

#106

Diplomacy *World*



HISTORICAL VARIANTS

www.diplomacyworld.net



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Notes from the Editor

With a theme of Face-to-Face Diplomacy coming up in a few issues, I thought this might be a good time to go over some thoughts I have on promotion of large and small-scale events beyond local publicity. Certainly you'd want to publicize the game locally, with signs in any friendly game store, mentioning it on local-interest websites, and the like. But I'm talking more about using publications like Diplomacy World not just to attract visitors this time, but to build a regular following, and to make your event better known overall.

Let me be clear about one thing: I've never organized a large face-to-face event, tournament, or convention (self-standing or otherwise). So I have no personal experience with the problems and tremendous workload each organizer faces.

But with that said, I still remain rather disappointed with the level of participation Diplomacy World gets from many events. In my mind, the best way to increase participation from outside the general area (and occasionally even in that area) is through publicity in popular, free locations. Diplomacy World certainly fits that bill, with each issue downloaded 10,000 times or more (between the diplomacyworld Yahoo group, the www.diplomacyworld.net website, and the Diplomacy section of my personal website) by the time the next issue is released.

The way I see it, if the event is (or is going to be) an annual one, there are effective ways to keep the event in the minds of those who would have to travel to participate.

1. Create and submit a simple advertisement for the event, in time to appear in the issue **BEFORE** the event takes place. If your event is in early April, an advertisement in the Spring issue (which comes out the first week of April usually) isn't going to do much good. The prior issue would be better. DW comes out quarterly: January/April/July/October, with final deadlines on the first of each of those months.

2. If the organizers can think up some reasonable points, write an article about the work you're doing preparing for the event. How will it be different then the prior years? What new obstacles do you face? Will it be held somewhere new? What criticisms or compliments from the prior year have caused you to look at things differently? This can be interesting for those who hope to attend, and informative for those who want to run their own events.

3. During the event, take some digital photos. Then be honest with yourself. Will **YOU** have the time and energy to write a decent convention report? Remember,

in Diplomacy World we want to read about the personalities, the off-board fun, the accommodations, the night life, the funniest moments, what family members who did NOT play did to pass the time...in some ways, the results themselves are secondary. Read some of the con reports from prior issues to get a feel for what I mean. If YOU are not going to have time to write a con report, RECRUIT at least one person from the gallery of players. I can email likely players and I can beg for articles about the event until I am blue in the face, because I want Diplomacy World to be fun and interesting, but in the end this is YOUR event. Far too often, after the fact, nobody wants to write an article. How will people who did NOT attend see what a fun, worthwhile event it was unless you (or someone else) writes about it? Soliciting an article or two for Diplomacy World should be something you put on your to-do list, for your own benefit as well as the hobby at large.

4. For the Diplomacy World issue after the event (or few months down the road for the one following), write an article on what you learned from the event this year. What went right, what went wrong, what was unexpected? If you have trouble stretching this to a page, think about what advice you can give to others, to learn from your mistakes and your triumphs.

5. Go back to #1 and start over for next year.

Using this process, your event gets some form of notice and publicity, however small, in at least 3 issues per year. Both European and North American events can use this to attract more out of town (or out of country) players. Make your event a desired destination to those who have to travel more than an hour to get there!

Finally, a similar but scaled-down version can also be used for local clubs and even house games. Look at the articles we've seen in DW on the Windy City Weasels as examples. If you're holding a ftf game at your home – especially if you haven't organized one before – some photos and a write-up may attract a lot more local Diplomacy players to the next one. Remember, there are SO MANY Diplomacy players out there who are in NO WAY part of the face-to-face scene. Use Diplomacy World as a way to find them and attract them. They're out there...to butcher a popular phrase from Field of Dreams, "If you print it, they will come."

I'll close by reminding you the next deadline for Diplomacy World submissions is October 1st, 2009. Remember, besides articles (which are always prized and appreciated), we LOVE to get letters, feedback, input, ideas, and suggestions too. So email me! See you in the Summer, and happy stabbing!

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

Themes for Upcoming Diplomacy World Issues:



Diplomacy World #107: Balance of Power **Deadline for #107 Submissions – October 1, 2009**



Diplomacy World #108: Face-to-Face Diplomacy **Deadline for #108 Submissions – January 1, 2010**



Diplomacy World #109: Economic Variants **Deadline for #109 Submissions – April 1, 2010**

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Honesty Becomes You Not, Or You Can Con at a Con

By Chris Babcock

As much as I harp about maintaining clear separation between in-game and out-of-game behavior, I am tempted to advocate one exception - recruiting, or at least recruiting at conventions. As I write this, I have barely slept off the dehydration and other effects of RandomCon. You might say that I am writing while the details are still fresh in my mind. You might be entirely too charitable.

This was the first RandomCon and my first convention. The organizers were experienced. Well, they were beyond experienced. OK, they were old and jaded. They knew exactly what people expected of a first time convention and they delivered it. There's every indication that they will do the same thing when the expectations are higher, but the damage has been done. I have been infected with cynicism.



First, a gaming convention is different when you don't have a crowd there specifically for Diplomacy. People are there to try different games, new games. They want to kick tires. You don't kick the tires on a classic. If you want to play Diplomacy at a general gaming convention then you have to build your own group ahead of time. I'm thinking ringers. Start with at least 3 players in addition to the GM. The GM can watch the table while the other 3 canvas the open gaming area for players. Their goal: Spread a specific group of lies.

The first lie is "We'll just have a short game." There's a time to be honest about the length of a game, but it's not when you are bringing in new players. Show them the moves. Get them talking and writing orders. Let them feel the suspense of orders being read. Do that for two hours then turn them loose. "It's time to go to your next event. Well, OK, we can adjudicate Fall 1903 before you go if you want..."

The second lie is "It's easy." I like, "In chess you have 6 kinds of pieces with a total of eight different movement rules. In Diplomacy, there are only two types of pieces and 4 movement rules." There is no lie like the truth.

It's short and it's easy. I hate thinking that way. I like Diplomacy because it's rich and worthwhile. It's addictive enough though for lies to work, though. It's just a matter of finding the lies I can tell without my sense of honor driving me onto my sword later.

So this is my plan for next time:

1. Run regular sessions. I know I can't have a game in 2 hours. Until I do have a game though, it's enough for people to sit and play a little.
2. Take ringers. Fill the sessions at least part way so that I don't have a 'lonely table.' Maybe play one loud game early in the convention to build buzz.
3. Model in-game behavior in my sales pitch... or have someone else do it for me.

So when is next time? Probably the next RandomCon, which will be held in the same Phoenix area venue during the summer of 2010, but possibly sooner. RinCon in Tuscon this October is an option. I just need three people who will lie for me.



Chris Babcock is the Judgekeeper of USAK, where he is GM in about 70 games. He has his fingers in more pies than little Jack Horner. His aspirations include forming a nonprofit corporation to provide information services to the Diplomacy hobby and forming local and regional Diplomacy clubs in the southwestern United States. Yes, focus is an issue.

Sweden, a Great Place for a Holiday

by Ursa

In Andrew Goff's great article in *Diplomacy World* #105, he asks an intriguing question to the readership:

'Germany is considering bouncing Russia in Sweden in Fall 1901, should he?'¹ A very short answer would be: 'NO'. This requires, of course, an explanation.

First of all, a combination of words containing 'should' should not occur in Diplomacy. Players never **should** do something; perhaps they *could* do something, or likely *would* do something, but never **should**. I believe this is a philosophical trap of the author, as he has stated that it's best to keep all options open regarding the best opening moves. For instance, saying 'England should open with F EDI-NWG, F LON-NTH and A LVP-YOR' would be ultimately wrong (even though it's my favorite opening). Perhaps with hindsight, one could say that a player should've made other moves in order to prevent someone else's moves from succeeding, or to gain advantage in a certain specific situation.

So, for all accounts, this question Andrew Goff asked can be seen as a test: 'have you understood what I am trying to say?' I hope I have, and I will illustrate this using an example of one of my own games. It can be seen at <http://phpdiplomacy.net/board.php?gameID=8971> where I am playing Germany. But before we do that, allow me to introduce myself: I'm a Dutch Diplomacy player, in possession of the board game² and mostly playing online at the phpdiplomacy site under the name of 'Ursa'. If my English is poor, it's because I am Dutch.

If you follow the link above, you will be able to see all the opening moves. Russia opened with F STP(sc)-BOT, A MOS-STP, A WAR-GAL and F SEV-BLA, and all of these moves succeeded, because Austria and Turkey NMR'd. While conversations between the Russian player and me had been friendly, I feared he would soon possess eight centers if Austria and Turkey were in civil disorder. So, having moved my fleet to Denmark, that should be enough reason to bounce Russia in Fall 1901, which I did. I also warned England to either bounce Russia or go for Norway himself, and with our set of orders we thought Russia would still be at six which would be less threatening (taking Goff's formula into account this would result in Germany -0, England -1 and Russia -2).

But at the end of 1901 it appeared that I never should've done such a thing. Partly because of his own mistakes

(such as moving A GAL unsupported against an occupied Budapest) and partly because of other powers' moves, Russia ended 1901 with four centers and no builds whatsoever. What first was the main threat of Europe ended as an easy target, especially for England. Russia described this in the global chat-box most eloquently: 'This game perplexes me.' Had I given him a stay in Stockholm, the game would've been more balanced, and perhaps he would bear less of a grudge against me.

This, at first, shows that Germany should not **always** bounce Russia in Sweden. It may be a standard move for a standard situation in which Russia will likely get Rumania. But like Goff himself says, standard situations should not occur, and when they do they are not 'standard' in any way, just like human behavior is never standard. While I put on shoes and brush my teeth every day, I will always have different thoughts or say different things (except I don't say much while brushing my teeth). So with all of that said, I would like to discuss the wild variety of possibilities surrounding the situation in which Germany is able to consider bouncing Russia in Fall '01.

Big Scary Russia. Russia has moved into BLA and will likely take Rumania, and perhaps BUL or BUD. From the looks of it, he has an alliance with Turkey (juggernaut-alert!) or Italy. In this situation, it is highly recommended to bounce Russia in Sweden, with the result of Germany +0 (Germany, having entered Denmark, will in all cases get a build whether from Denmark or Sweden. Sweden is better, but that's not easily converted into math) and Russia -1. With one build to spend, Russia will think twice about placing a unit in STP and/or WAR, being busy in the south.

West or East? Variant of the above. If you have an alliance with England against France, and England opens with a Sealion, and (big, scary) Russia also moves A MOS-STP, you'll have to support England into Belgium and ask him to move F NTH-NWY to quell the need of bouncing Sweden. Of course, both of you want to appease Russia, and would rather see him going south, but he wants some gain in the north. In that case, it might be better to leave Sweden to Russia and bounce him in Norway (preventing a fleet build in STP(nc)), keeping him satisfied. Of course, why not leave France as it is and root out Russia first? Well, that's up to you.

Entente. When you have suspicions that England and Russia have an alliance against you, it heavily depends on the position of your own units. If A BER or MUN has moved to Kiel it's safe and advisable to bounce SWE. Otherwise Russia might refrain from entering SWE, leaving Denmark open for England's F NTH to enter. If

¹ A. Goff, 'Taking your game to the next level', *Diplomacy World* 105 (2009) p. 13.

² That is, the new version with flat cardboard pieces. When I learned of the old version, with wooden blocks, this was a real turn-off. Maybe I'll find the old one on the internet someday.

Russia has moved F BOT-BAL in the meantime, the puppets are really dancing (to use a Dutch expression). This would result in ENG +1, GER +0 and RUS +0.

Von Ribbentrop. As Germany, you are building up an alliance with Russia. In this case, it would be none too bright to deny him a center. However, you don't want Russia walking all over you. So, in negotiations, you've got the card of 'I could bounce you but I won't' and Russia really wants that center to add to his or her collection (see **Lovely Sweden**). On the basis of your consent in this matter, you will perhaps be able to arrange a deal about owning Sweden in the future, while Russia takes Norway. If thereby the moves F DEN-NTH and A KIE-DEN have worked out, it's 'goodbye Commonwealth'!

Gütentag! Just to remind Russia that you are on the map too, let him know by bouncing the blunt vodka-drenched dictator.

Lovely Sweden. Being aware of the high proportion of tall blondes in Sweden's female population, Germany should really consider bouncing Russia no matter what. Should they be left to the care of the highly professionalized Russian army? To prevent certain things, it's sometimes better to act for the sake of (and

future of) Europe. This would result in Germany +10 and Russia -1.

Nearing my conclusion and way over 1000 words, I can only repeat what I said earlier: a game of Diplomacy is never **standard**. I've given several possible options, and there are many more. Answering 'yes, always' to the question asked only contributes to laziness, lack of creativity and - whether it's wrong or right in the given situation - ultimately results in boring and predictable games. Playing Diplomacy is about being open-minded to all sorts of possibilities, on the board as well as in negotiation. On the internet, few people practice these to their full extent...at least that's my opinion. People play too many games at the same time, and when they do, they converse in one- or two-lined messages (or sometimes not at all). How can you have an alliance with someone who doesn't talk to you for years? All this leads to a code of behavior resulting in hard-to-overcome gaps of communication between players. I wonder if this is specifically a problem with online variants, and, if so, what contributes to that problem. Perhaps I'll write about that some other time.

"Ursa" is a first-time contributor to Diplomacy World, but let's all hope he'll repeat the gesture in the near future!

Why I Was Rooting for Annie Duke

by Hannibal Atticus

It's time for a confession. I have been known to indulge myself in a vice occasionally. That vice is called reality television. When I was in college, I would watch the "Real World" on MTV, which admittedly was back when there were actual music videos on that channel. Ah, to think that living rent free in a house full of booze was reality. Later, I was swept up in the Survivor mania in its first couple of seasons. Scheming, plotting, back stabbing, alliances. This year, I've been viewing the Celebrity Apprentice. I saw the first couple of seasons of this show back a few years ago, but then it fell off my radar. I didn't even watch the previous season, which was also a celebrity edition.

This recent season intrigued me. The water cooler at my office was abuzz with chatter about Joan Rivers and Andrew Dice Clay. And this season did deliver a healthy dose of drama and entertainment on Sunday evenings. But as the season progressed, I found myself rooting more and more for one contestant in particular, a professional poker player named Annie Duke.

There appeared to be some sort of cultural bias against her by certain other contestants because she was a

professional poker player. Annie Duke was under attack at times because she knows how to read people, and she knows how to play people. She was maligned because she knows how to effectively lie to and bluff others. These are the types of skill sets that many of us as Diplomacy players would bring to a reality television show. I think that is why I was drawn to her. I saw sort of a companion in arms.

As Diplomacy players, we also know how to read people, and how to play people. We develop skills to effectively lie to and bluff others. It made me wonder, would we as Diplomacy players, with our skill set of lying and back stabbing as an art form, be reviled by the public at large? How effective would one of our own be in a Reality TV Game Show that involved a lot of the politicking and backstabbing? Would we be successful from our gaming experiences and practice? Would there be loathing of us for our acquired skill sets by those outside the hobby? Maybe that's why I still have not revealed my Diplomacy enthusiasm to my girlfriend... who happened to hate Annie Duke and her largely successful performance on the recent season of the Celebrity Apprentice.

Losing with Panache

By Chris Sham

Much has been said about the virtues, in Diplomacy or any other game, of playing to win, even in the face of certain defeat, and it really is something admirable. You don't rise from a single supply center to 18 by giving up at the first obstacle you come across. But if you're just playing for fun, such an epic struggle is an awful lot of work, much of which won't seem like any fun at all at the time. In most such cases, you don't care about winning anymore; if you keep playing at all (which I do encourage, if only to keep it interesting for the other players), then you're probably just trying to squeeze out as much fun from the game as possible. Is that so bad? Probably not, but it does rather depend on how you go about it.

Let's say there's only 4 powers left on the board: 3 big ones, each on the cusp of solo victory, and you, sitting on a mere 2 SCs. Victory is not impossible, however unlikely it is, but you're just not in the mood to play the game that seriously anymore. You could throw your toys out the cot and just quit, but that's not fun for anyone. It robs any remaining fun out of the game for you, and spoils it for the remaining players by throwing off the balance of power, as someone inevitably grabs the supplies you've left undefended. Similarly, staying in the game but intentionally allowing one player to take your territory seems a little unfair. Why should that player get free supply centers and not anyone else?

Instead, if you're only in the game for fun, then I advocate doing something a bit more creative and amusing until your certain doom strikes. Using your units and correspondence, you can fall into oblivion while still keeping yourself and your fellow players entertained. As with all creative endeavors, I can't really prescribe this sort of thing to you, or it's not truly creative anymore. However, I will list a few examples that I've come up with, just to get the ball rolling. Naturally, everyone has their own style, so think about how you would adapt these ideas for your own use, rather than just taking them from here exactly as they're written.

1. Write all your press and correspondence in the persona of an over-the-top Bond-style villain. Explain to your opponents how you plan to sink Spain, turning Portugal into an island, unless the current owner of Por pays you a large ransom. Give accounts of how captured enemy spies were done away with by means of ridiculously complex death traps. Get a cat and/or a henchman.

2. Provide ongoing commentary of all the other players' actions, in the style of a sports commentator.
3. Tell the most outrageous and blatant lies you can come up with. For example, tell France he can't invade your last remaining supply center, because otherwise the warning in a chain letter, sent to you by the god of Abraham himself, will come true, with tragic results. These include, but are not limited to, the banning of hat-wearing by small dogs, the complete and mysterious loss of the entire dark side of the moon, the 47th reincarnation of Trevor P. Pimplecross, the rising of Great Cthulhu, a new family sitcom based on the Star Wars Holiday Special, and an inevitable counter-invasion by Austria-Hungary. But say it all with a straight face.
4. See how far you can get a unit across the map by raiding undefended backline supply centers and holding them just long enough to raid the next one. Bonus points to Russian players who can raid their way around the map like this, sending a fleet from Sev to St.Pete or vice versa.
5. If you can break the serious moods of the winning players for a round (or better still, trick them into thinking this is a serious plan), see how long a convoy chain you can get them to make for you. Again, Sev to St.Pete wins by default.

Will these tricks help you win the game? There's a small chance, but it's about as likely as Switzerland winning. The real point is to find something to do while everyone else goes about the business of winning, so that you can still participate without the stressful burden of trying to save a hopeless situation. After all, the game is structured around winning, but the real reason we play is to engage with each others' intellects, and there's certainly more than just the one way of doing that. Being a fool for everyone's amusement is a reasonable challenge, if you want to do it well (just ask Robin Williams or the Pythons), and it can certainly be more fun than playing strictly and pointlessly to the letter of the rules.

[[I don't think it would be fair to say that Chris is putting himself out there as an expert on losing by writing this article...I'll always be the #1 expert at that, believe me!]]

My First Tournament – I Was a DixieCon Chick

By Elizabeth Boudreaux

This past Memorial Day weekend I was invited to attend Dixie Con by my boyfriend, Conrad Woodring. At this time, all I knew was that he plays this board game called Diplomacy and he has a wall in his apartment full of plaques and trophies from past tournaments. I was certainly interested in a trip to North Carolina, but didn't plan on participating in the games considering I have not played a board game in five years (and that was Monopoly). Feeling certain that I would get some quality sightseeing accomplished on this trip, and probably find some time to relax and read, I accepted his invitation. Because this was a spur of the moment trip, Conrad and I travelled separately, with my flight arriving four hours before his. He had made arrangements to have someone pick me up at the airport, and for someone to take me to the location of the tournament and introduce me to people. After arriving at the UNC dormitory where the tournament was being held, and being introduced to people I decided to get settled in my room (which took all of 15 minutes). With nothing else to do I went to the basement and try to catch a glimpse of this game, Diplomacy.

As I entered the basement floor of a UNC dormitory, I quickly realized that a 26 year old female was not the typical demographic at a Diplomacy tournament. Moments after stepping in to the room I was asked if I would like to join a game of Dominion. Hoping this would be just the opportunity I needed to quickly make some friends, I joined in and I put my search for a Diplomacy board on hold. After a few rounds of Dominion, I headed off to continue my search of Diplomacy. As luck would have it, a Diplomacy player had just set up a board and was about to explain the rules to a friend of his who, like me, had never played or even seen the game before (and just so happened to be the only other girl there at the time). After a rules rundown, the other girl quickly decided that this was **not** the game for her and left to see the sights of the town, I, on the other hand, was very excited and wanted to play one round before the tournament started. Unfortunately, there were only 30 minutes until the tournament started, most defiantly not enough time for me to play a game of Diplomacy. All of this had drawn a small crowd of players who encouraged me to play in the tournament. Very excited and a little nervous, I put my name on the list of tournament players. Conrad arrived only moments before the first round started, and was not very surprised that I had already been roped into playing. My first game ended well, in my opinion, the result of the game was a three-way draw, and with me being one of the three. After Diplomacy ended that night, we stayed up playing other games into the early morning hours. I finally went to sleep at 4:30 a.m. and could not have

been more excited for the next game of Diplomacy, which would start in only five hours. I ended up playing in every round that weekend. Although I didn't do as well as I did in my first game, I still felt that I had held my own.



Elizabeth and Conrad enjoy some artichoke pizza.

During all of the Diplomacy excitement, there was little time available to get out of the dorms and actually see the sights and sounds of Chapel Hill. Saturday night provided the opportunity to remedy that situation. Conrad and I went out to dinner at a Thai restaurant, and then made our way to Hookah Bliss, the local hookah bar in Chapel Hill. After spending about an hour there, we took a walk just to explore the area. During our walk, we came across a pizza parlor called the Artichoke Basil. Conrad, having an unbelievable love for pizza, had to go in and try it. So we went in, ate pizza and visited with the owners who said they had just opened for business only three hours before we had come in. The pizza was, by far, the best pizza I have ever tasted and Conrad agreed that although he had had better, it was very good pizza. Needless to say we ate all of our meals there for the remainder of the weekend.

To sum it all up, I really enjoyed my weekend in Chapel Hill. I am now officially a Diplomacy fan and can't wait for the next tournament. I feel that there are many people to thank for making my first tournament a great experience; first, David Hood for hosting Dixie Con and for picking me up at the airport and secondly, David Maletsky for taking the time to help me track down my luggage at the airport (which proved to be more difficult than it should have been), and for getting me involved in that first card game. I did win an award that weekend, the Player's Choice award, so thank you to everyone who voted for me. Last, but not least, my boyfriend, Conrad Woodring, for inviting me to join him on this trip, and for helping to make it a wonderful weekend.

The Imperial Variant

By Douglas Brown

This variant has seen a lot of action lately, thanks to the boosterism of Yves Grosdidier of the Dipsters Alliance. For a game of this size you have to have reliable players; both the games I have played went well over a calendar year with no substantial pauses for absences or replacements. I would say here that this game appears to be played as a gunboat game, partly because of its size and the time it takes to play even without diplomatic timeouts (although I think it would be a very interesting game). In the one or two press games I found, however, the dynamics remained more or less the same. I haven't played many other large-map variants, so I will just discuss this particular one, which I find quite enjoyable.

It is a global game, and is somewhat unusual in not being balanced at the start. The setting is 1860, which allows the old CSA to make an appearance; but from the games I have played and the few example games I studied first to see how the game worked, the CSA is destined to be a non-factor (unless the USA and Mexico are both completely inept). So the start could as easily have been any time from 1830 to 1930 simply by forgetting about CSA and balancing English Canada, USA, Mexico and Brazil slightly. Nonetheless, 1860 it is.

It takes 70 centers to win. France and England are spread out across the map with 20+ centers apiece, and Russia is spread out across Eurasia with over a dozen. The next-largest powers have only a handful of units. One would think that England and France could, by allying, simply wipe the rest of the board, but it is not as simple as that. "Spread out" are the operative words. There is a fair helping of un-colonized territory to allow everybody a little momentum at the start. Before long, the minor powers are issuing flea-bites all across the map to take out singleton fleets and army garrisons, and the cumulative effects are devastating. In a full-press game, England or France could combine to limit this effect, but the board is so large that they are still going to be harassed, and it would be extremely difficult for one or the other to sneak up on a solo. In a gunboat game, it is so hard for these two to coordinate that they are defeated in detail; I played in one gunboat game where they tried to ally, but it took them a couple of years to see that this was the other's intent, and by the time they worked that out, each of them had a lot of other problems to deal with, and they were too spread out to do much for each other anyway.

Russia has a bit more centrism at the start, but has indefensible borders and hardly anywhere innocuous to go for centers to shore up the core. Centers in the west lead to confrontations with powerful opponents; in the far east there are open centers with too much real estate

between them, so it takes two or three units to hold one center if the frontier is contested. Moving forward therefore requires what appears to be excessive force to remain peaceable; but doing nothing is unacceptably dangerous. Within a year, Turkey could get around the Caspian for a clear shot into the Russian heartland, or Japan or China could open up a hole in Siberia; or Germany or England could occupy Scandinavia and roll up the northern frontiers. Yet movement on one front necessitates not just economy of force but actual naked risk on the others. So Russia cannot afford to sit and wait to see what happens; but in moving he is sure to cause powers on that side of the world to mobilize, while tempting powers on the un-attacked side to lick their lips over a loosely-guarded Russian frontier. In every one of the games I played and observed, Russia was effectively eliminated within a half-dozen years. Any further existence was mostly the result of accident; in one game Russia was unable to suicide out and his two remaining units were used as buffers by Japan and a western power (Germany in one game, Austria in another) for over a decade (and several months of real time) before the log-jam cleared.

Smaller powers fill the vacuums created by the three greater powers as they make their prioritization decisions. If, for instance, France decides on setting up a solid base in the center-rich Caribbean, this will probably put a serious damper on the expansion of CSA and Mexico; but this just makes Holland and Turkey more competitive in Africa, and probably allows USA and Brazil to establish dominance on their respective continents – which will, in turn, grow to be strong enough to eject the French as soon as their attention is drawn elsewhere. Over time, China, Japan, USA and Brazil are almost sure to emerge as second-tier powers, with Mexico having a possibility of cracking that list. Either Prussia or Austria, and either China or Japan, will make the second tier; the other member of the pair may grow substantially at first but must eventually be consumed. Again, CSA is really the only country that just does not seem to have much chance of making it past the first couple of years unless the neighbors really get themselves in a bind.

The geography does make one wonder whether Brazil can actually win the game outright, but it can definitely create a redoubt that ensures it a strong place in a final draw (and with this large map, an outright solo seems extremely unlikely, even where gunboat limits the ability of the players to alarm each other). It is likewise unclear that China can break out of the mainland position to go from around 20 largely inland centers to jump up to the high 30s needed and then create the massive fleets it will need to seriously compete for 70 centers. China has

so much work to do in dealing with landward security that meanwhile Japan or Holland (or both) will have established naval supremacy in the China Seas. However, I have not seen what happens if Russia and China are able to really take an alliance forward, and it is possible that if freed from the landward problem, China could play the role more normally seen from Japan.

The other second-tier powers can certainly get into a game-winning position; there are examples of Austria, Germany, USA and Japan dominating the game. I have not seen Mexico end up in such a position but have played in a game where Mexico had 25 centers accounting for most of center-laden North America, controlled the Atlantic Ocean and had made landfall in West Africa. Only a moment of hubris in which he decided to further split his effort by attacking Brazil prevented a sure run-up to over 40 centers with access to many more from the Atlantic base.

The anomalous country is Holland. He is the first to learn that the game has nothing to do with ownership of the original centers, because he has only one center and one unit in Europe. Holland has to build out the nuclei of an empire in Asia and South Africa, while early abandonment of red herrings in South America seems to pay off. An apparently weak land position turns out to be quite sustainable with enough fleets controlling the Indian Ocean if the Dutch can conclude the proper alliances (hard to do in gunboat) while leaving enough flexibility to continue making progress. In the games I have played and observed, Holland appears to be a marginal proposition and all of a sudden he is in fourth place, then third, and so on.

The map is fully global. The poles are not passable, but the Antarctic does permit rapid moves across hemispheres. The wraparound in the western Pacific can create some confusing optical problems, but not all that serious. A more misleading case is created in the Bering Strait, which can cause the powers holding Alaska and Siberia to forget that another power may be sitting only 2 seasons' move away. In any event, whether coming across the date line or around the South Pole, to see the cavalry coming from a quite unexpected quarter is quite exhilarating (or disillusioning, depending on whether you are the cowboys or the Indians).

Notice also the route this cavalry takes to get there. In this variant, as with regular Diplomacy, the centers may have city and country names on them, but the wars are won and lost at sea. Brazil and China, for instance, need armies at first to get to open inland centers, but they cannot hold the coasts if an opponent can stand offshore and assemble forces that cannot be disrupted. Germany and Austria are limited to trench warfare for a handful of centers unless they can get offshore to

bypass the trench lines and open other theaters. England and Holland essentially have no existence except at sea. Ultimately every power (except perhaps Russia and China) needs fleets to create the solid defensive lines in one theater, and all of them need fleets to project power from one continent to another. One of the most interesting uses of sea power is in the Caspian Sea, where a fleet can with complete impunity influence every surrounding province, all but one of which are also resource centers – but you have to own one of the two producing centers in Russia to build that fleet (unless the portage rules are in effect). One of the “sneakiest” centers in this regard is Cairo, which is always captured from the Mediterranean but is most valuable in being able to generate fleets into the Red Sea and completely changes the game for a power that had been entirely confined to the European theater.

There is a tendency to introduce the “coastal convoy” and/or the portage rules in this variant. At least with regard to the portage, I would advise against that. Given the way the portage rule has been implemented, it is unrealistic in this huge variant. In a portage, a fleet is essentially convoyed by an army, or a succession of armies, from one coastal province to another. The rule should (but does not) permit portaging from one sea square to another via a land province, e.g. over the Panamanian isthmus, or from the Black Sea to the Caspian Sea. Instead, the rules do (but should not) require that a fleet must be picked up and deposited in a coastal province, and portaged across provinces that are totally landlocked. As a result one sees ridiculous convoys such as Finland to Baku (across St. Petersburg, Moscow and Georgia), and one cannot convoy from the Black Sea to the Caspian Sea. They are good for entertainment value, but not that much good since the game is gunboat, but other than destabilizing the situation a bit, they add little of value.

In conclusion, Imperial is a game that takes a long time to play, but offers each player several years' worth of entertaining play. With the geography dictating a mass policy of attacking the leaders, and a solo victory pretty unlikely, everyone has achievable success criteria – for the leaders, not to shrink too fast, and for the followers, the possibility of moving into the mid-size tier and then perhaps to become the clear leader. Unless you simply cannot play without getting a solo, give Imperial a try.

[[There are actually a number of large variants which don't seem to get the notice they once did. I'd love to see some articles on variants such as Colonia VII-B, Final Conflict, or even Youngstown XIII (which I can't find my copy of, anybody have one?). Thanks to Douglas for possibly introducing the reader to one you may not have known about.]]

Capsule Reviews of Pre-1900 Dip Variants

By Jack McHugh

Ancient Mediterranean

This is one I enjoy playing at [USDP](#), one of my favorite sites for non-human GMing. Ancient Mediterranean (AM) is a five player variant that was created by Don Hessong. It still has the same number of supply centers as a normal Diplomacy map, so you need 18 to win, as in regular Diplomacy. There are five powers: Rome, Carthage, Greece, Persia and Egypt.

The game often becomes a four player game fairly quickly as someone—usually Greece or Egypt—gets squeezed out. The game has a tendency to stalemate somewhere in the Mediterranean, although there are 19 sea spaces in the Mediterranean plus one for the Black and Red Seas. I've played it a few times and always enjoyed it as the game moves along fairly quickly, and it's tough to keep a stalemate line indefinitely.

The Hundred Variant

This is another USDP Judge variant that covers the Hundred Years War. It is a well-balanced and effectively designed three player variant, with the three powers being Burgundy, England and France. It was designed by Andy Schwarz and Vincent Mous.

I like this variant because it is fast and fun. The powers start out intertwined so you do not have to waste a lot of time on preliminary maneuvering. You start the game already going at it with your neighbors. The English and French start out on top of each other with three English armies on the continent and two English fleets in England. The Burgundians start off in the Low Countries looking to cut a deal with either France or England.

Ancient Empires II

This is an old variant for seven players designed by John Lipscomb that I found in an old *Diplomacy World* that Doug sent me. According the [variant bank](#) website run by Stephen Agar, there are three other Ancient Empire variants: a 5 player Ancient Empire I (designed by John Boyer – Doug has the rules and map for this if you are interested), a 7 player Ancient Empires III (designed by John Lipscomb and Fred Davis) variant and an Ancient Empire IV (designed by Warner Airey), although there are no maps or rules listed for any these variants on the site itself.

I haven't actually played this variant but I have heard good things about it from other players. There are seven powers: New Carthage, Rome, Macedonia, Antigonos, Seleucus, Ptolemy and Carthage with a total of 32 centers, so you would need 16 to win. The only difference in the rules is that units ordered to move cannot defend the provinces they are coming from so if another unit tries to move in they would be dislodged. I

imagine this rule is to keep any stalemate lines from holding up for very long.

Because you can't readily find this variant, we are reprinting the rules and map in this issue of *Diplomacy World*. And remember you can contact Doug at [diplomacyworld "of" yahoo.com](#) if you'd like the rules and map for Ancient Empires I by John Boyer.



Ambition & Empire

This is the a 10-player map and rules variant designed by Baron Powell and Jeff S Kase that takes place in Europe about 10 years after the Seven Years War in 1763. You can find this at the [variant bank](#). The game is won when a Great power controls 15 or more centers.

What sets the variant apart besides the nice map and some serious historical research is the fact that some of the powers are smaller than 3 centers. There is also several "minor powers" who garrison all the neutral centers A&E also has rules for Diplomatic Points that players are awarded (up to three) based on their supply center count. These points are used to issue votes for orders to the minor powers.

So, there are four terrific variants, all set before 1900. I plan on making this Capsule Review section a regular column in *Diplomacy World*, trying to select variants that relate to each other in some way. If you have any suggestions I'd love to hear them. Now go out and try one of these!

Jack McHugh is the *Diplomacy World* Variants Editor.

Ancient Empires II Rules

Designed by John Lipscomb (John Boyer designed Ancient Empires I)

1. Use all regular Diplomacy rules except when they conflict with the following rules.
2. The major powers and their starting positions are as follows:

CARTHAGE:	F ICO, F UTI, A NUM
NEW CARTHAGE:	F N. CAR, A SAG, A LUS
ROME:	F NEA, A ROM, A AQU
MACEDONIA:	A EPI, A CHA, F ATH
PTOLEMY:	F THE, A MEM, A SIN
ANTIGONUS:	F PON, A ANT, A MYS
SELEUCUS:	A RAYY, A ATR, A SEL

3. Sinai, Mysia and Arabia function as Con does in the standard game. A fleet in Mysia could move to either the Euxine Sea, the Aegean Sea, Pontus, Caria, or Thrace (either coast). A fleet in Arabia could move to either Seleucia, Sinai, the Red Sea or the Persian Gulf. A fleet in Sinai could move to either Thebes, Arabia, the Red Sea, Memphis, Judea, the Levantine Sea or the Egyptian Sea. The reverse of any of the above are also possible.
4. Thrace has two coasts. Thrace functions as Bulgaria does in the standard game.
5. A unit ordered to move may not defend its original space and if attacked is dislodged. This would not apply if the attack was coming from the space the unit was attempting to move to. For example, if Rome orders A Aqu-Alps and Macedonia orders A Ill-Aqu and A Dan-Alps, the usual standoff in Alps is unaffected even though the Roman unit is dislodged by the army from Illyria.
6. A single attack against a convoying fleet disrupts the convoy.
7. Victory is achieved by owning 16 centers at the end of any Fall turn. Any other victory situation may be decided by unanimous vote of all remaining Powers.
8. Fleets and armies may move directly from Gades to Mauretania, and vice versa. Fleets may still move from the Atlantic Ocean to the Iberian Sea, and vice versa.
9. The game begins in 300 BC.
10. **Optional:** There are neutral armies representing barbarians in Gaul, Danubia, and in Scythia. They are all in Civil Disorder. If dislodged they are eliminated, but return when the space is vacated. They may of course be supported to hold by other units.



Standards of Play

By David Maletsky

Let me preface the forthcoming argument with, I am the first player to encourage the growth of the hobby. I love working with the inexperienced on boards, indoctrinating new players into the social scene of the hobby, helping them feel a sense of camaraderie, et cetera. That said, the weekend I just spent in Columbus at the World Diplomacy Championships reminded me of a truism: not every venue is new player-appropriate.

I understand all too well the motivation of a Tournament Director to try and have as many boards as possible at his/her tournament; so frankly, Dan Mathias (TD), Edi Birsan (Assistant TD), *et alia*, can't be blamed for the many players they introduced the game to over the weekend. Theirs is a positive motivation, to grow the hobby, and should be encouraged... not enough of us are active recruiters, quite frankly, myself included.

The blame lies with the structure outlined in the respective Charters of the North American Championships, and the World Championships. These scraps of paper... well, I suppose electronic media anyway, need to provide at the minimum standards of experience, if not skill, for eligibility to attend what should rightly be invitational tournaments. The *status quo* strips the legitimacy from the title "Champion", at the end of the day; given the uneven nature of our hobby, and how important who you sit down next to is to your results, if you have players of wildly different skill and experience

present, luck is permitted to play a significant role, whereas a "Championship" should, as much as is possible, be a test of skill.

What I'm not saying here is, let's devise a subjective, scoring-system-esque, new source of unending debate. All I'm asking for is some simple standard that everyone could agree upon to start, and from there, if it required more tweaking, we could cross that bridge when we came to it. As an example, participation in a Grand Prix event in the previous two calendar years would at least be a small criterion that would ensure we're not getting first-timers introduced to the game at the Championships.

This topic will be on the floor at next year's BADAss Whipping in San Francisco, the site of DipCon 2010; it will also be brought before the cabal that runs WDC in the forthcoming months. So if you have a point or counterpoint, feel free to post it on Diplomacy World, or mail it to me (dmaletsky@comcast.net), so that your voice might be heard in the discussion. And, of course, attend DipCon 2010; as a former attendee of Whipping, I can recommend it as a highly enjoyable event.

David Maletsky is the current Head of the North American Diplomacy Federation

3 Things I Learned at World Dipcon 2009

By Christian MacDonald

There were a group of 11 players that travelled from Chicago together to World Dipcon 2009 held at Origins Game Fair in Columbus, Ohio June 25 to 28. I've been playing with the Windy City Weasels for about a year now (having moved to Chicago from Canada 2 years ago) and have been steadily gaining exposure to the hobby at large for much of that time. As is common to many players I'm sure, I owned a copy of the game in college in the early nineties and managed to gather enough people for one or two FTF games during that period (neither of which came to any comprehensible result). The proliferation of the internet and email in the mid-nineties lead to my discovery of The Diplomatic Pouch and PBEM, and I managed to get into a couple of games, none of which came to any result at all (hey, there was a lot going on in college!).

After I finished my graduate degree in 1998, I lost contact with the game in any of its various forms, until I was lucky enough to hook up with Jim O'Kelley's group

in Chicago. Since that time I've had some decent results in club games, and even managed to win the first tournament I travelled to, last year's Buckeye Gamefest, held (coincidentally) in Columbus. But it wasn't until this year's WDC that I learned some very important lessons regarding high level tournament play, as well as the state of my own game.

Lesson Learned #1 - "I am NOT an elite level player (... yet)."

The first thing that struck me about the top players I met and played against at WDC was the value that experience brings when analyzing a board. Like most players at my level, managing openings and board play through the first 4 or 5 years is not overly difficult or complicated. The issues arise during the mid-game, when 1 or 2 powers are eliminated or are reduced to playing subservient positions, and (if you're lucky) you

have grown to between 9 or 12 centers. It is unsurprising that a preponderance of the literature online deals with openings. There are fewer variables at play than in a developed game, and many more players are old hats at playing these positions (it's nearly impossible to be eliminated in 1 or 2 game years). It's also unsurprising that many higher level players put little stock in set-piece openings (some don't even know their names, or care to), preferring instead to allow the early game to flow and develop, rather than be constrained by dictated actions. I believe there is value in studying openings (even in knowing what they're called), just don't let a solid grasp of them fool you into thinking you're a grandmaster.

I also observed that experienced players have rock solid knowledge of stalemate positions. This is essential to analyzing a developing board and informs both who to ally with (and who not to) as well as where to move your units. Position is far more important than grabbing that next dot and, if you want to solo, knowledge of the stalemate lines is crucial. Like most players, I have a cursory familiarity with these positions, but I need a LOT more work. I've looked at published maps but, in my opinion, you need to move the pieces around the board, and the best way to do that is to play dozens (if not hundreds!) of games (whether email or FTF).

Aside from experience, it was also apparent that the top players exhibit an extreme commitment to the game, something that is required to solo tough boards and win top tournaments. Having played mostly club and social games over the past year, this was something I was unprepared for. Anyone who played a board with me at the WDC knows that I regularly looked for the early draw vote and, as a result, my games generally ended quickly (my longest result was 1908). You'll drink a lot of beer that way, but you won't win many tournaments in a draw based scoring system. Actual physical exhaustion plays a role (I heard one player compare tournament play to the Bataan Death March), but that's the same for all players; in fact it was less of a factor for me because my games ended so early. I now know that performing well at a high level tournament demands a much higher degree of patience, grit, and stamina. I'll be ready next time.

Lesson Learned #2 - "It just 'is.'"

The scoring system, the venue, the TD, the amount of new players, etc, etc is neither good nor bad, it just "is." The elite players generally adapt to all of these environmental factors, and use them to their advantage. In a conversation with the champion shortly after he soloed his final board to clinch the championship, he related that after being soloed upon in the first round, he observed the style of play that brought success in the environment, and sought to implement that style in

subsequent rounds. Presumably, he meant allying with a more junior player (one that has some tactical knowledge, but is perhaps light on mid and endgame chops, in other words, ME) and allowing him to grow steadily until the time is ripe. This may seem like a patently obvious path to a solo, but that doesn't make it easy. If it were, there would have been twice the number of solos than there were.

Ultimately, Diplomacy is all about interaction with live people, and people rarely do what the "book" says they should do. In a tournament environment with a high percentage of inexperienced players, a lot of board play becomes a battle for the soul of those newer players. Newbies don't intuitively make the right moves or react to changing board dynamics, but they can be influenced to do so (we all can). I believe this is why uber-tacticians and some great PBEM players struggle on a board with a number of new players, and many complain of the injustice of having to play with less knowledgeable players (reminds me a little of Han Solo's famous quote, "Good against remotes is one thing, good against the living, that's something else.") In the past I have complained bitterly when other players have not done what I would consider the "right" thing, however, I am starting to learn that their poor play is not *their* failure, it's *mine*. While I can understand that playing on a board or in a tournament with many newer players may not necessarily be the most enjoyable for the experienced dipper, it is neither metaphysically bad nor good; it just "is." Deal with it.

Lesson Learned #3 – Travelling to a Diplomacy Tournament is a Damn Good Time!

You wouldn't necessarily equate intense concentration for hours on end and severe sleep deprivation to a good time, but playing in (and travelling to) Diplomacy tournaments is quickly becoming one of my favorite things to do. I remarked to several people upon my return, that when you can spend an entire weekend exclusively doing something that you love, with 50 or 60 people that are just as passionate as you are, you can't help but have a good time. You may not necessarily like the scoring system or the venue, but in the end you're playing a boardgame that you love, and you're meeting interesting people from (in some cases) all over the world who love it as well. Some people love golf, or skiing, or fishing, and I love all of those things too, but I can't wait until my next diplomacy tournament.

Hopefully we'll see you all in Chicago this September for Weasel Moot III.

I hope this article motivates you to get out and travel to a Diplomacy convention near you!

Goffy Slices Across America from Boston to Columbus: Jim-Bob meets the Australian Master

by Jim Burgess

Let's be clear about one thing up front. I only attended the first day of Boston Massacre (though I played three games, more on that in a minute) and did not attend World DipCon at Origins in Columbus. But I got to see Andrew Goff or Goffy come sailing into our hobby and as that experience ended I expected he would be the odds on favorite to win World DipCon. It always amazes me how American players don't do very well at basic research and self-analysis as they play in tournament games. Goffy instantly struck me as a player with all his senses on FIRE at Boston Massacre and he was holding back just a bit. All his attention was on winning World DipCon, and of course some luck of the draw (and perhaps other things) came into play, but I can say confidently from afar that he won World DipCon with his legitimate skill on the Diplomacy board.

Mel Call was her usual efficient self, but her laptop crapped out just as we were trying to get Round 1 started. Luckily I was on my way to my camp in Maine immediately following the two Saturday games, so I had my laptop in my car so I could check in on the Internet from there. And, of course, I had the records from TempleCon and all the software already loaded, so Mel could just add all the new players. This was most fortunate. I'm not sure what she did for Sunday, but she worked out something. Mel also hosted Goffy's visit. Unfortunately, we all thought Boston Massacre would be a good tune-up, but other than our locals who went, Goffy was the only out of town visitor on his way to World DipCon. I know my work schedule has been incredibly bad, but I think I need to start organizing some foreign trips for Americans. Most of my all time favorite Diplomacy conventions have come in Europe and I'd love to get to Sydney in 2011. Who knows, I might be able to make it happen.

Ah, but this is ABOUT our Melbournite, Goffy. I was all about supporting Mel in making the tournament work, so I quickly agreed to play two boards in Round 1 and got two just ducky draws. On Board 1, I drew Austria and the only even slightly inexperienced player was Max LeBlanc all the way over in England. My pals Carl Ellis (France) and Luke Dwyer (Germany) also were over there with Luke also playing two positions. Closer to me, Mel's pal Amanda McLean-Thomson was Italy, Charles Steinhardt was Russia, and Peter McNamara was Turkey. Let me tell the story of this game quickly. Charles and I tried to take out Peter, but Peter was appropriately slippery and Charles stabbed me JUST at the right/wrong time. I told Charles that he would regret this, and he did. Carl topped the board with 17 centers, and Charles and I tied on 1 as we worked with Luke, Peter, and Amanda to stop up Carl. It was a really

exciting back and forth game, but playing Austria while playing on two boards was just a little too tough. I think I could have called Charles off the stab or tried to balance things a bit better otherwise. But these were all good players playing at a very high level of play.

For playing two boards, this is something that takes some work and practice, but I find I can do it without appreciably risking misorders, except you definitely lose on the Diplomacy. It is really important to have people willing to do this to get games going and not push people to sit out. Most of the other people who played two positions selected one game to focus on and then just submitted orders for the other. I made serious attempts to play both games equally and think that is the ethical thing to do. You're sacrificing for the tournament, that's your job in my view. And that's what I'm here for, promoting the FTF hobby and getting people to meet each other and have fun. Our New England tournaments really DO succeed at accomplishing this, well, with that one exception that proves the rule.

Anyway, on my second board, here's where I met up with Goffy. I was Turkey to his Austria. Jon Hill was Russia. The vastly improving Scott Houser was Italy. The other side of the board (who I didn't get too much chance to deal with) was Alex Amann in England and newcomers Lionel Levine in France and Terri Ackerman in Germany. ALL of the novices in this tournament were highly engaged and really played well. I don't know why we have that experience in the New England tournaments but we really do. I can't think of anyone at TempleCon or Boston Massacre who was truly disruptive by being inexperienced. OK, so Goffy and I started out trying to joust with each other, and I toyed with a Juggernaut with Jon Hill. But I really DO hate Juggernauts, so when I told Goffy early on that I was ready to stab Jon, he did not believe me. He studied us very, very carefully for tips on how we were playing. I think I could have convinced Goffy that my stab of Jon was serious if I had had more time. Jon left me to Goffy's devices and the next thing happened that clued me in to Goffy's skills. Houser was bopping around seemingly with no point, moving an army around through Galicia. I thought it was just Houser being Houser, but NO, Houser had a deal with Goffy and put the nail in my coffin. Houser was playing like his fifth game ever FTF, and has only played a bit on phpdiplomacy on the Internet (which is not generally your best example of stellar play), but Goffy had how working wonderfully together. The three of them, Jon, Goffy and Houser took me all the way out and knocked the Western Triple down to a total of four centers. Goffy had 14 and I saw lesson #3. Goffy had a near sure win, especially if he stopped

feeding tactical moves to Houser, but they called a draw (essentially a three way though Detour doesn't work that way -- I still think Detour is the best, and was a type of system Goffy is used to). Why put a target on your back, Goffy had everything centered on winning World DipCon (he tells us that with his essay elsewhere in this issue, but it was not a secret, it was pretty obvious).

We then went to Round 2, and another shot for me at playing two positions. But I drew England twice and when we got Luke Dwyer to return, I gave up one of the England positions to him. Although I knew board 3 would be a great shot at a win, I gave that one to Luke (who did finish with 16 centers) to take on Peter McNamara again. Goffy was on Board 2, the other board, so I did see a bit less of what he was doing there. Anyway, in my Round 2, Board 1 game that I did keep, Peter was France, Chris Morse was Germany, Max LeBlanc was Italy, Ryan Smith was Russia, Mel played Turkey as TD, and Brendan Hickey was Austria. Brendan was really, really funny. He got Austria up to seven centers and then spent like three or four game years holding seven centers, but gaining and losing at least a center or two every season as he shifted back and forth. Brendan is going to be a star in this hobby. Chris Morse is one of my favorite people and I allied with him against Peter McNamara. Ryan and Brendan held down Mel's Turkey and then Brendan started going after Max, Mel, Ryan, and Chris in turn, moving from center to center to center. Meanwhile, Chris just wasn't quite

organized to take out someone as slippery as Peter, so I decided to ally with Peter so we could stop the East. Peter worked up to 10 and I got to 8, with Ryan at 7, and Brendan finally down to 6 when we ended it. This also was a really exceptionally fun game, very fluid, much of that due to Brendan's play.

So Goffy finished second overall at the Massacre, after playing a very cagey set of games. What a perfect lead-in to the next week's bigger success. I also need to offer my congratulations to Randy Lawrence-Hurt, who also is going to be New England organizer in the future, as he won Boston Massacre. We have HuskyCon (the third in the four-tournament Nor'easter) in a few weeks, and then finish up with Carnage in Vermont the first weekend in November. Then we will start again with TempleCon the first weekend in February again that I run. Start up a sequence of four tournaments in YOUR region, one in each quarter, with house games falling in between. Play drop-dead deadlines so the games MOVE along, and consider the Detour scoring system to promote some good dynamic play. Don't pay attention to all this controversy, just do it clean and right yourself. You won't regret it.

Jim Burgess is a fixture in the New England Diplomacy scene, and of course both the publisher of the often despairingly late The Abyssinian Prince and Co-Editor of Diplomacy World.

WDC 2009 Diplomacy Tournament Report

by Dan Mathias

The last time I hosted WDC was 1996, also at Origins in Columbus, Ohio. While Origins is not an inexpensive gaming convention, it offers game play in almost every genre of gaming. For WDC, The Origins Board Game Manager and I negotiated the sweetest deal of the entire convention. No other event at Origins had as good a deal as WDC. One Ribbon, with the same cost as all other ribbons, gave access to all WDC events and Board Room games. WDC events were scheduled from Wednesday evening through Sunday afternoon. The Board Room had a wide variety of different games available for check-out to play, and was located right next to the reserved WDC area.

In 20 years, this was the most volatile and contentious tournament I have ever run.

There were 4 rounds this year, instead of my usual 3, in deference to it being WDC. The additional Variant rounds were not well attended.

My format has no artificial externally imposed round endings, so players can play the game as the inventor intended. I start my rounds at 6 PM on Thursday,

Friday, and Saturday so there should not be any time constraints imposed by convention endings. Usually there is 24 hours between the start of each round, but with the addition of a 4th round there was only 15 hours between the start of the 2nd and 3rd rounds, and only 9 hours between the start of the 3rd and 4th rounds. This was caused because a 4th round was demanded during planning and the idea of a Wednesday round was rejected, meaning a Saturday morning round had to be added. This proved to be a mistake. Usually games end in 5 to 7 hours. Occasionally one game might last 9 or 10 hours. This tournament had several games that lasted far longer than usual. One game lasted 14 hours! One game in round 3 lasted past the posted start time for round 4!

My practice for each round has always been to get even multiples of 7. If there is not an even multiple of 7 at start-time, then I ask for volunteers to step out or seek additional players to get to 7 for the last board being filled. If these methods fail, then the last to check-in are dropped. For WDC, I did not wish to force any players out, so I opted to try to recruit players to achieve multiples of 7 unless someone volunteered to step out.

Since many players showed up late, my job getting each round started on time was further hampered.

Once I had even multiples of 7, I used the registration cards to randomize the boards. The main time delay starting each round was due to players showing up late and getting even multiples of 7, not the actual board set-ups.

Several players tried to circumvent the tournament format regarding secret balloting for game-ending votes. Some players seemed to wish to play on tournament formats and embroil GM involvement in their game play, and even attempt to manipulate the GM to achieve their ends.

In spite of these unpleasant occurrences, most players seemed to have a good time and a good tournament. Several new players were introduced to the game and face-to-face tournament play. There were 23 boards played over 4 rounds.

Andrew Goff from Victoria, Australia, was the overall winner of WDC 2009, with 3 wins in 4 rounds. Dan Lester from London, UK, came in second with 2 wins and two 3-way draws in 4 rounds. Jim O'Kelley from Illinois came in 3rd with a win and a 3-way draw. Adam Sigal from New York came in 4th with a win and a 4-way draw.

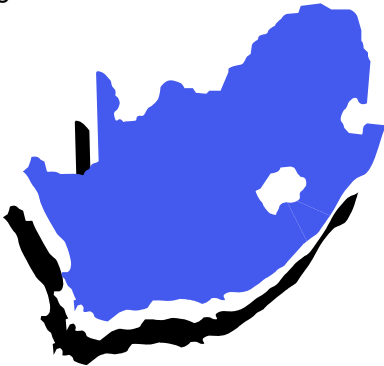
Dan Mathias was the Tournament Director for World DipCon 2009.

World DipCon 2009 Result Summary			
Best Austria	Andrew Goff		
Best England	Adam Sigal		
Best France	Dan Lester		
Best Germany	Jim O'Kelley		
Best Italy	Dan Lester		
Best Russia	Jeremiah Peterson		
Best Turkey	Conrad Woodring		
Golden Blade	Chris Mazza		
Hammered	Michael Schnebly		
First Death - Rnd 1	First Death - Rnd 2	First Death - Rnd 3	First Death - Rnd 4
Brian Ecton	Peter Rohn	Adam Sigal	Michael Schnebly
Favorite Player	Dan Lester		
Death w/ Dignity	David Leary		
Death w/ Dignity	Elizabeth Boudreaux		
Variant: One-on-One	Dan Lester		
Outstanding Novice	John Dextraze		
Team Tournament Winners	Mark Washington	Andy Bartalone	Dan Lester
#Players:	55		
#Boards:	23		
1st	Goff, Andrew		
2nd	Lester, Dan		
3rd	O'Kelly, Jim		
4th	Sigal, Adam		
5th	Birsan, Edi		
6th	Woodring, Conrad		
7th	MacDonald, Christian		
8th	Colman, Sean		
9th	Binder, Michael		

The Diplomacy World Cup – A South African Perspective

By Dorian Love

I first discovered Internet Diplomacy at around the turn of the millennium, having played some twenty years earlier face-to-face at University. One of the first thoughts that struck me was how easy the Internet would make the staging of a World Championships, indeed a World Cup similar to the ones staged by soccer, rugby, or cricket! Whereas the face to face game is difficult to organize at the best of times, and very few can afford to travel to a World Championships in the real world, the virtual world is different. Large tournaments are relatively easy and cheap to run. A World Cup of Diplomacy should be fairly simple to organize.



I imagined that such a tournament must exist, in which teams from the USA, Great Britain, France, Sweden, etc contested for the title of best Diplomacy nation online. It seemed to me that such an obviously desirable thing must have been staged. I was anxious to promote the hobby in South Africa, and anxious to use such a tournament as an incentive. South Africans are sports mad, and our mind-set is very much towards the test match, the international. Our wargamers had been instrumental in setting up the International Wargames Federation, and in getting government recognition for wargames as an official sport. There have been numerous test matches between nations, and the players have been awarded official Protea colors just like our cricketers and soccer players. Incidentally this recognition of wargames means that Diplomacy is seen as a sport in South Africa, and falls under the control of Mind Sports South Africa and the National Sporting Federation.

I raised the idea of a World Cup with a few players. Was there such a thing? I was greatly surprised by the negativity of the response. It almost seemed as if the question was somehow obscene, as if it contravened the very rules of Diplomacy itself. I was repeatedly told that nationality was irrelevant, that the whole point of Internet Diplomacy was that an American could play with a Frenchman, etc. Now, of course, I am sensitive to this. It is truly wonderful that one can pick up a game in which people from different parts of the globe routinely play against each other. Being South African, and with a

relative paucity of opportunity to play locally, the Internet was my major fix! However, it seemed to me that the ultimate expression of this internationalism would be something like a World Cup of Diplomacy. Nevertheless, stung by the response to my enquiry, I kept the idea to myself for a number of years.

Eventually, however, I did raise the issue again, on the DipWorld (<http://www.diplomacy.ws/index.asp>) forum, and the discussion this time, though equally adversarial did address the idea seriously. The group seemed to feel that "Clan" tournaments were a more valid expression of "nationality". The debate about clans wasn't what I had in mind. I think it is a great idea to have tournaments, even a tournament circuit, in which teams have continuity to them. South Africans have entered a number of tournaments under the banner of our team, The Diplomatic Corpse, which represents the South African hobby portal:

(<http://www.embassysa.co.za/index.php>)

most recently in the Wonderful Mansions tournament, for example. But I wanted to see a team called South Africa, whether given official recognition or not, compete against teams called The USA or Australia!

I was emboldened by the level of engagement on DipWorld and drew up a possible Charter for a World Cup

(<http://www.embassysa.co.za/worldcup/worldcup.php>)

setting out some ideas about what a World Cup Tournament would look like and how it might be organized. The Charter sets out a body called the **World Cup Council (WCC)** responsible basically for safeguarding the ideal of the tournament, overseeing continuity, and accepting bids from host sites wanting to host the World Cup. The winning bid host would then be responsible for running the World Cup, and then two years later, another host, or the same one, would stage another event. I felt that this framework would give the necessary flexibility and division of powers. The idea would work if a bid was made to host such a tournament, and if the tournaments themselves were a success.

In late 2005, I set up a yahoo group:

(<http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/DiplomacyWorldCup/>)

to discuss the idea and promptly invited everyone I knew to join the forum and explore the notion of running a World Cup tournament online. Opinion was greatly

divided with some lively debate as I recall. If memory serves the biggest issue was how to handle the whole idea of nationality and the obvious contradictions this would entail. If an American lived in Spain, could he represent both countries? Was Scotland a nation? If Scotland was declared a national entity, why not Texas? If America had the largest number of players, how would we handle the fact that an American team should easily be able to beat one from Albania?

All these were legitimate concerns and the discussions were sometimes heated. Especially when Scotland was mentioned! My own feeling was that none of these issues posed insurmountable barriers. After all, all sporting codes face similar debates. In some codes Scotland is a separate nation, in others the Scots form part of a wider British team. In some sports players have represented more than one country at different times of their life, e.g. Sergey Bubka, who has represented both the Soviet Union and Ukraine in the pole vault, or Graham Hick who has played cricket for both Zimbabwe and England! And Albania is no more competitive at soccer than it might be at Diplomacy, but that has never stopped anyone. One of the main reasons for taking part is to raise the skills of the players.

The WCC would simply listen to debate and make a ruling on each issue. Over time each decision would aggregate into a set of rules, a philosophy that would set Diplomacy apart from how they do it in Chess or Soccer. At times, however, the debate was so heated it threatened the very idea of the tournament itself. Nevertheless, key to the success of the idea was the bid, and when Jeremie Lefrancois decided to launch a bid for his Stabbeurfou (<http://www.stabbeurfou.org>) site to host what became the Diplomacy National World Cup tournament, it was clear that the thing would work. Jeremie's tireless energy and commitment made the tournament a success, and one cannot congratulate him enough for this! There were some issues, and I did not agree with all the decisions, for example to exclude Scotland, but it was a considerable joy to me to see the event actually take place after so many years of planning for it.

My role then changed to one of getting a South African team to participate in the inaugural tournament. It jolly nearly didn't happen, and having fought so hard to get the tournament up and running it would have been a bitter pill to swallow for me if South Africa had not entered a team. There were a number of factors militating against a team entry.

Firstly was a general apathy which had set in. My real life was making such demands that I could not effectively organize face to face games anymore, and online games on the portal had slowed to a trickle. I was quite simply getting sick of being the only person to organize games and GM them. I wanted someone else to take up the slack. My work commitments were escalating too, and

indeed the last two years have seen me have to take a decided back-seat. As I tried to get the South African team together, player after player declined because of this or that commitment. I had to pull out all the stops to get seven players together, and included a number of youngsters in the team, who themselves had no Internet access except from school.

The other major obstacle was in the form of looming government legislation in South Africa aimed at preventing racism in sport. In some sports, teams were engaging in international competitions which were not racially mixed. In an effort to curb these activities, the government was in the process of introducing tough new laws which made it illegal for a South African to participate in any sport involving foreign participation without the permission of their sporting code, and the national sports federation. Potentially it meant that no South African could even play a game online (given that Diplomacy was a recognized sport) without governmental permission when such a game meant playing against "foreigners". No one was sure whether the law would be enforced, and whether it even applied to online gaming – that would have to wait for bureaucratic interpretation, and probably a test court case. Given that contravention of the act entailed a stiff fine or prison sentence, no-one was particularly keen to become a test case.

Mind Sports South Africa was of the view that online games were covered by the act, and it advised all members to comply. I asked MSSA to give blanket permission for non-representative (i.e. Social games), but I think that MSSA erred on the side of caution, and was not keen to give any ruling, clearly, which might implicate it in the eyes of the government. It was against this back-drop that we tried to organize Team South Africa for the inaugural World Cup, and I suppose the response was good given that we might well have faced sanctions had the act passed before the tournament started, which it looked likely to do at the time.

When the team eventually did start playing it did so locally as The Diplomatic Corpse rather than South Africa to avoid any imputation that we represented the country in any way. In the event, the youngsters on the team did not excel and had to be replaced when the three students from St Enda's Wargames Club failed to secure a reliable Internet connection. The team was lucky to finish in 23rd position. Nevertheless, I was pleased that we had fielded a team, that we had been part of the first World Cup, and that the players had benefitted in whatever way. I enjoyed my game tremendously, and that, at the end of the day, is the main thing!

[[Dorian remains a central figure in the South African Diplomacy hobby, and is always a welcome contributor to DW!]]

Before the Great War - Balkans 1860 (Revision 1)

By Benjamin Hester

Because every self-serving variant pitch deserves another, dear DW readers, I present you with my latest creation - the Balkans 1860 variant. For those that have longed for an Austria position that isn't burdened by 20-1 against odds, dreamed of leading the Greek rebellion against Ottoman domination, or yearned to try their hand as Garibaldi leading the Italian unification, the long-awaited hour is at hand. In Balkans1860, I invite the seasoned marshals of the WWI map to try their hand at changing the course of history and stabilizing the Balkans before WWI unfolds.

Balkans 1860 is a historical snapshot variant of southeastern Europe, roughly as it appeared in 1860. There are a few slight anomalies from any exact period in history, but then again, most such variants do have a few of these for the sake of game play, and this one is no exception. I will spare you the laborious task of reading them all here; suffice it to say, I have done my best to reflect history accurately while creating a balanced and playable variant. The map, rules, Realpolitik files, and all other documentation needed to play can be found at:

<http://www.geocities.com/nairenvorbeck/files>

The player positions are Italy, Austria-Hungary, Serbia, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, and the Ottoman Empire. The war begins in Spring of 1860. Some slight concessions are made to game play considerations here - the map actually represents a 10 year spread between 1860 through 1870. The game begins with Spring 1860, and 18 SC's are needed for a solo victory just as in Standard.

Which brings us to an overview of the belligerents...

The snapshot of Italy in this variant is intended to capture the spirit of its formative stage, as Giuseppe Garibaldi led armies through the peninsula, occasionally restrained by the political considerations and edicts from Torino. Accordingly, Torino, Firenze, and Napoli are the starting Italian SCs, while the key centers of Roma, Venezia, and Palermo are vacant SCs, representing key hold outs that were not yet integrated into the Italian state (refer to the disclaimer above regarding the start year of the variant)

While they possess a beautiful edge position on this map (negating the historical influence of France and Spain), Italy nonetheless faces significant early threats from Austria-Hungary, Greece, and possibly Serbia in this variant. By design, both Austria-Hungary and Greece have the potential to contest Italy for SCs within their sphere of influence - Venezia and Palermo, respectively. Greece can even choose to force their way into Palermo

in the first year if sufficient forces are dedicated to the effort, and Austria-Hungary can often seize superior positioning in the second year against Venezia if F Trieste moves out to the Gulf of Venezia. So Italian players must typically chose to negotiate a settlement on one of these fronts, and focus their attacks on the other - all the while maintaining a defense at home, as their peninsula is particularly vulnerable to invasion by convoys. An alliance of both Greece and Austria-Hungary to partition Italy is a particularly lethal combination, and sends the Italian scurrying over to the Serbian embassy for assistance.

In Balkans1860, Austria-Hungary is no longer the underdog position players loathe to play. Here, AH is a contender from the start, although they retain vulnerabilities on several fronts that Standard Diplomacy players will find familiar. AH's attentions in the first two game years are typically directed towards Italy and Serbia, her closest neighbors. Both have the potential of reaching AH home SCs in the first year, and an alliance of the two can lead to an early elimination for the AH player. Careful diplomacy is needed to ensure that never comes to pass. And should the AH player navigate those stormy seas, they often find a Romanian ready to kick in their door from the east by the second or third year. But take heart - AH has ample growth opportunities, as Agram can be guaranteed against all but the most coordinated Italian/Serbian attacks, and Salzburg is also likely to fall under their sway. In rare circumstances, Kolosvar or Venezia can be captured, but such open aggression is not often rewarded, and such gains come at the expense of a defensible core position. Far better for AH to negotiate a stable alliance with one or two of Italy, Serbia, and Romania and focus their growth in that direction. Of all positions in Balkans1860, AH rewards the alliance player.

Serbia is reminiscent of Austria-Hungary in Standard Diplomacy in that they are vulnerable on almost all fronts, but begin the game in a veritable minefield of SCs as compensation. With sufficient negotiation, a three SC gain in the first year is not uncommon, but does require the Serb to tip his hand against either the Italians or the Greeks to find a new haven for F Cetinje. It is also not uncommon for the Serbs to come into direct contact with every player on the map in the first year, excluding only the Ottomans and maybe Italy, though in the latter case the two surely have much to discuss in negotiations. Accordingly, the Serbs typically opt to expand slowly in all directions (Sarajevo to the west and Nis to the east) as they gauge the intentions of their rivals. Often, using F Cetinje to support a potential ally yields a higher payoff over the long term than a direct assault on Agram or Tirana; it is usually not in the Serbs' best interests to see any one power dominate the seas.

Greece, like Italy, is displayed in its formative stages in Balkans1860. Here we see the rebellion of Kalamata, after it has spread north to Athens and Larisa. The Greek player is then faced with a choice to continue down the historical path and seize Salonika and Heraklion from the Ottoman domains, or perhaps turn west instead and claim Palermo as the start of an Italian invasion. North is also an option, and rich spoils await at Serb or Bulgarian expense, though I would counsel against neglecting both the Ottomans and the Italians for very long. Of all the positions, Greece is the most likely to find her fortunes at sea, and should consider building a heavy concentration of fleets accordingly.



Some special attention should be paid to the territory of Athens. It functions very similar to Kiel in Standard, in that I have included the Corinth Canal in this variant (somewhat anachronistically by about 30 years). For example, this means that a fleet could sequentially move from the Saronic Gulf to Athens to the Gulf of Taranto, and an army could likewise move from Agrinio to Athens to Patrai.

Now, we turn our attentions to Romania, another edge position powerhouse of the variant. Romania is alone on the map insofar as *none* of their potential gains in the first year can truly be guaranteed. That said, at the very least, Kolosvar usually falls under their sway in the first year, and Sevastopol is not uncommon either. From a strategic perspective, Romania is one of the three players involved in the Black Sea fight, and is typically the player most interested in dominating that region, as two of their home SCs lie along the coast. This leads a Romanian player into an alliance with either the Ottomans or Bulgaria against the third party (and fervent efforts to ensure that they are not the third party.) Meanwhile, the majority of their spoils are to be found overland, and all three of AH, Serbia, and Bulgaria are valid targets, though Serbia is often spared due to Romanian fears of becoming sandwiched between AH and Bulgarian holdings.

And speaking of Bulgaria, we arrive at the most diplomatically intensive position on the map. It is imperative for Bulgaria to form an early alliance and

overpower either Romania or the Ottomans as they attempt to fight their way to a corner position on the map. Early wars with Serbia or Greece are highly unadvisable, though some squabbling over borders with both is almost inevitable. A Serb/Bulgarian/Greek triple is a potent alliance combination, similar to the Central Powers pact in Standard. A wise Bulgarian player would be careful not to reveal those intentions early however, as that would almost certainly prompt an Ottoman/Romanian counter-alliance that can be fatal. Despite their vulnerabilities, the Bulgarians have rich prospects available both to the north and south if they are capable of forging the right alliances needed to exploit their enemies.

Finally, we arrive in the Ottoman Empire, which shares a similar situation with Turkey in Standard. The Ottomans enjoy a very secure corner position, but extremely limited early growth opportunities. Salonika is the only guaranteed gain, though it is advisable to occupy with A Ankara if possible to retain options against either Bulgaria or Greece. Heraklion is a tempting target, but cannot be forcibly taken from the Greeks if both F Kal and F Ath are dedicated to the task. Viable alliance options are available with both Greece and Bulgaria, and to an extent Romania as well, though this route is usually an act of desperation against Greek/Bulgarian attack. Achieving dominance in the Black Sea is desirable, though it can be just as effective to play off Bulgaria and Romania against one another indefinitely while rebuilding the Ottoman Mediterranean empire.

Istanbul is another unique territory deserving special mention. It's not quite like Constantinople in Standard, in that the Sea of Marmara is a separate sea zone. Istanbul remains one single territory however, and an army could move from Ankara to Istanbul to Edirne sequentially. Likewise, a fleet in Bosphorus could move to Sea of Marmara and then the Thermaic Gulf sequentially. Basically - if it looks like it borders on the map, it does :-)

So I hope that this brief overview has whetted some appetites for a game, and that you enjoy the experience. Every effort is being made to ensure Balkans1860 provides a balanced game with multiple alliance options for every position. Please note that this variant is still undergoing play test and may be tweaked further to improve balance and game play - thoughts, comments, and independent play tests are welcome to that end. If interested in playing or running a game of Balkans1860, please contact me at nairenvorbeck@yahoo.com.

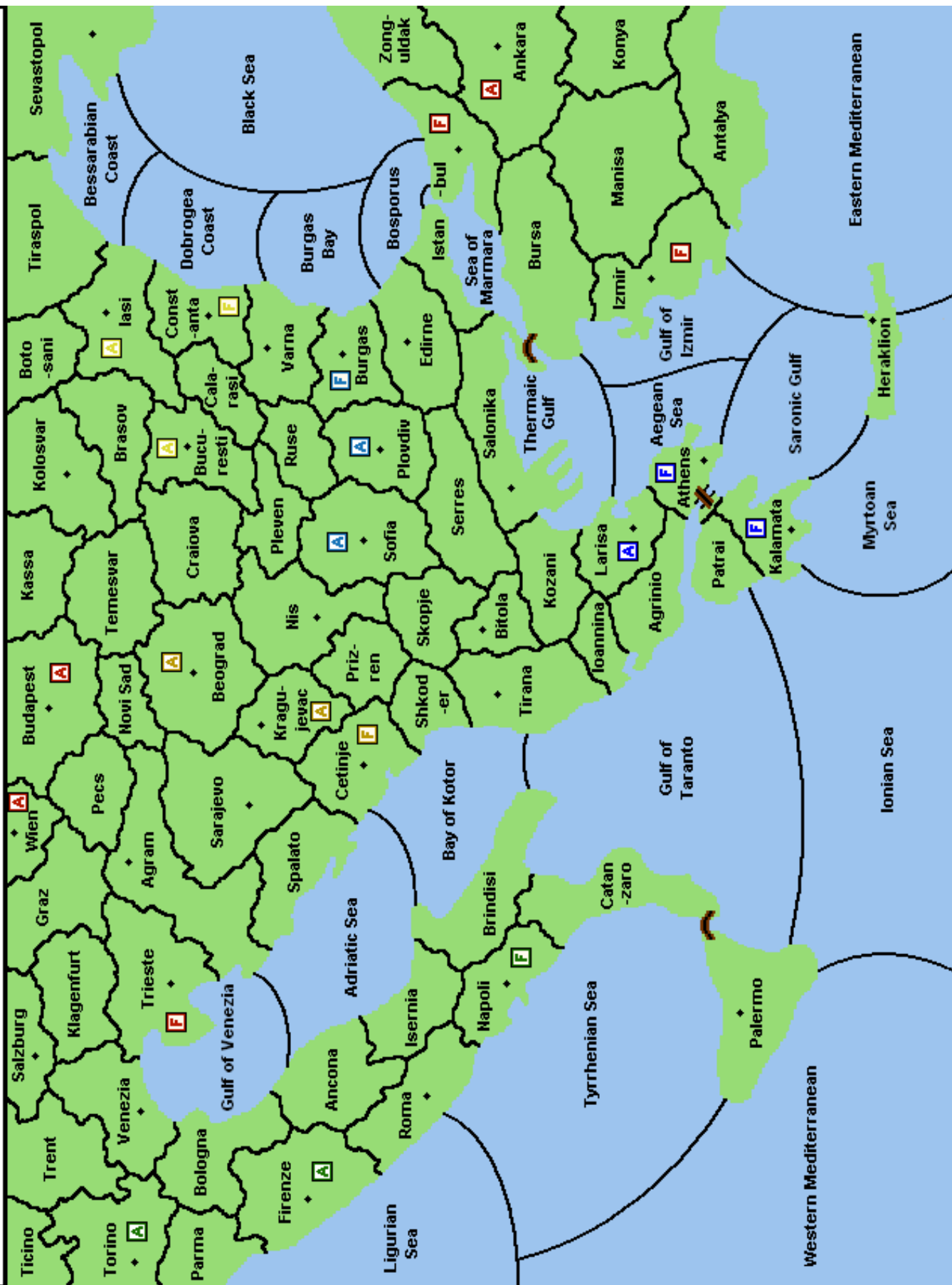
Benjamin Hester is the Diplomacy Variant Workshop (DVWorkshop-subscribe@yahoogroups.com) list owner, and designer of the Sengoku, South American Supremacy, Dark Ages, Balkans 1860, and Exodus Diplomacy variants.

BALKANS 1860

AUSTRIA - A WIEN, A BUDAPEST, F TRIESTE
BULGARIA - A SOFIA, A PLOVDIV, F BURGAS
GREECE - F ATHENS, A LARISA, F PATRAI

ITALY - A MILANO, A FIRENZE, F NAPOLI

ROMANIA - A BUCURESTI, A IASI, F CONSTANTA
SERBIA - A BEOGRAD, A KRAGUEVAC, F CETINJE
TURKEY - A ANKARA, F ISTANBUL, F IZMIR



MYSTERIOUS FORTY-NINE TOURNAMENT

Stabbeurfou.org 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 and the Mansion tournament.

NAME OF TOURNAMENT The tournament is named "Mysterious Forty-nine", as it is a social experience on the internet for which the Diplomacy games will serve as an excuse. Mysterious Forty-nine uses the same support (stabbeurfou.org) than the Diplomacy National World Cup and Wonderful Mansion but is completely different in two aspects: it is purely individual, and players hide their identities (but do negotiate). Since the rule covers face to face, and since you know who you are playing with in face to face (unless you start wearing masks), this can be considered as a variant.

TIME AND ADVANCEMENT The tournament will have two simultaneous rounds, all played between September 2009 and June 2010. Both rounds will have exactly seven boards. Every player will play at the same time a game in both rounds (round = set of boards). Overall score is best score added to half of other score (since every player is in two games).

REGISTRATION AND TECHNOLOGY Players have an account that they must have created themselves (a quick operation). Orders are submitted on site and checked (there cannot be mis-orders), and a password is required to enter the orders. Adjudications are performed by system at 23h59 GMT. Players have access to all usual site facilities. All game maps and all tournament rating will be available to anyone (on the stabbeurfou.org site). Dynamic information is also available about games on the site, typically the reason why the deadline has just been postponed. Organization may select players (main criterion will be reliability).

SCORING SYSTEM The scoring system will award 100 points for a solo, and none for the others. Other configuration will abide the "Manorcon square" system: $c^2 + 4c + 16$ normalized such as Σ scores = 100 (but no 0.1 bonus for late survival for technical reasons).

TEAMS This is a pure individual tournament. No team consideration will apply. No player in more than one game. Replacement players will be taken from a waiting list (that may include eliminated players.)

GAMES Game style - This is standard negotiations play (this is no gunboat). Negotiations use the site. Players have at least (usually more) three full days for negotiations before moves and one before retreats and adjustments. Players may require extensions.

* Complaints - Complaints about private message 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 message 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 - (a) 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.
(b) So finding out who plays what and where will be part of this new experience. Pretending to be any other player as well.
(c) Overall list of all players involved somewhere in the tournament will still be available, without any clue on who plays where.
(d) Players will be referenced to as « Russia of game Lynette » without knowing who this is in the ratings.
(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 - 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. Awards are : **Boulangier** - the nicest **Napoléon** - best strategist and tactician **Machiavelli** - most devious **Balzac** - most prolific correspondent. An informal award may be attributed to the player who guessed the most identities of other players (to be confirmed). Rewards - The winner be rewarded a game from Hasbro company (Diplomacy, Axis & Allies, or a futurist Risk).

PRESS Press is information made public by players on the site on a special page (one per game). Players may issue press using their account.

In this tournament, all press is anonymous, except press from Game Masters, since identities are hidden.

CROSS GAMING

Cross gaming is not forbidden, but every effort will be made to discourage it (but it will never be sanctioned). Every player meets $2 \times (7-1) = 12$ different players out of the 48 other players (that is 25% of the other players).

SPECIAL FEATURES

- A specific mailing list will be set as a very convenient way to provide last minute information to all players.
- A specific FAQ for the tournament is available on the site and will be enriched until the actual beginning of the event.

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

A Quick Look at the Build Anywhere Variant

By Joshua Danker-Dake

In the Build Anywhere variant, you start with the units you choose, and you can build in any unoccupied center you control, not just your home centers. Optionally, dislodged units are automatically disbanded. These simple changes significantly alter the dynamics of Diplomacy, but not the mechanics or the great foundation of the game. And Build Anywhere works well with both standard and gunboat Diplomacy.

Build Anywhere shifts the game's balance of power, both in the opening and in the endgame. Turkey and England, for example, are often hampered in standard Diplomacy mid- and endgames because it takes a prohibitive amount of time for them to move new units to distant fronts. Here, this disadvantage is eliminated, benefiting these nations significantly. Additionally, the default builds have certain checks and balances built in; these are now out. So what strengths and weaknesses have been created or eliminated? Let's take a look, country by country.

Russia

Russia will typically choose to build the usual units in the south, but substitute A STP or F STP/NC for STP/SC. This removes Russia's built-in handicap and enables him to get into NWY in Spring of 1901. If he also opens MOS-STP, he is sure to hold it against a supported English attack. This northern approach to Scandinavia is great for Russia – it is also pro-Germany and anti-England, as it takes away England's best chance at a build and all but concedes Sweden to Germany. This is something to think about. On the surface, taking NWY and gaining a supply center is preferable to bouncing with Germany in SWE. But down the road, will Russia be happier with a German presence in Sweden than he is with an English fleet in Norway? That will depend on Russia's negotiations and long-term plans.

Germany

If Russia goes north, Germany almost certainly gets Sweden, unless Russia tries to bounce him from NWY, whereby Russia risks being dislodged by a supported English attack. The default builds here are fine – F KIE is generally more flexible than A KIE. Beginning with a second fleet in BER virtually guarantees SWE and DEN, but invites France to overstep his bounds immediately.

England

England may build three fleets, and good for him. England has a hard enough time making real progress in the east in standard Diplomacy, but it's even more difficult in Build Anywhere. If Russia builds F STP/NC, it's just stupid for England to try to fight for Norway. England's better off forgetting about Scandinavia for the time being; it's more productive for him to establish a

presence on the continent. In that case, A LVP is probably a better option, although three fleets can work if England can get the Channel immediately – then he can support F LVP IRI-MAO in Fall 1901.

France

The default builds work well for France; F MAR is another option. F MAR may agitate Italy prematurely, although there still isn't a whole lot France can do to him early on. F MAR also means there's only one army to keep the Hun at bay in 1901, and Germany might be tempted beyond what he can bear.

Austria

Austria benefits most early on by this variant's rule changes. He will be tempted to build three armies, then try to rampage across the Balkans as quickly as possible – this is probably his best move, as A TRI is significantly more flexible than F TRI. Austria can take SER, move against GAL, and still make a supported attack on RUM no matter what happens. Build Anywhere also means Austria could eventually build fleets on the Black Sea, giving him even more devastating potential against Russia and Turkey.

Italy

F ROM is a commonly-seen opening build – Fleet Rome is a variant of its own, after all. But I'm still enamored with the Bohemian Crusher, and I prefer Italy's default builds.

Turkey

Turkey is fine with the default builds, but there's a more exciting option: three fleets. With fleets in CON and ANK, Turkey is guaranteed the Black Sea. Three fleets give Turkey a stronger immediate influence on BLA, RUM, BUL and GRE than the default two armies, which can have a tendency to get backed up en route to the Balkans. Alternatively, Fleets in CON and ANK with A SMY opening to ARM gives Turkey that supported attack on SEV while allowing him to also pick up BUL. Three fleets give Turkey the best possible 1901. The great thing about Build Anywhere is that later, when you don't need so many fleets, you can just swap them out.

On the whole, Russia and Austria benefit most in the short run, England and Turkey in the long run, and Austria probably most overall. In short, Build Anywhere makes a nice change from standard Diplomacy because gives the game a substantially different flavor without being gimmicky.

It's always nice to have another article from Joshua. He's become quite reliable, and a welcome contributor!

One Man's (Eleventh) Trip to WDC

By Don Del Grande

Back in 2007, in Vancouver, a bunch of us got together and decided that it might be a good idea to have the 2009 World Dip Con (or is it World DipCon - I don't think anybody has ever come up with an "official" spelling, especially as we just call it WDC) at Origins in Columbus. I am not exactly a stranger to Origins; this would be my sixteenth or so time, and my seventh since it was moved permanently (for now) to Columbus in 1996, which is also the only other time Origins hosted WDC.

For those of you who don't know what Origins is, it was created in 1975 as, for lack of a better term, the "national gaming convention", although the first few tended to concentrate on wargaming, miniatures, and role-playing.

Columbus holds Origins at its convention center, which is directly connected to two hotels and has other hotels connected to it via enclosed walkways over the street levels. In the past, it was mainly a business district, so there wasn't that much nightlife, but a few years ago, Nationwide Arena (where the city's NHL team plays) was built, and the "Arena District" has been built up since then.

But enough about the site - I'm sure you are more interested in the gaming. For me, this started one day early, as I was in the Fluxx National Championship event. Fluxx is a card game released by Looney Labs (named for its head honcho and the creator of Fluxx, Andy Looney) with a simple set of rules; deal three cards to everyone, then each player draws a card and plays a card until someone wins. I would tell you more, but at the start of the game, those are the only rules - and no, I did not forget to mention how to win. (There are five types of cards; "keepers", which are "things" (for example, "Chocolate", "Toaster", and "The Sun"); "goals", which describe the victory conditions ("Toast" - if you have the Toaster keeper card and the Bread keeper card, you win (toaster + bread = toast)); "rules", which let some of the rules be changed ("Play 3" (play 3 cards in your turn instead of one); "Double Agenda" (there can be two Goals active at once)); "Actions", which are like Rules but they are used once and then discarded ("Jackpot" (draw 3 extra cards); "Take Another Turn"); and one recently added to the game, Creepers, which are like Keepers except you have to play them when you receive them and, usually, you cannot win if you have one. In addition to the original game, there are now ecological, zombie, and Monty Python versions, with a Martian version in the works. (There is also a "stoner" version, but it is not published by the same company.)

Anyway, about the event, it was planned to be a 2-hour round, but it was structured to allow everybody to play two games with winners advancing to a single

elimination round, and the first two games took 45 minutes each in some cases. This would not be the only event where scheduling would have an effect on things. (In subsequent rounds, there was a 30-minute time limit enforced, even if it meant that everybody lost a game.) This is probably the game's largest problem; depending on the deal, a game can last 45 minutes, or 45 seconds.



Okay, who said, "Get to the Dip!"? The way the tournament was set up, the rounds would be played Thursday night, Friday night, Saturday morning, and Saturday night. Round 1 had 42 players - well, it did when one of the 43 players who showed up was excused. I show up in my Buzzkill T-shirt (a reference to Nothing But Nets, a charity that sends mosquito nets treated with insecticide to areas heavily infected with malaria - "buzz kill"). I was England with (and I apologize for some of these spellings) Dave Maletsky (Austria), Steve Cooley (France), Nate Cockerill (Germany), Dave Leary (Italy), Nicholas Rohn (Russia), and Christian MacDonald (Turkey). I don't consider England to be one of my stronger countries, so I forego my usual "sit around and let things happen" strategy and go right after Russia. This is usually when France and Germany

would team up and have somebody in London in 1902, but strangely enough, they were leaving me alone. I managed to get up to 7 centers, while Cooley was pretty much taking charge on the mainland against what may or may not have been an AT. Eventually, a four-way draw was proposed, but Maletsky decided he didn't want part of it and it was changed to an EFT. Dan came over for the draw vote (one player had been eliminated, so there were six of us involved); we dropped our pieces into the box. I for one heard six pieces fall in, but Dan informed us that there were only five pieces in the box... Eventually, another vote was taken, and the draw passed - my first result better than a four-way in the 11 WDCs I had attended up to that point. (At the awards, Edi Birsan mistakenly claimed that it was my best tournament result ever, although it was the first time since 1984 that I was in a three-way draw.) There were reports of people dancing in the streets that day. (In fact, I headed back to my hotel room to watch what was supposed to be a Larry King Live tribute to Farrah Fawcett, who died that morning. Little did I know...)



Somebody decided to hold the second round at the same time as the annual Smithee Awards, so I skipped that round. (The Smithee Awards is sort of like the Golden Raspberry ("Razzie") awards, but these are for seriously bad films.) You would think that such a "special event" would have its correct starting time in the program, wouldn't you? Meanwhile, at the Dip, Dan wasn't kidding when he said that there would be no time

limit, as one game ran over 14 hours. (Dave Leary won the tournament "death with dignity" award for being eliminated in 1915.)

I'll use this gap to describe the scoring system; it is a combination of "divide and conquer" and a result-based bonus. First, 100 points are divided among the players in proportion to "(modified average supply centers) squared plus game years played" ("modified" by giving each country a 1900 count for balance - 6 for Italy, 5 for England and Russia, and 4 for the others). Then, in a solo, the winner gets 220 points and the others lose (yes, lose) 5 points each; in a draw, the players in the draw get 100 (2-way), 50 (3-way), 25 (4-way), or 12.5 (5-way), with the other survivors getting 1 point extra. (There are no draw points for a 6-way or 7-way.)

In fact, there was a time limit of sorts for round 3; if any game was in progress at 6 PM, anyone in that game would not be allowed to be in round 4 that night. As round 3 was also the team round, this pretty much forced games to run faster in order to make sure they got results in time. (Speaking of the team round, I didn't know I was on a team until one of the Australian players informed me that he had put me on his team and I was expected to do well...) I drew France in a game where five of us had played England in a previous round, and the world returned to normal, as I was eliminated by an EGI in 1905. After I was eliminated, I asked the Italian player, John Dextraze, how long he had been playing the game, as he had left some units unordered in a previous turn because he felt he didn't have enough time to work all of the orders out; he told me he learned the game the previous day (at one of Edi's teaching sessions), and that he was worried that we were going to chew him out because of his novice play. I explained that every novice has problems (for example, when I first started playing, I didn't know units could mutually support each other), and suggested that in order to save time when writing orders, he should write down his units at the start of the turn rather than at the start of the order writing period. (He ended up winning the tournament's novice award.)

In the end, 55 people had played, including two from Canada and Australia, and one from the UK and France. For the record, the award for Turkey was called "Best Turkey" (as I like to say, if anybody asks, tell them somebody else won Best Pastrami, and the less said about Best Meatball Sub, the better - I was a little surprised nobody suggested it to go the Subway in the food court).

Don Del Grande is obviously a long-time fixture in the Diplomacy hobby, both face-to-face and postal. So show him some respect, damn it!

Further Adventures With Dippy Queens

By Queen Suzanne

As we recently rode in our royal chariot to Cleve-to-the-Land, we were flooded and overcome with memories of a long-ago kidnapping by the at-that-time Prince Consort, Waldo of Lee-Ban-on-in-the-Hinterlands. At that time, in that long-long Queendom, Queen Suzanne and her Prince Consort resided in their castle on Hazel-Rigged-the Road, along with young Prince William.

Prince Consort Waldo was engaged in secret diplomatic negotiations, which (said he) necessitated a trip to Youngish-Town, located in the far-off country of O-hee-hee-O. Needing his Queen's permission to leave the Queendom, Prince Consort Waldo slyly approached Her Majesty (me) describing a wondrous and glorious journey to the land of O-hee-hee-O, where Her Majesty (still me) would be waited upon hand and foot - and her every wish would be granted. Pshaw!

[For those of you who may have inadvertently missed our stirring report in the last issue of Diplomacy World, we invented the above term to show our contempt and/or disdain ("pshaw") and our extreme boredom ("yawn").]



We are no fool. We immediately saw through the Prince Consort's opening gambit. The Prince Consort wanted us to accompany him to this strange new land, thinking that our beauty and radiance would distract the dwellers therein from his evil and dastardly backstabbing negotiations.

And so we put down our dainty and delicate foot in no uncertain terms. There was no negotiation allowed. Queen Suzanne would not set her royal foot in that strange land of O-hee-hee-O.

Imagine, if you will, our royal surprise upon waking up in an ordinary red Wagon of the Folk, bound for this distant province. The Prince Consort, along with some of his allies in the secret diplomatic negotiations, had kidnapped our royal personage!

The Allies of the Prince Consort had secretly packed up the Queen's baggage, along with all the requisite paraphernalia for Baby Prince William, and then they had the audacity to drug Her Majesty (me again) and throw her and young Prince William in the Wagon of the Folk in the middle of the night. (One wonders, "Why do such reprehensible things always happen in the middle of the night?")

Suffice it to say, when we reached Youngish-Town, we were not waited upon hand and foot (we had recognized *that* deception in advance!), nor was our every wish granted. In fact, the Prince Consort hardly knew we were around, so involved was he in his secret diplomatic negotiations. Little did he know, however, that perhaps the seed for the Diplomacy Widows Association was planted on this trip ("you don't get away with kidnapping the Queen"), for we did a bit of plotting on our own with the ladies of the court in Youngish-Town - and they quickly became our loyal and friendly allies.

The final indignity of this journey, heaped upon the prior indignity of being kidnapped by the Prince Consort and his allies so they could take this trip in the first place, was being forced to drive that plebian red Wagon on the Folk on the journey homeward. It wasn't even a royal carriage.

Upon entering the Wagon of the Folk, the Prince Consort and his allies all claimed to be too tired to drive safely ("we wouldn't want to jeopardize your Royal Highness's life") and all promptly fell asleep in the back of the Wagon of the Folk. Even young Prince William deserted his Royal Mother in her time of need by sleeping contentedly throughout the long night's journey back to the Queendom. What's a Queen to do?

Remember no treat Diplomacy Queens with proper respect when you encounter them, or you may be VERY sorry!

phpDiplomacy for Facebook

A Review

by Philip Murphy

When I discovered that popular social networking site Facebook had a Diplomacy app written for it, I was thrilled. The growth of these social networks grant us Diplomacy players a wonderful opportunity to play with a new generation of gamers who might not necessarily want to play by email using judges or web adjudicators. I enabled access to the application on my Facebook account. What follows is a review of the Facebook implementation of the phpDiplomacy project at Sourceforge.

The Good

The fact that it's platform independent and runs on Facebook in the first place is a good start. The adjudication works perfectly and the individual chat channels are a nice touch. I was particularly interested in the points system for ensuring the quality of games. Some games were limited to those with high point scores which were reflected in the player's behavior in meeting deadlines, as well as ability to play the game competently. This was an excellent idea.



The Bad

While the color-coding works well, the map is claustrophobic in the extreme. It's hard to see the individual centers and the units, not the provinces,

should be color-coded. All the armies are green and all the fleets are grey - though there is a small box which shows the color of the country it's very hard to make out on the map, which is TINY and needs to be twice or three times the size. The interface is cluttered and lacks some things which I would consider vital when playing Diplomacy. It should be easier to see the orders from previous turns; it should be possible to send anonymous press to all, and it should be possible to enter orders manually using the keyboard.

The Ugly

The game instructions are sparse and unhelpful. At the very least they should link to Avalon Hill's rulebook directly so that people can learn about the rules properly. The method of entering orders is clunky and over-reliant on careful use of the mouse. Considering how dinky the map is, a mis-order is too easy to make and figuring out how to organize convoys and supports is a real pain.

Conclusion

The creation of this application is a positive step but I do feel that the developers need to embrace the pre-existing community more and provide links to sites like The Diplomatic Pouch, Diplomacy World, or the Diplomacy Archive, for example. Also, there are interface issues to be looked at as well and while it's a worthy first effort, there's a lot of work to do before I would consider using it for competitive matches instead of email, Judges or sites like Stabbeurfou.

Rating: 3/5.

<http://sourceforge.net/projects/phpdiplomacy>

Philip Murphy is the publisher of the Diplomacy zine Th' Edge of th' Abyss. He's been on hiatus for a few months, but is set to resume publishing in mid-August and is actively looking for Diplomacy players for his game openings. You can contact him at [trekkypj "of" gmail.com](mailto:trekkypj@ofgmail.com) if you're interested in signing up. You'll be able to find the next issue (and can currently find the the prior ones) at:

<http://www.whiningkentpigs.com/DW/>

in the special TEOTA section.

5 Years Forward to Move 500 Years Backward

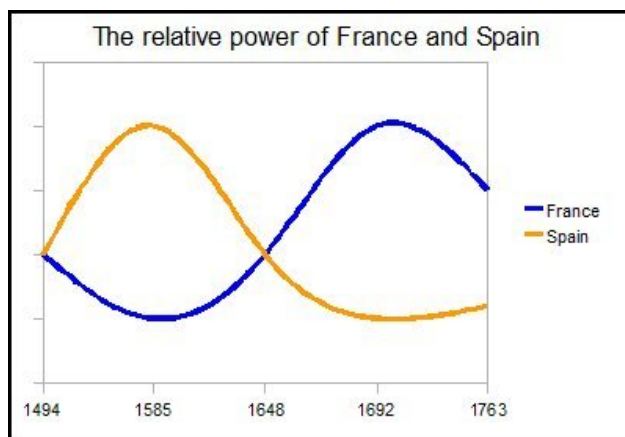
1648 – A New 9-Player Diplomacy Variant

By Charles Féaux de la Croix

It has now been more than five years since I began working on **1648**, a Diplomacy variant for nine players. In this article I shall discuss why I chose a mid-17th century setting and examine a number of **1648**'s statistical characteristics. Let's start by looking at the historical circumstances I found conducive to a Diplomacy variant design...

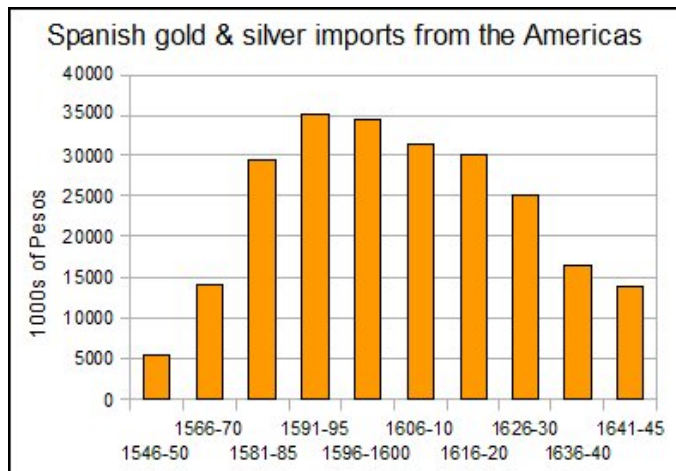
Why 1648 AD?

The course of European history over the past five centuries is marked by a succession of claimants to continental hegemony being countered by a coalition of lesser powers. The Habsburgs, having united in quick succession their German territories with their Burgundian, Spanish and Hungarian inheritances, were among the first to bid for such continental mastery. Yet the burdens of unceasing warfare imposed by such far-flung domains were too much for even such a vast empire to shoulder and by 1659 the mantle of being Europe's foremost power had passed on to Bourbon France.



The German historian Ludwig Dehio (1888-1963)¹ identified 1585 and 1692 as the respective heights of Spanish and French power. Following the abdication in 1555 of an Emperor (Charles V) worn down by the Sisyphean task of keeping Habsburg's many enemies at bay, his son Philip II had inherited the rich domains of the Spanish Crown and the Burgundian inheritance (Spain and its vast overseas empire, the Italian domains, the Low Countries and the Franche Comté), whereas Ferdinand I, Charles V's brother and long-time lieutenant

in Central Europe, had received the Imperial Crown next to Habsburg's Austrian and Hungarian domains. In good Habsburg tradition, Philip II had in 1580 won the Portuguese Crown by inheritance, thus uniting all of Christendom's lucrative overseas possessions and being able to call upon unparalleled resources to finance his ambitious foreign policy. Yet as Goliath was defeated by David, so did Elizabethan England best Philip's Grand Armada of 1588, while the defiant Dutch and Henry IV's France managed to prevail on the continent. Yet no serious scaling back of Spain's foreign policy aims took place, thereby condemning Spain to almost constant and financially ruinous warfare. In other words, strategic overstretch led to steady decline.



France's fortunes took much the opposite course as the French Wars of Religion (1562-98) rendered an aggressive foreign policy, as Francis I (1494-1547) had pursued, quite impossible. Only once the monarchy had recovered and consolidated its power thanks to the work of Henry IV and Richelieu was the demographic powerhouse of Europe able to challenge Spain's predominance, vanquish her in 1659 and rise above all other European states.

Yet for all the setbacks Spain had suffered in the 1630s and 40s, that outcome was not preordained in 1648 as these two bitter enemies continued to fight each other whilst the other participants in the Thirty Years' War (1618-48) grudgingly made peace. Indeed, by late 1648 Spain had regained the initiative against her Bourbon nemesis as France plunged into civil war (1648-53).

1648 not only marks a rough strategic equilibrium between a declining and an ascending giant, but also a wider balance of power. Indeed, the terms of the Peace of Westphalia signal a strategic impasse both within the

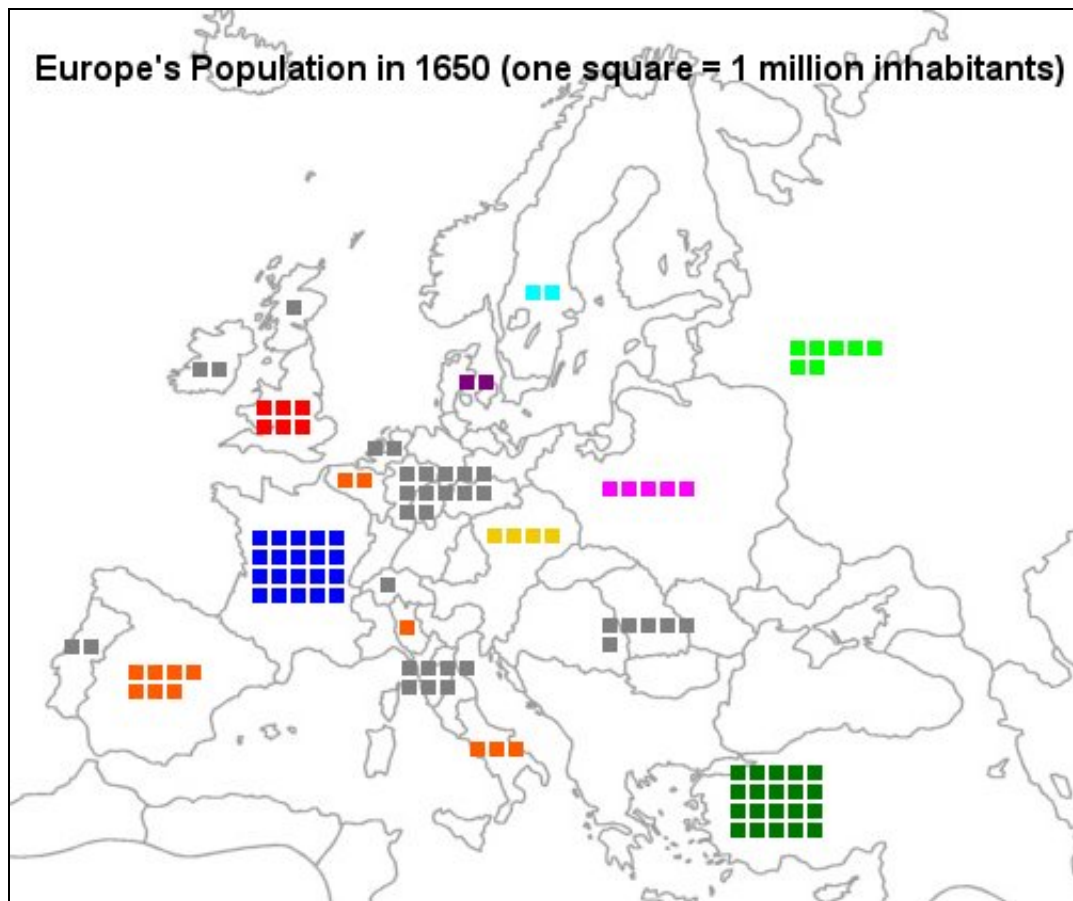
¹ Ludwig Dehio, Gleichgewicht oder Hegemonie. Betrachtungen über ein Grundproblem neuerer Staatengeschichte [translated: The Precarious Balance], Krefeld 1948.

Holy Roman Empire and further afield.

Just the right scenario for a Diplomacy variant! I would argue years of rough geopolitical balance (e.g. 1494, 1648, 1763, 1815, 1900, 1926) all lend themselves well to Diplomacy designs, whereas the peaks of regional power concentration such as 1585 (Spain), 1692 (France), 1805 (again France) and 1941 (Germany) tend to be rather problematic.

The Great Powers

It is fortunate that all nine great powers featured in **1648** roughly played in the same league, whereas by the mid-18th century only five powers were recognised as being of first-rate calibre, namely the *pentarchy* of Austria, Britain-Hanover, France, Russia and the Prussian *parvenu*.

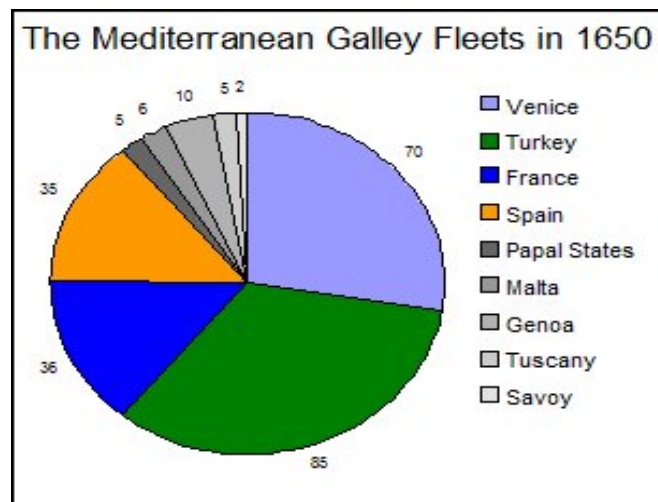


Yet why limit the number of playable powers to nine? What about Brandenburg-Prussia, the Republic of Venice and the United Provinces of the Netherlands?

During the Thirty Years' War Brandenburg-Prussia had woefully lacked the military means to prevent plundering armies of either side laying waste to its lands. Precisely this traumatic experience gave birth to the strong military-bureaucratic state that enabled Brandenburg-Prussia's spectacular rise. It would amount to an impossible stretch to elevate the war-ravaged Brandenburg-Prussia of 1648 to the rank of a great power.

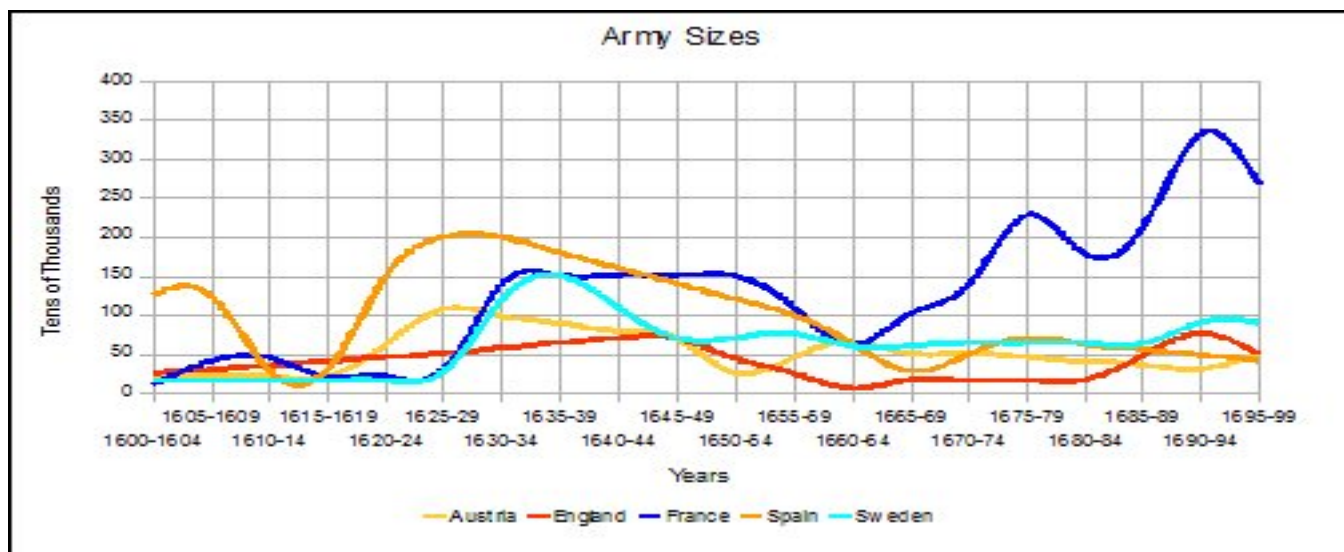
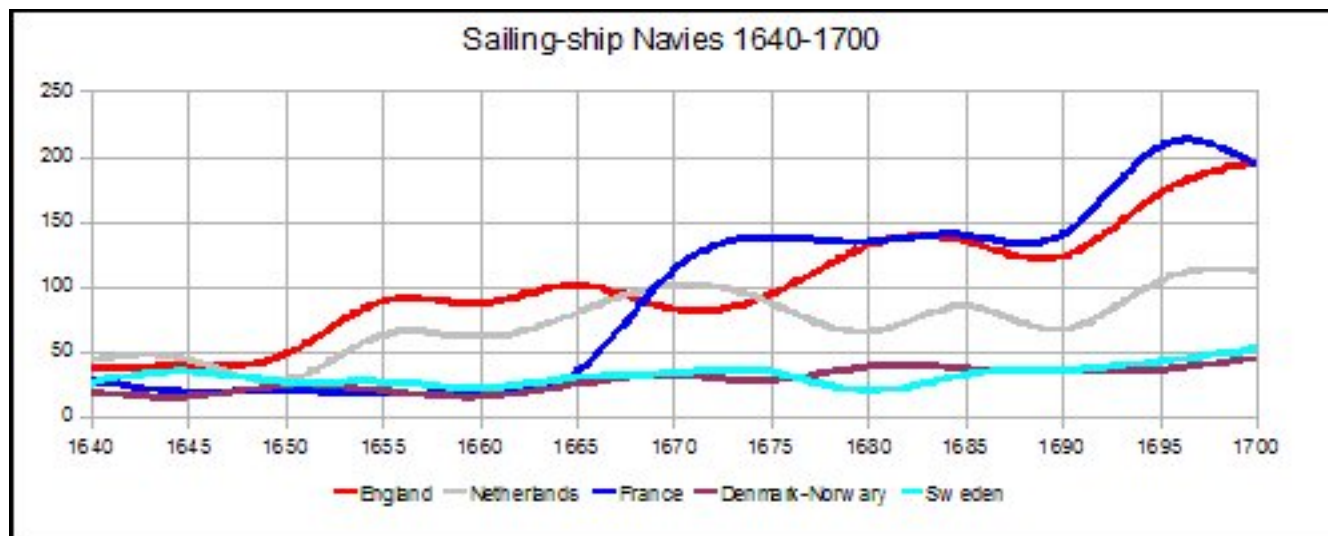
Nor is the case for the Republic of Venice being a playable power all that convincing. Though the Serene Republic still owned a large galley fleet (albeit at a time other powers were slowly replacing their Mediterranean galleys with sailing warships), her commercial interests dictated a defensive posture rather than an expansionist

foreign policy typical of a 17th century great power.



As for the Dutch Republic, it was undeniably a major power in mid-17th century Europe. As the leading financial centre of the age, it was able to maintain both a strong army and navy. Yet Dutch territorial ambitions were focused on the extra-European sphere, whereas

closer to home the United Provinces adopted a defensive posture. I believe history would be done a disservice if one were to see the Dutch regularly expand far beyond the Low Countries.



The Minor Powers

During the 17th century a far greater share of Europe was controlled by lesser powers than was the case on the eve of World War 1. In particular, Germany and Italy were at the time key battlegrounds for contending powers rather than the true power centres they were later to become in their own right.

The foremost states sought the allegiance of lesser powers for the sake of additional legitimacy and military strength. In mid-17th century Europe, even the largest military establishments lacked the means necessary for protracted warfare. In an effort to make good this shortfall, greater powers often relied on the standing armies of lesser princes, whom they paid large subsidies

for those services.

In other words, the collective military and diplomatic weight of lesser powers was then incomparably greater than in the early 20th century.

To account for the politically fragmented parts of the continent not being absolute power vacuums, **Ambition & Empire** - Baron Powell's and Jeff Kase's Diplomacy variant set in mid-18th century Europe – allowed greater powers to influence the orders of minor power units with Diplomatic Points (see the abridged variant rules).

It is safe to say that I would have never designed any of my three variants (**Locarno: Europe 1926**, **The Road to War: Europe 1936** and **1648**) had not **Ambition &**

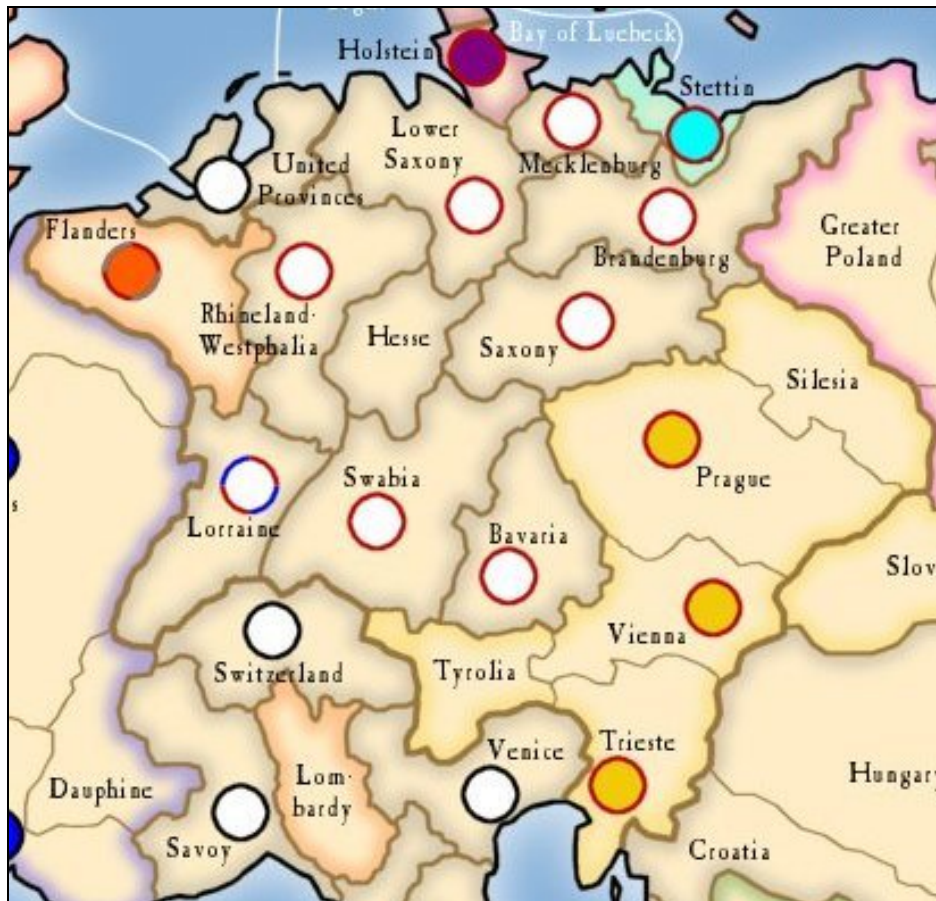
Empire's Diplomatic Points rule shown how one might tackle a scenario lacking the same degree of power concentration seen in the Age of High Imperialism (1871-1919).

Yet next to its simulation value, I relish the whole new layer of decision-making the Diplomatic Points (DPs) bring to the table. For they allow any player to influence events across the map and add, since DP allocations are kept secret, a further element of intrigue and duplicity.

I ought to here note that **1648** does not divide the minor powers explicitly into a Christian and Muslim camp as **Ambition & Empire** does. The Peace of Westphalia inaugurated a period of complete secularisation of European politics, as one historian remarked, and hence the variant does not in my view warrant any diplomatic restraints based on religion.

The Holy Roman Empire

Rather, I chose to model a more important factor in international affairs, namely the Holy Roman Empire (of the German Nation). Past generations of 19th and 20th century historians underestimated its importance as they compared it unfavourably with the modern nation state of their time. Only in recent decades have historians begun to question this still widely held prejudice. Following the Westphalian peace settlement of 1648, the constituent states of the Empire worked to strengthen its key institutions (among them the *Reichstag*, *Reichskammergericht* (Supreme Court), *Reichskreise* (Imperial Circles) and *Reichsarmee*) in an effort to prevent internal strife and foreign aggression from delving Germany into yet another infernal war. Such newfound unity allowed the Emperor to mobilise greater imperial forces than ever before as was to be seen in the long struggle against the French and Turks.



Given the restored power and prestige of the Imperial Crown, rivalling contenders, most notably Louis XIV among them, sought to wrest this elective office out of the hands of the Habsburgs, yet were never quite able to succeed in doing so.

So what does this mean in game terms? **1648** allows the Emperor, i.e. whoever owns the most supply centres within the Holy Roman Empire (HRE), to build in any of

the 14 HRE supply centres he owns. It is assumed the eight Electors invariably offer the Crown to the foremost power within the realm.

Since Austria's hereditary lands lie within the Empire, she initially holds the Imperial Crown and may – unless her fortunes take a definite turn for the worse – hold on to it for much of the game. I believe many an Emperor of Habsburg extraction will jealously guard his elevated

position by protecting lesser German princes against foreign intrusion, whilst expanding his own dynastic power base within the country. The famous Wallenstein had assembled a powerful Imperial Fleet in the Baltic a mere twenty years earlier and - who knows? - perhaps the imperial player will accomplish the same feat again. I wanted such lofty plans to be feasible in **1648**, while also accounting for the Hofburg's dual Austrian and Imperial foreign policy outlook.

For ascending non-German powers the Imperial Crown holds the promise of forward bases, so useful in a final bid for European supremacy. The state of the Holy Roman Empire thus becomes a key consideration for the balance of power. I think it quite possible that a coalition of powers may choose to prop up an Emperor, who lacks the resources to use the HRE as a springboard to victory. A savvy Austrian may convince the non-German powers that her continued Imperial reign presents, of all options, the least threatening accumulation of power as her entire dynastic power base already resides within the confines of the Holy Roman Empire.

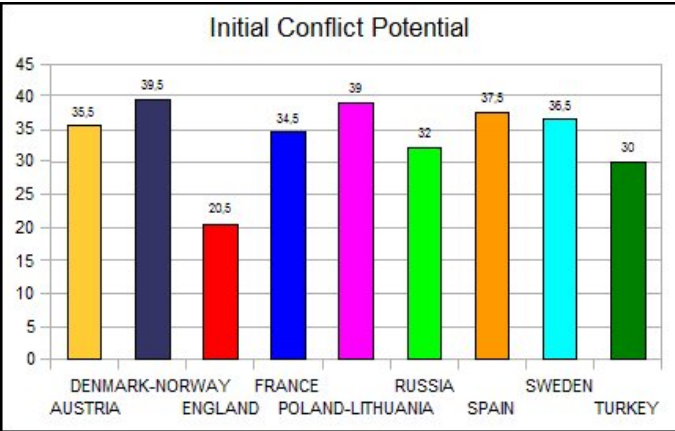
It may not be so much the actual rewards the *Kaiser* reaps, but the Empire's potential in assisting a final bid for continental mastery which makes the fate of the *Sacrum Romanum Imperium* a weighty concern in all capitals.

Variant Statistics

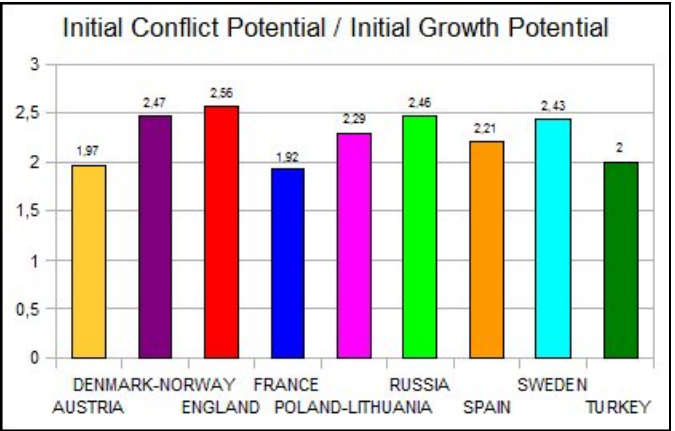
Since I believe a lot may be learnt through statistical analysis, I indulged in some number-crunching to assess play balance. Without further ado, here's a table showing how many SCs a power can reach in the opening year, a variable I shall hereafter call the Initial Growth Potential (IGP):

AUSTRIA	18
FRANCE	18
POLAND-LITHUANIA	17
SPAIN	17
DENMARK-NORWAY	16
SWEDEN	15
TURKEY	15
RUSSIA	13
ENGLAND	8

Armed with those numbers, I went on to calculate the overlap in these initial spheres of interest (by a factor of 2 for SCs initially controlled by a great power and by a factor of 1 for any others) to arrive at an admittedly crude estimate of two powers' Initial Conflict Potential (ICP) with another. Summing up these bilateral data points, I arrived at the following:



As the military weakest power, the Commonwealth of England has fewer initial growth opportunities (8), though this is tempered somewhat by an equally low ICP. Relating our two variables, IGP and ICP to another, I arrived at the following diagram:



While these values bode well for two central powers (Austria, France), what I take away from this table is that greater growth opportunities tend to be offset by similarly larger risks of conflict as the two extremes (France, England) only differ by 33% as compared to **Standard's** IGP/ICP extremes (England, Austria) differing by 188%.

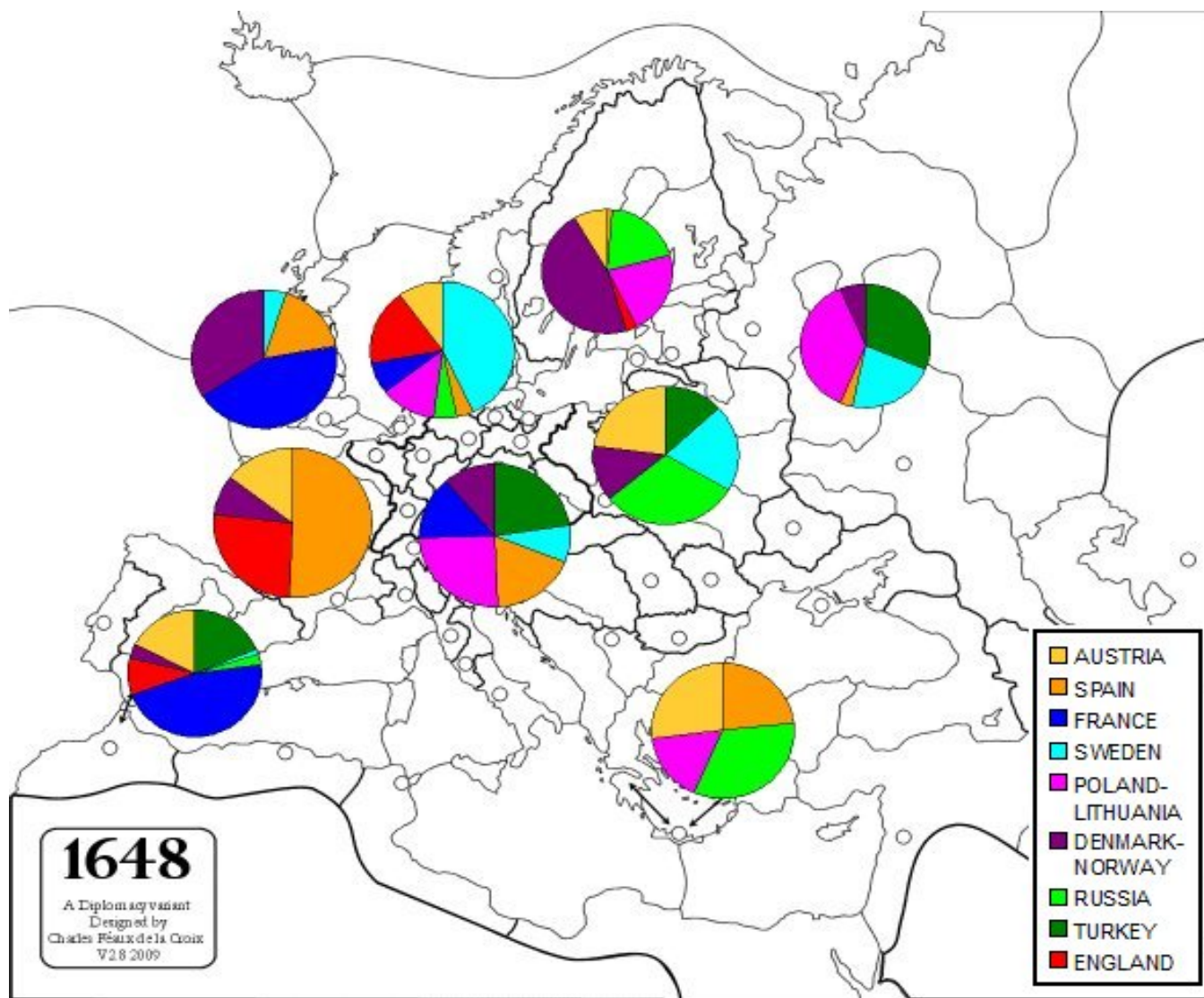
Standard's values

	IGP	ICP	IGP/ICP
AUSTRIA	12	39	3,25
ENGLAND	8	9	1,13
FRANCE	9	21	2,33
GERMANY	13	34	2,62
ITALY	11	30	2,73
RUSSIA	14	32	2,29
TURKEY	8	15	1,88

Austria and Italy – **Standard's** "weak sisters" - suffering as expected from the highest IGP/ICP value suggests this measure is sound enough, but it does not tell the whole story. The degree of friction (expressed as ICP)

between two powers weighs heavily on the chances of neighbouring third powers.

The below pie charts (superimposed on the map) show how great a country's friction level (ICP) happens to be relative to its overall conflict potential with its rivals.



The highest bilateral ICP scores are listed in the below table:

France/Spain	17,5
Denmark/Sweden	17
Poland/Russia	12
Russia/Turkey	10
England/France	9
Austria/Poland	9
Poland/Sweden	8
England/Denmark	7
Russia/Sweden	7
Spain/Turkey	7

And it is in my view these favourable numbers save the militarily weaker England from being the red-headed

step-child of **1648**. Denmark-Norway and France, her two immediate neighbours, need to deal with high levels of friction with Sweden and Spain respectively. England is well-positioned to exploit this for its own benefit by buying itself time to put its house in order back in entire British Isles, keeping her neighbours distracted and possibly enlisting the help of her neighbours' arch-rivals.

Anyway, such statistical exercises of my own give me some confidence in play balance being reasonably fair. Yet how does **1648** fare by other benchmarks?

The Agar Test

In his article "Designing Maps for Diplomacy Variants" (Designing Maps for Diplomacy Variants, The Diplomatic Pouch Zine, Fall 1998 Movement Issue), Stephen Agar distils a number of invaluable design maxims from **Standard's** own makeup. Though the DP mechanism

presents a major departure from Calhamer's basic rules, I find much of Stephen's advice remains applicable to **1648**. In the following I shall examine how my variant's parameters measure up to Agar's maxims:

"Each power [should have] at least three and preferably more directions in which to expand."

The more strategic options a player has at his disposal, the better. As the ICP pie charts present on the above map show, a power may move against the interests of 4+ different powers.

"Any increase in [a power's military] strength should be tempered by [additional] geographical [challenges]."

Both Spain and Sweden start off with four units, though unlike all other powers save Denmark-Norway these supply centres are not contiguous and Flanders – a far-off outpost at the end of very tenuous supply lines – does not serve as an actual Spanish home supply centre (i.e. Spain may not build there).

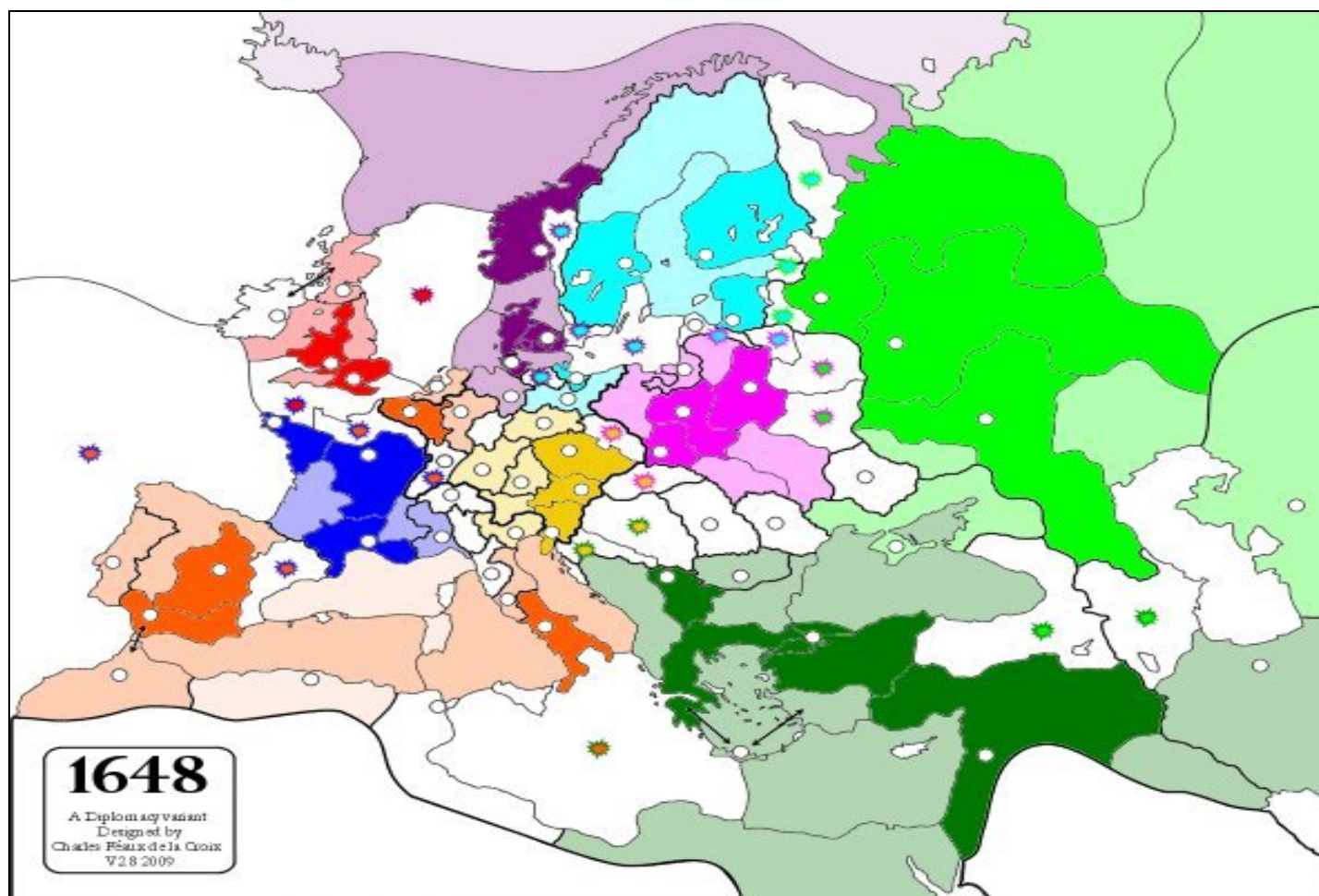
Of course, England starting off with only two units also presents a departure from the usual three, yet the Commonwealth may build in Scotland and Ireland once

these have been conquered and enjoys some key advantages I've already mentioned. England was only just emerging from the Second English Civil War in late 1648 and for that reason I wanted it to start off with some "homework" left to be done.

At this point I might as well also mention that France may build in Lorraine once it has been conquered. The same also applies to Russia and the Crimea as well as Poland-Lithuania and her one-time possessions of Courland, Prussia and Moldavia. As you will note, these all provide sea access those powers would otherwise go without.

"It is better if every Power can have a guaranteed build in the first game year, assuming no tactical disasters."

Now, **1648**'s armed minor powers make this an inherently trickier affair, but all great powers have at least one minor power squarely falling in their own sphere of influence (i.e. being closer to one than any other major powers). I've highlighted these clear zones of influence on the below map, next to marking immediate flashpoints of great power rivalry (i.e. spaces players may immediately contest):



"It is better to group neutrals together to construct an area of the board which at least two and preferably more Powers can enter early on in the game to make some gains, and thereafter provides a fertile battleground."

There are number of such fertile battlegrounds:

- Central Europe & The Holy Roman Empire: Ten minor powers are to be found in a region contested by Austria, France, Spain, Denmark-Norway, Sweden and possibly England as well Poland-Lithuania. The fate of the Imperial Crown is also decided on this key battleground.
- Italy: While arguably the Southern extension of the wider Central European battleground, it feels quite distinct due to this being an arena involving Austria, France, Spain and possibly Turkey. The region's topography also gives fleets an especially important role here.
- South-Eastern Europe: Five states invite here the attentions of Austria, Poland-Lithuania, Russia and Turkey.
- The Baltic fiefdoms: These were the historical bones of contention between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Sweden, yet Russia and Denmark-Norway may also before long take an interest in these.
- Barbary States: Spain and Turkey may be joined by France in the carving up of these unruly territories.
- Central Asia: Arguably the only one minor power cluster with only two powers contending for the spoils.
- Celtic Fringe: England is well-positioned to subjugate its Celtic backyard, though France, Spain and Denmark-Norway can easily meddle in this region.

"Roughly one-third of the centres on the board should be neutrals."

There are actually more minor power SCs (30) than those initially controlled by the great powers (28), yet really this maxim does not apply to **1648** as they cannot be gobbled up as rapidly as unoccupied neutral supply centres may be. Indeed, some minor powers may survive right until the end of the game.

"For every unit on the board there are at least 2 spaces and not more than 2 1/2 spaces."

Stephen writes: "The ratio between occupied spaces and unoccupied spaces must be sufficient to allow for freedom of manoeuvre, but not so large as to make the game unduly long to play because all the units are so far away from each other."

1648's unit/space ratio equals 2.07. Germany and Italy,

covered by a dense network of fortresses, are marked by a high supply centre concentration. Sieges were here far more common than pitched battles, whereas rapid manoeuvre warfare remained characteristic of the less densely populated lands in Eastern Europe.

"The initial balance of fleets to armies should be in the same approximate region as the ability of those units to occupy the home supply centres on the board."

Fleets can capture 17 of the centres initially controlled by the great powers and armies can take all 28 of these – a ratio of 1 to 1.47. At the beginning of the game the ratio of fleets to armies belonging to the great powers is 9:19 or 1:2.11.

I should say this discrepancy is so large as to not meet Stephen's recommendations. Yet I don't mind this being the case as the slight lack in fleets encourages players to build fleets at a somewhat higher rate until the above ratio of 1 to 1.47 is met. The second half of the 17th century was marked by an expensive naval arms race. The royal navies began to increasingly rely on custom-built warships rather than on armed merchantmen. So I think the gap between 1.47 and 2.11 actually helps model the rapid growth of Europe's royal navies (or given that England was a republic, I should better say state navies).

"Beware Stalemate Lines."

Despite there being a total of 58 SCs, only 18 SCs are necessary to solo. A mere 31% of all supply centres as opposed to the 53% necessary in Standard Diplomacy. Why did I adopt such a low threshold?

- 1) It makes for a far shorter game than were 30 SCs (i.e. 50%+X) required.
- 2) The closer a power gets to the 50% mark, the less it feels like playing an historical power. **Standard's** endgame feels to me more like an abstract tactical puzzle pitting roughly one side of the board against the other. No longer are we then seeing a true "Concert of Powers" in action. I personally find this to be the least interesting part of a **Standard** game and so it will not surprise that **1648** cuts out what I enjoy the least.
- 3) Much as their historical counterparts, a low threshold encourages players to pay more heed to an emerging threat to the balance of power.
- 4) A lower victory threshold ensures stalemate lines become far less of a factor.

I think this lower victory threshold and a lack of any impassable space (but for the remote Lake Lagoda) contribute to stalemate lines not being much of a factor in **1648**.

“Try to make sure that no Power has to go further than 50% more to reach victory than the Power which has to travel the least distance.”

The benchmark I here considered is the overall number of tempi² required for a power to reach 18 SCs from its originally controlled home centres, one tempo being defined as the movement of one piece from one province to another. The following tables list the overall tempi so required:

Standard

RUSSIA	29
AUSTRIA	33
GERMANY	33
ITALY	36
FRANCE	38
ENGLAND	44
TURKEY	44

1648

AUSTRIA	26
SPAIN	26
FRANCE	28
SWEDEN	28
POLAND-LITHUANIA	29
DENMARK-NORWAY	30
RUSSIA	31
TURKEY	31
ENGLAND	41

Standard's Turkey thus requires 52% more tempi to solo than Russia, whereas **1648** needs England to go a 58% further than Austria. Neither variant is in the range Stephen recommends, but I think both are reasonably close to being so.

“Try to balance the map so that no Power has a higher percentage of [originally enemy-controlled] home centres within three spaces that exceeds double the percentage of enemy home centres enjoyed by the most secure Power.”

Standard

ENGLAND	28,57%
TURKEY	42,86%
RUSSIA	45,83%
ITALY	50,00%
GERMANY	52,17%
FRANCE	55,00%
AUSTRIA	63,16%

1648

TURKEY	25,00%
AUSTRIA	28,13%
FRANCE	27,59%

² Cf. Paul Windsor, Geography is Destiny. How the Standard Map Dictates Fortunes and Strategies, The Diplomatic Pouch Zine, Fall 1999 Retreat Issue.

SPAIN	37,04%
POLAND-LITHUANIA	41,38%
SWEDEN	41,67%
RUSSIA	42,31%
ENGLAND	47,37%
DENMARK-NORWAY	48,28%

I think these two tables should be taken with a grain of salt. I believe **1648's** Turkey initially is more vulnerable than a host of other powers, in part because all three of her home SCs border minor powers, which may assist the Sultan's enemies in taking his home supply centres. Minor power SCs simply don't merely present an opportunity for expansion as **Standard's** neutral SCs, but also may present an ongoing threat. That reason alone makes the above table of very limited utility.

“Try to avoid having any two home centers belonging to two players adjacent (for example, Trieste and Venice), as that denies both players a degree of flexibility and peace of mind in the first move of the game.”

Ah, an easy one... Though I must confess I was tempted at one stage of the design process to introduce such an anomaly by letting Riga and Vilna touch. Previous map versions had me worried about a possible diplomatic imbalance within the Polish-Russian-Swedish triangle and, unlike Stephen, I don't consider outright HSC adjacency a design taboo. Provided the powers burdened with such a tricky situation are helped in other ways, I am not categorically against such a map feature. Indeed, as my 2-SC England shows, I am rather fond of asymmetric map features. They can help ensure a player operates under conditions his historical counterparts faced. It just so happens that, in the case of the North-Eastern triangle, I found the map configuration I ultimately came up with a better solution. So, how does **1648** measure up to the Agar Test? I dare say it is for you to decide whether - in the instances I broke one of Stephen's rules - my reasons happen to be sound or whether they simply amount to fancy excuses.

Conclusion

I have only managed to cover a fraction of what I had originally intended to. Though perhaps that is just as well since **1648** is bound to undergo further change. It took me five years to arrive at a design I felt sufficiently comfortable with as to launch a first playtest. That is now underway. Yet perhaps you may be interested in running a game yourself. If so, please contact me as I would love to keep track of any **1648** game out there and – you guessed it - am anxious to play the variant myself!

Charles Féaux de la Croix has played Diplomacy since 1998 and is the designer of the “Locarno: Europe 1926”, “The Road to War: Europe 1936” and “1648” variants. If you would like to contact him directly, email him at charlesf “of” web.de

1648 Diplomacy Variant Rules

By Charles Féaux de la Croix

Introduction

1648 is a nine-player Diplomacy variant set in Europe following the Peace of Westphalia, the first adjudicated season being Spring 1649.

1648 uses the armed neutrals & Diplomatic Points (DPs) mechanism pioneered by Ambition & Empire, a variant designed by Jeff Kase and Baron Powell. Players secretly bid DPs in an effort to influence the actions of minor powers.

Rules

All the rules of standard Diplomacy apply save those noted below:

Great Powers

Initial Setup

Austria: A Prague, A Trieste, A Vienna.
Denmark-Norway: F Christiania, F Copenhagen, A Holstein.
England: F Bristol, F London.
France: F Brest, A Marseille, A Paris.
Ottoman Empire: A Belgrade, F Constantinople, A Damascus.
Poland-Lithuania: A Cracow, A Vilna, A Warsaw.
Russia (Muscovy): A Moscow, A Novgorod, A Voronezh.
Spain: A Flanders, A Madrid, F Naples, F Seville.
Sweden: A Abo, A Riga, A Stettin, F Stockholm (East Coast).

Home Supply Centers (HSCs)

Note the additional HSCs (underlined below) on top of those controlled at the start of the game and Flanders not being considered a Spanish HSC.

Austria: Prague, Trieste, Vienna.
Denmark-Norway: Christiania, Copenhagen, Holstein.
England: Bristol, London, Ireland, Scotland.
France: Brest, Marseille, Paris, Lorraine.
Ottoman Empire: Belgrade, Constantinople, Damascus.
Poland-Lithuania: Cracow, Vilna, Warsaw, Courland, Moldavia, Prussia.
Russia (Muscovy): Moscow, Novgorod, Voronezh, Crimea.
Spain: Madrid, Naples, Seville.
Sweden: Abo, Riga, Stettin, Stockholm.

Holy Roman Empire (of the German Nation)

The Holy Roman Emperor may build in any SC within the Holy Roman Empire (HRE) he controls. Following SCs (marked by a burgundy red circle border) belong to the HRE (hereafter HRESCs):

- Bavaria
- Brandenburg
- Flanders
- Holstein
- Lorraine
- Lower Saxony
- Mecklenburg
- Prague
- Rhineland-Westphalia
- Stettin
- Saxony
- Swabia
- Trieste
- Vienna

The Great Power owning the most HRESCs is considered the Holy Roman Emperor and enjoys the described building privileges. The title only is transferred whenever one single Great Power other than the present office-holder (initially Austria) has the most HRESCs.

Minor Powers

In addition to the nine Great Powers, there is also a host of "minor powers", which are non-player neutral Supply Centres (SCs) representing the smaller states of Europe, North Africa and the Near East. These include (space names in bold) the following:

- The Regency of **Algiers** (an autonomous province of the Ottoman Empire)
- The Electorate of **Bavaria**
- The Electorate of **Brandenburg**
- The Venetian Colony of **Candia**
- The Duchy of **Courland** (an autonomous fiefdom of Poland-Lithuania)
- **Rhineland-Westphalia** (representing various territories belonging to the Lower-Rhenish, Electoral Rhenish and Lower Saxonian imperial circles)
- The Khanate of **Crimea** (a vassal state of the Ottoman Empire that includes the lands of the Crimean and Nagay Tatars)
- The Kingdom of **Ireland**
- The Duchy of **Lorraine**
- **Lower Saxony** (representing various territories belonging to the Lower Saxonian and Lower Rhenish-Westphalian imperial circles)
- **Mecklenburg** (representing the Duchies of Mecklenburg)
- The Principality of **Moldavia** (a vassal state of the Ottoman Empire)
- The Sultanate of **Morocco**
- The **Papal States**

- **Persia** (the Persian Empire)
- The Kingdom of **Portugal**
- The Duchy of **Prussia** (an autonomous fiefdom of Poland-Lithuania)
- The Duchy of **Savoy**
- The Kingdom of **Scotland**
- **Swabia** (representing various territories belonging to the Swabian, Franconian and Upper Rhenish imperial circles)
- The Swiss Confederation (**Switzerland**)
- The Principality of **Transylvania**
- The Regency of **Tunis** (an autonomous province of the Ottoman Empire)
- **Turkestan**
- The Grand Duchy of **Tuscany**
- The **United Provinces** of the Netherlands
- The Republic of **Venice**
- The Cossack Hetmanate of the **Ukraine**
- The Principality of **Wallachia** (a vassal state of the Ottoman Empire)

Each minor power, although a "non-player," starts with a unit (unit color is black). All minor powers start with an army except for the following minors that start with a fleet: Algiers, Candia, Courland, Portugal, Tunis, the United Provinces and Venice.

Minor power units prevent a Great Power from simply moving into an empty space and gain-ing control of the SC. To occupy a minor power SC, a Great Power will need to move in with support. A minor power unit that is forced to retreat is disbanded. If a Great Power does not occupy the minor power SC at the end of a Fall turn, the minor power's unit is automatically rebuilt in the Winter.

As in standard Diplomacy, a Great Power controls a minor power SC when one of its units occupies the space after a Fall turn has been played and completed. Once a Great Power gains control of a minor power SC, it can leave the SC vacant and still keep control of it as long as that SC is not occupied by another Great Power at the close of a Fall turn.

Minor power units do nothing but hold in place, unless the unit has been ordered by a Great Power using its Diplomacy Points.

Diplomatic Points

At the start of the Spring and Fall turns, each Great Power receives one Diplomacy Point (DP) for each SC it controls, up to a maximum of three DPs per turn. During each Spring and Fall turn, each Great Power may allocate none, some, or all of its DPs to minor powers that still have units on the map, though no more than two of its DPs may be allocated to a particular minor power. (**Design Note:** *This is a departure from the Ambition & Empire rules.*)

For each DP allocated, the allocating Great Power submits an order for that particular minor power's unit. A Great Power may only order a minor power to hold or support. A minor power can not be ordered to move/attack.

Unused DPs may not be carried over into the next turn. They are simply lost.

Players are not required to tell each other how they allocated their DPs. Just as with negotiations, players may honour their agreements with other players or not, as they see fit. Only the GM will know how Great Powers have allocated their DPs. DP allocation is not published in the adjudication; only the end results are published.

The GM determines how DPs have been allocated. In the event of a conflict, an order for a particular minor power's unit is followed if it is supported by more DPs than any conflicting order. See the following example:

In Spring 1649, Austria allocates one DP to Swabia to get it to support an Austrian attack on Bavaria. France allocates one DP to Swabia to get it to support a French attack on Lorraine. In support of Austria, Spain allocates one DP to Swabia to get it to support the Austrian attack on Bavaria. Although Austria, France and Spain each allocated one DP to Swabia, the Austrians get the Swabian support because the Spaniards supported the Austrian diplomatic efforts with the Swabians.

If, during a Spring or Fall turn, a Great Power allocates more DPs to minor powers than it is entitled to or exceeds the limit of allocating two of its DPs to one particular minor power, all of that Great Power's DPs are forfeited for that particular turn.

Civil Disorder

If a player is lost during the game, the GM is strongly encouraged to find a replacement player for the affected Great Power rather than have it lapse into civil disorder. In the event no replacement player is found and the GM declares the Great Power to be in permanent civil disorder, the following rules apply:

- All units of the Great Power in civil disorder (GPCD) are immediately disbanded.
- All SCs controlled by the GPCD that are unoccupied are immediately considered newly independent minor powers. Minor power army units are built in those minor power spaces.
- All SCs controlled by the GPCD that are occupied by a unit belonging to another Great Power are unaffected. If the occupying Great Power moves its unit out of the GPCD's SC so that the SC is unoccupied at the conclusion of a Fall turn, a minor power army unit is built there

and that SC is considered a newly independent minor power.

- For the remainder of the game, all newly independent minor powers are subject to the provisions of regarding minor powers. In particular, this means the new minor power can be influenced using Diplomacy Points.
- Once a Great Power is declared to be in permanent civil disorder, it may not be played by an active player again.

Victory Conditions

As soon as one Great Power controls **18 SCs**, the game ends immediately and the player representing that Great Power is the winner.

If two Great Powers each gain control of 18 or more SCs at the same time, the player representing the Great Power with the most SCs is considered the winner. If the

two Great Powers each control the same number of SC's, the game continues until one player has 18 or more SCs and has more than any other player. Players may terminate the game by mutual agreement before a winner is determined. If this occurs, any decision reached by the players (e.g., concede game to one player, concede game to an alliance) must be accepted unanimously. If the players cannot agree, all players who still have pieces on the board when the game ends share equally in a draw.

Map Clarifications

- Ingria is a canal province (much as Copenhagen), thus allowing fleets to move between Novgorod (South Coast) and Ingria itself. The River Neva is shown on the map to indicate this. • Red arrows indicate that two spaces are adjacent to another, allowing any units to operate across it.

Space Names and Abbreviations – SC's are noted with an asterisk (*)

Abo*	Abo	London*	Lon	Tekke	Tek
Algiers*	Alg	Lower Saxony*	LSa	Transylvania*	Tra
Aragon	Ara	Madrid*	Mad	Trieste*	Tri
Armenia	Arm	Marseille*	Mar	Tunis*	Tun
Astrakhan	Ast	Mecklenburg*	Mec	Turkestan*	Tur
Azerbaijan	Aze	Mesopotamia	Mes	Tuscany*	Tus
Bavaria*	Bav	Moldavia*	Mol	Tyrolia	Tyr
Belgrade*	Bel	Morocco*	Mor	Ukraine*	Ukr
Bohuslan	Boh	Moscow*	Mos	United Provinces*	UPr
Brandenburg*	Bra	Naples*	Nap	Venice*	Ven
Brest*	Bre	Normandy	Nor	Vienna*	Vie
Bristol*	Bri	Northern Norway	NNo	Vilna*	Vil
Bulgaria	Bul	Novgorod*	Nov	Volhynia	Vol
Candia*	Can	Papal States	Pap	Voronezh*	Vor
Christiania*	Chr	Paris*	Par	Wallachia*	Wal
Constantinople*	Con	Permia	Prm	Warsaw*	War
Copenhagen*	Cop	Persia*	Per	White Ruthenia	WRu
Courland*	Cou	Podolia	Pod	Yorkshire	Yor
Croatia	Cro	Polotsk	Pol	Adriatic Sea	ADR
Cracow*	Cra	Portugal*	Por	Aegean Sea	AEG
Crimea*	Cri	Prague*	Pra	Arctic Ocean	AOC
Dalmatia	Dal	Prussia*	Pru	Baltic Sea	BAL
Damascus*	Dam	Pskov	Psk	Bay of Lübeck	BOL
Dauphiné	Dau	Rhineland-Westphalia*	RWe	Black Sea	BLA
Devon	Dev	Riga*	Rig	Caspian Sea	CAS
Egypt	Egy	Samogitia	Sam	Eastern Mediterranean	EAS
Flanders*	Fla	Sardinia	Sar	English Channel	ENG
Gascony	Gas	Savoy*	Sav	Gulf of Bothnia	GOB
Greater Poland	GPo	Saxony*	Sax	Gulf of Lion	GOL
Hesse	Hes	Scania	Sca	Helgoland Bight	HEL
Holstein*	Hol	Scotland*	Sco	Ionian Sea	ION
Hungary	Hun	Severia	Svr	Irish Sea	IRI
Iceland	Ice	Seville*	Sev	Mid-Atlantic Ocean	MAO
Illyria	Ill	Siberia	Sib	North Atlantic Ocean	NAO
Ingria	Ing	Silesia	Sil	North Sea	NTH
Ireland*	Ire	Slovakia	Slo	Norwegian Sea	NRG
Karelia	Kar	Smolensk	Smo	Skaggerak	SKA
Lapland	Lap	Stettin*	Ste	Tyrrhenian Sea	TYS
Leon	Leo	Stockholm*	Sto	Western Mediterranean	WES
Lombady	Lom	Swabia*	Swa		
Lorraine*	Lor	Switzerland*	Swi		



Consistency is the Key – WDC 2009

By Mark Zoffel

I was fortunate enough to attend World DipCon this year in Ohio, and see a lot of old friends face to face. After the final Diplomacy round was completed, the usual bitterness over what had just happened began with their annual fervor. Typical complaints had to do with the scoring system, board assignments, and the number of complete novices playing in the supposed World Championship. I'm going to leave those topics for other contributors and focus on something else. One turn of events in particular which I will detail for you now filled me with disgust both as a player and a hobby member. This was the one which I found most offensive, but the reader should know that this example was one of a plethora of them that marred this event.

Let me set the stage for you....

We've finished the first two rounds, and have now arrived at: Round 3 Board 1. Began at 9 am. On the Board was:

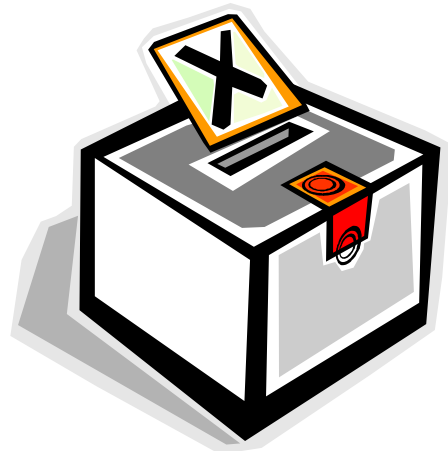
France - Novice Player
England - Chris Mazza Extremely good player
Germany-Andrew Goff-World Class Player
Italy-Mark Zoffel good Player
Russia-David Maletsky-One of Hobbies best tacticians
Austria and Turkey Good Players.

Before I go into detail, I should mention that the rules for this round of the tournament are that at 6pm the next round is supposed to start, and at that point you have to call the game, or decide to continue and not play the next round. That is how it was stated.

Game starts, England and Turkey are targets. England dies, turkey is cornered and soon to die, Austria is weak and Italy is stuck with a dying ally and G,R, and T against him. France comes to the Med, and Germany stabs Russia, a classic FG alliance. At this point in game Russia and Italy realize they have one option (they can play defense for longer than the 6pm time limit for sure as they have 14 units between them at this point) and that is to ally and play to the letter of the rules; try and make it to 6pm to either get the game called, or force Germany to stab France, thereby opening up the game. It is 2:30 pm. Germany has a solo in tournament and needs a great score to have a shot at title, he asks for a 2-way and it is turned down. For the next 3 1/2 hours IR use as much time as allowed and at 6pm have 10 units still on board in good defensive position. France has moved all of his units to the Med, and Germany, who kept trying to get people to vote a 2 way, has not stabbed at France, even though it was wide open. At 6:05 a final (we thought) concession vote was called for Germany, in a Secret ballot. It fails. No one

knows who voted it down, so nobody wants to make any aggressive moves.

Sidebar to the TD, Dan Mathias. At around this time, he has told us the next round will be starting soon and everybody who wants to play has to get their playing card in stating they wish to play. He tells the people still playing "your time is up." They had 29 people signed up for the round. Usually when it is a number like that, and finding 6 is next to impossible, you say 4 boards only, remove one player, and move on. Dan Lester, who had two solos, and was sitting at the table with the TD, and who heard the card count of 29, volunteered to sit out, as that would make it 28 people and a 4 board round. Dan also knew that if he sat out he would be world champion as the only person who could catch him was Andrew Goff, so it was somewhat self serving, but still offered. TD Mathias says no, with no explanation. I would ask why, but let's move on.



Back to the draw votes. Of the 4 players remaining,(Turkey and Austria dead around 3pm,) another concession vote is called, right after another. For me playing Italy, if the game ends, it is a 4 way, and I get points for my team in the team round. I was willing throughout the afternoon to vote myself out of the 2 or 3 way draw, but now, at the end I will be thrilled to get in the draw. Will I publicly veto it and gain the wrath of the others? Well it is 6:10 now and officially the others at the table have already had to make up their minds on whether or not to play in the next round so sure, I veto it saying we just had one, this is a waste of time, let continue spring negotiations. TD Mathias is still walking around.

2 minutes later, after G and F have spoken (at this point IR have nothing to say as we have set a defensive line that cannot be broker anytime soon) they come back to the table and ask for another draw vote. The rules state

the limit is 1 per person per round.. R may have asked for the 2 or 3rd one, but it was legally called. Nobody for sure knows who is vetoing it, but instead of publicly vetoing it I figure a secret vote will take up another 2 minutes and we have to be getting close to calling the 4th round boards. TD Mathias comes over and asks everyone to pick up their pieces for the vote.

Everybody puts their first piece in the box, France opens his hands and gestures to Germany to look at it. Germany does, as do I and a dozen other people, and I called them out. "I am Sorry" "I apologize" are the next words from France and Germany. Do I care about their apologies? No. The unknown factor that was keeping the game at a stalemate and keeping everyone guessing about who was vetoing the concession is now gone. Russia, who wanted to teach France a lesson and had always voted for the concession tells Germany to walk into his centers next year. France does the same. It won't be scored until end of Fall in over 17 minutes, so I am still fine, as that would push it passed 6:30 and they have found only 1 or 2 players. They have to start the next round, or the TD has to come over and give a final decision, right?



Wrong. He is obviously waiting for this game to end, now that there is a solo being thrown and players from that game will fill out the next board. Fall comes, everyone walks out of their dots, and Germany gets a solo victory. The second the game is over, Sean Colman (Andrew Goff's country companion), puts Andrew's card into the box, and TD Mathias calls the round closed. David Maletsky (who had just played Russia) is told **he** cannot play in next round because the round has now been closed, 30 seconds after the game ends.

To sum up:

The 6pm timeline was extended to suit the TD. They had 28 players at 6pm and could have started the next round on time. Cheating occurs and no punishment is attached to it. It completely alters the game, and the TD

response is simply "it won't happen again." The time limit continues as TD can see an end to the game now.

What happens next? The boards are called and Andrew Goff is randomly selected to play on the same board as Sean Colman, his countryman. I watch most of this game, and when it ends in a solo for Andrew Goff, it is 100% obvious that Sean had in his mind all along to throw the solo to Andrew. No question about it. Part of the game sure, but

Having said all this I wish to summarize my feelings this way:

1. To TD Mathias - A lot of hard work goes into doing what you did. Great job and thank you. However, this was a WDC and you are not qualified in any way to be a TD of such an event as you let things slide throughout, thereby changing the outcome. Grade F
2. To Sean Colman - for throwing a solo to your countryman -Weak- Grade F
3. To Andrew Goff- Nothing you did pissed me off at all, as you brilliantly worked with all types of players and situations to three solo's. A truly world-class exhibition. In regards to Sean's thrown solo, who wouldn't ask, that is negotiations, and on him, not you. You proved to all that you are one of the best players in the world, and were clearly one of the 2 best there. Job well done. Grade A if indeed you didn't "know".
4. To some others who were helping keep that board going , by suggesting to continue to look for others, or by discussing the possibility that the game was now about to end, due to people throwing their centers. Meta-Gaming BS.- Grade F

Maybe the bigger question is whether or not all WDC should have a minimum requirement for players and whether or not a top board is required.

Still, with all of that being said, it was great to see all those who made it out to WDC. That is the main reason for coming to these events and being in the hobby – the people you meet and become friends with.

Mark is the Strategy & Tactics Editor for Diplomacy World.

"[HuskyConV] was so much fun, it was scary how much fun I had"
- Andy Bartalone

"[HuskyCon] is the best thing going in Diplomacy"
- Buz Eddy

"...If you take one vacation this year, go somewhere with your family.
If you take two, go to HuskyCon" (on HuskyCon VII)
- Conrad Woodring

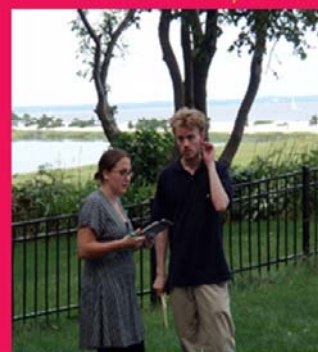
HuskyConVII is just around the corner! North America's most popular event is less than four weeks away. If you like playing Diplomacy and are the slightest bit social, this is the place to be July 24th. Highlights for this year's event include:

- ★ The same great Venue. Beautiful views over Long Island sound, outdoor play (good weather), swimming, kayaking and general relaxing.
- ★ Two fo the world's largest Diplomacy boards.
- ★ **Free room and board all weekend.** You won't have to spend a cent other than getting yourself to the venue.
- ★ Easy to get to. If you need help getting there just ask.
- ★ 50 confirmed guests so far! Consistently one of the largest diplomacy cons in the country.
- ★ The first ever costume round of Diplomacy! The theme will international diplomacy and world politics. A prize will be given to the player's choice for best costume.

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HuskyCon VII

July 24-26



2009 World DipCon – Columbus, Ohio, United States

By Andrew Goff

Preliminaries – How I got to WDC 2009

The 2008 World DipCon was an experience... let's be honest: I played poorly and should have stayed away from the gruel. I was a bit down on my performance, but even by the end of the tournament I'd decided to learn from my mistakes and focus on the positives – a great group of people sharing a wonderful common interest and some good times!

I returned to Australia a better player, continued my rich line of form, and accidentally won another Australian Championship. Sean Colman donated to the hobby the first prize – travel to that year's World DipCon. Makes you almost wish for a professional Diplomacy hobby...



So once again I was carrying the flag for Australia, and as with last time I decided to take a fortnight beforehand to travel and see the world. There's one big difference: this time the travel is absolutely second to the Diplomacy: I'm going to make the top board or die trying.

The Land Of The Free

Last year I wrote a travelogue, but this year I will keep it short (due to time restrictions and, well, you all probably care more about other things). I must give a huge thank you to Chris Mann, Adam Sigal and Matt and Melissa Call for their very kind hospitality – New York and Boston were both much better for your advice as well as just having a place to stay.

New York is amazing and more than I had ever imagined. I'll skip the details but must mention one thing. Perhaps some Americans take it for granted, but I was honestly moved to tears by the juxtaposition of the Statue of Liberty and a New York skyline which has a missing piece. Many in the world increasingly see the United States as being on a cultural crusade, but if that

crusade is one to bring genuine freedom to all – may your flag always fly high.



On a lighter note, would even one person in New York City please learn how to make a decent Cafe Latte? It's enough to make me want to drink tea.

Speaking of which – Boston is magnificent. Some of this may have been the company. Any city that can engage in genuine and non-judging theological arguments without coming to blows and at the same time be quite prepared to lynch anyone with a Yankees hat... or start a revolution... has got me impressed.

Boston Massacre

I don't think I am giving anything away... I was playing nice at the Boston Massacre. Two 3-way draws and no stabs... I was of course setting up reputation and playing the big game of WDC. That being said, I was so impressed by the players in Boston – it was probably a higher quality tournament by average player! Randy (the winner) in particular has Diplomacy superstar written all over him – but the New England hobby is filled with talent that could all win tournaments.

I played Austria and copped an RT... Finished on 14 centers as the major partner in an RAI alliance. I played Germany in an FGR and finished 2nd on 9 centers. I played France and after fighting off the stabby stabbers got 5 centers. Peter McNamara is very, very dangerous indeed. I finished 2nd – perfect!

World DipCon

Scoring System is odd. Origins is HUGE. Dan seems to rub quite a few people the wrong way... by explaining things too much? I'm not sure why but that was a key issue. I made the mistake at WDC 2008 of getting caught up with how unnatural my game felt with the C-

Diplo scoring system... instead of just accepting and playing the game. I'm determined not to this time.

I'll be honest – I ABSOLUTELY HATED the scoring system. But Dan could just as easily say the same about C-diplo or the Europeans about Aussie Centre-based systems. So I accepted it and moved on. I'm not going to buy into the politics of North American Diplomacy... but I think that the issues that were causing disharmony worked hugely in my favor as they distracted people from the main event – which is usually something I work very hard to achieve in my games. This time it was easy.

Round 1

I draw England. Early negotiations are strong, with both France (Jeremiah Peterson) and Germany (Chris Mazza) keen to work with me, and an EFG is agreed. Italy (Dan Lester) and Austria (Name removed to protect the guilty) were having none of that... and as it turned out neither was Germany. 1902 Spring and Chris guts Jeremiah and then asks me to jump on board. Jeremiah is broken, but I stab Germany instead of helping him... underestimating Chris' outstanding tactical ability.

The two of us fight for four years to a standstill and then agree to form a line against the now rampant Austria/Italy alliance. Then... the scoring systems hits. Chris stabs me. The reasoning is very simple... he is betting on a 3-way draw (A four-way draw on a defensible 6 being hugely inferior to a 3-way draw on 1 centre).

I'll have none of it. I play the unbalance card and decide the only way to get in a three-way draw is to kill Chris and put Austria in a position where he must work with me to stop Dan getting 18. It all works according to plan, except Austria doesn't believe that Dan would ever ever stab him for 18. Dan does stab him, and does get 18. Oops.

Needless to say, this game is not one I am going to count in my best 3.

Round 2

I draw France. Jonathan Hill draws England. Buffalo draws Germany. Gold.

I convince Jon to bounce Germany in Holland in Fall 1901. England and France go all the way. Jon is someone I had chosen not to stab at the Boston tournament, so he pretty much refuses to conceive of me stabbing him. He also greatly overplays his negotiations, infuriating everyone on the other side of the board to my distinct advantage.

When one of them does eventually really crack it and moves away from me to unbalance things, I stab and comfortably walk into 20 centres. Not happy: Jon.

To his great credit, Jon is one of only two people who

actually tried to stop me getting to 18 in the whole event. He also clearly cared about the result, which sadly is more than can be said for some others.

Dan is still way out in front with a win and a three-way draw. Adam Sigal also has an 18 and is the most likely challenger with a 4-way draw. I've soloed at a WDC and I am still in distant fifth.

Round 3

This is where the controversy will start. I must disclaim this by saying that my opinion is of course biased. I don't want to even try and paint a black and white picture... but I will say that what I write is my honest opinion. I respect others opinions on the game as there will be many and probably none of them are outright wrong.

The game starts terribly enough. I draw Germany, my least favorite country, on "the board of death" featuring a rat pack of America's best tacticians. I talk for 10 minutes to France and agree to take the board. I beg everyone else to leave me alone as there is a big EF coming. It all works and I have no pressure in Tyl/Boh/Sil/Pru/Bur. Being a man of my word, apparently except when it comes to English players, I support France into Belgium, let Russia have Sweden, and proceed to dismember England in good time.

I turn on Russia as soon as England is dealt with, and hold my breath as I leave myself wide open for a French stab. It doesn't come. I return this favor a number of times. Russia falls for the feint, and while I do clean his northern position back as far as StP, I descend on the Austrian centers instead of the Russian ones, guaranteeing that Italy will fall to the French fleets in good time.



This is where it starts to get ugly.

At this point, Russia and Italy decide it is a very good idea to slow the game down so that it runs into the next round. Refusing to have reduced deadline or order writing early and taking the full five minutes of order writing time before submitting orders is a tactic fully within the rules (though I must admit it is one I would not have used) and it is an unpleasant game environment from this point on. But, what they can't have expected was the Frenchman's reaction – which was quite severe. He went from wanting a two way draw to wanting to teach the two of them a lesson. He swings a couple of centers to me and I push as hard and fast as I can

toward Serbia while he drives as far as Greece. Time is running out before I have my chance to stab... and I am shattered.

This is where it gets very, very ugly indeed.

I need one more year to secure an 18. But it is now 5:50pm and one more year will push it past time for the next round to start. Dan Lester has soloed again, so I have given up – I can't catch him so I might as well force the 2nd place by soloing here. The aggression boils over and the Russian calls for a concession victory to me. It is voted down. I call for it, and it is voted down again. The Frenchman calls for it, and it is voted down.



Unfortunately, the Frenchman has open-palmed his draw piece and I have seen it. He voted for it. Half the tournament sees this. I must stress that I did not look to see it, make any plan to see it, and as soon as I had seen it I wished I hadn't. Apparently he had shown it the previous two times too but I hadn't been looking. An already sour game erupts. France and Russia walk out of their centers leaving me with 21 and feeling awful. Italy is fuming (with justification). This is not how it is meant to be.

I don't know the motivation of the Frenchman for doing what he did. Dan Mathias (the TD) essentially took no action (Perhaps what could he do?) and a game that was going to be 18 anyhow now has a putrid stench around it.

Furthermore, I'm shattered because I've got two 18s and I'm going to finish second at WDC, having missed the deadline to nominate for the next round while I wait out the fall turn to claim the win. Except...

Round 4

Dan has held off starting the next round in order to fill out the boards. I ask Sean to put my card in as soon as the game is concluded after confirming this is OK with Dan. He kindly does so. I am included in Round 4.

I have no idea what Dan's motivation was for the way he

handled this situation. None. I think it would be fair to say I was astonished to find myself playing in the last round. I'd be lying if I said I was unhappy with the outcome, but how it came about I'm just not sure.



I draw Austria. The other Australian (Sean Colman) draws Russia. From 1901 he is clearly 100% in with the Italian. At the risk of giving away my game, I use my familiar tactic of asking him for no bounce in Galicia, which he kindly falls for and tells the Italian not to bother with Trieste. With a minute left I go to him and ask to change that to have a bounce. Sean gives me the evil eye and agrees to bounce. I then give his fleet support into Rumania in fall and thus ends the quick Austrian kill option.

I go to work on Italy. I have got to split them or I am next. I talk and talk and talk. And talk. And then, to prove what a nice guy I am, I give Italy Bulgaria (Tun-lon-Aeg-Bul). I've sold him. Only just in time, as just as I move out of position to go in for the final kill on Turkey Russia stabs me... and Italy doesn't go with him.



Sean looks like he is about to vomit. He knows he is in a deep shade of brown now as I build a unit instead of disbanding and his Army Budapest is friendless and surrounded. We discuss patching things up, and I forcibly remove him from Budapest. Then the move which would have got an 18 anywhere in the world: I

walk straight through Budapest to Galicia.

Sean can't believe it... I've made him the target, Italy now thinks I am the nicest person on earth, and Russia can never stab me, because the first piece to push is Galicia, which now retreats to one of his centers and is ready to support to another of his centers, all while he now has more centers and the rest of the board attacking him. He is locked in an RAI with no stab option and an unbreakable England (with France) hammering him 6 on 6 in the North.

Italy has three fleets to two in the med and slowly grinds the Frenchman back. I break through (eventually) into Burgundy. I point out that I am not likely to get any builds in a hurry and clean up Smy and Gre (both Italian) and I cede Bul to Russia so he can build another Northern fleet.

Then pass a year getting to Ruhr and cutting Paris so Italy can get Bre and Por. Italy in return cedes me Mar to leave me on 11, and builds F Nap. This could be construed as a mistake.

I, as agreed, support myself to Bulgaria to blow up the Russia fleet in Spring. As agreed, Sean disbands it. This could be construed as a mistake.

I take Bul, Rum, Bud, Hol, Bre, Par and Ven to go to 18. The only player who tried to stop me was Sean – he attacked Kiel and would have got it had England cut Holland. I think I probably can eventually force 18 anyhow, but with Italian fleets returning and Holland on ice, it would have been difficult.

Dan Lester stands on in disbelief, then returns to his board and agrees to the draw; I am the World Champion.



Blurry Bit

Some alcohol was drunk. I believe US politics were discussed. Chicago won the debate over Texas. Loudness was the determining factor (it took 3 to 1 mind you). HuskyCon sounds awesome. I start thinking "I'm

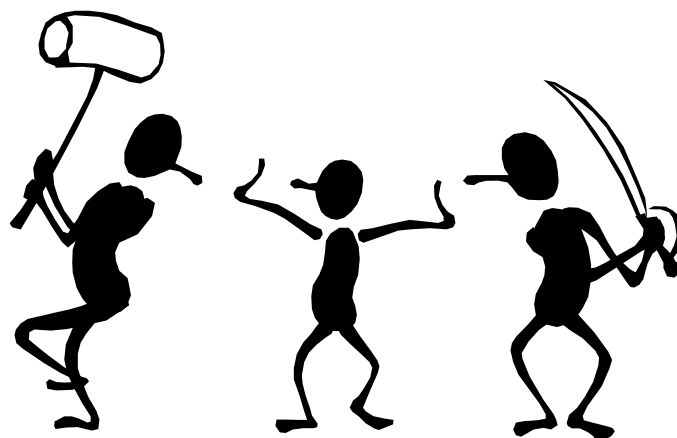
going to regret this in the morning" and then have it pointed out to me that it IS morning. I head back to the hotel room and Edi asks me how I went. I then sleep.

World Champion Hangover

Edi wakes me up an hour later and I get ready for the hobby meeting. Somehow he leaves half an hour before me and gets there half an hour after. Stabbed.

Sean isn't talking to me. The math has been done and he has finished 8th, narrowly missing out on the top board. This situation is maintained until his wife breaks this ice in the waiting lounge at the airport. Sean remains grumpy until I buy him a burger in Chicago while we wait to transit.

A disappointing 7 people turn up for the hobby meeting. Australia wins the World DipCon bid, and San Francisco wins the NADC bid. Not much else is discussed. I can't help thinking that a lot of the flame-war that followed could have been avoided if the issues had been aired in this forum.



I lose everything I possibly can at the awards ceremony except the one that matters. I feel awful for Dan Lester. I'm totally lost for words and give a rubbish speech. I call my mum. She's happy.

The End

I return to Australia, where customs quarantine my ego for 4 to 6 weeks. I'm now back at work in a cold and rainy Melbourne. My football team broke a little losing streak and my flatmates have yet to clean up from an ill-fated decision that it must be Fondue Friday. Life continues. I still can't really believe it.

I'm very sorry to all the people who have had to deal with being stabbed, annoyed, angered, and generally inconvenienced by me. Or just had to put up with me. In return, I gained a rare and personal insight into America and what it all means from the inside. Winning is one thing, but I still rate meeting such a diverse and interesting group of people as the highlight of my trip. I hope if any of you do make it to Australia I can return some of the many favors.

I also apologize for the very rough nature of this review... it's not going to win any Pulitzers. From a story of New York and Boston it changed by circumstance into a hastily written game review, so forgive me if you can. I've also tried to avoid the controversial issues that were raised at the tournament as much as possible; I don't think it appropriate for me to have a public opinion on how North America runs its hobby.

Thank you once again to all those people who made my

trip possible, and who made World DipCon happen. Travelling with Diplomacy is superb and I highly recommend it... whether you get to The Hague next year or Sydney in 2011 it will be an experience that you never forget and which I must admit I am very much addicted to. See you in San Francisco!

Two-time Australian champion, now World champion...I get the feeling Andrew has set himself up as a target in future tournaments!

It's Raining in Houston

By Conrad Woodring

This article is not meant to be a great work detailing the recent success of our first full board of Diplomacy in Houston, Texas. Instead, this is just a shout out to the hobby (and Brian Shelden specifically) to say: "HEY! There are Diplomacy players in Houston and we are playing Diplomacy."

After initially failing to organize a face-to-face Diplomacy game in Houston following Rice University's Owl Con (in downtown Houston), the second attempt at putting together seven players was more than a success. Although I live about 70 miles from Houston in Beaumont, Texas, I am doing my best to support building a hobby in Houston. Beaumont is simply too small with very few gamers to draw from. So, on Saturday morning, a friend from soccer (who I inadvertently discovered was already a diplomacy player), and my girl friend Elizabeth and myself got in the car and drove to the home of Roland Cooke, our host for the game. Since it was quite a trek getting there we made a whole day out of it, diplomacy, followed by a Houston Dynamo game followed by indoor rock climbing at midnight.

Unfortunately I ended up sitting out since we had eight players. Instead I helped coach the new player in England, Jeremy Dilbeck, and a very inexperienced player in Italy, Whitney Roberson. The game was nothing ground breaking. The RT (Roland and Trevor Isle) rolled right along without a problem. Austria (Brian Arensman who had played Diplomacy at Owl Con) and Italy got entangled in a war that gave the RT no opposition. On the other side of the board, an extremely aggressive Germany played by Florian Lee, succeeded in pushing the English and the French (Elizabeth) together despite the high level of mistrust between the two. The eastern alliance and the western alliance crushed the central powers and at some point I trailed off to play Race for the Galaxy and came back to see France had been dropped down to 4. I think most players had fun.

For me it was enough to see seven people playing Diplomacy face-to-face in Houston. For any kind of hobby building, your first face-to-face game with seven people is an important milestone. Until you get that one game down, you haven't made any measurable achievements towards your end goal (in this case, I would like to see an active community of Diplomacy players putting together at least one board per month).

Since then, we haven't played, although there is currently talk on our list about getting together for a game in Houston sometime in August. But in the wake of our first game, there has been a ton of chatter on the [texas-diplomacy] mailing list. Each of the major population centers in Texas seems to have a few players but not enough for a full board, and no push for new recruitment (that I am aware of). There has been some discussion of having all the diplomacy players in Texas getting together for a weekend in one city and playing all weekend in a sort of mini-con. Although not directly opposed to it, I felt recruitment should come before the con, and that such a con should not be used for recruitment. Post game, Jeremy and Elizabeth have both begun trying to recruit their friends and acquaintances. We may even see a game in Beaumont in the not too distant future.

So, who ever is reading this, keep in mind we are here. There is a Yahoo Texas Diplomacy mailing list with several people who really want to see Diplomacy become a regular occurrence in Texas (<http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/texas-diplomacy/>). So if you are passing through, live here and want to get involved, or are even a little curious, feel free to contact me at: conrad3384@gmail.com

Remember, I live in Dallas, so if we get some games organized you can learn – in person – what a terrible player the Lead Editor of Diplomacy World is!

Copyright and Diplomacy

By Chris Brand

In Diplomacy World 105, I read an article by Tom Anthony with lots of cool mathematic formulae that went completely over my head but certainly looked impressive. It was the bold print at the end of the article that caught my attention, though – “**By the way, this system is Copyright © 2009 Thomas Anthony. Please contact [him] if you wish to use the rating system**”. No doubt some of you have gotten weird looks from people when you tell them that you’re flying to some far-off city to spend the weekend playing board games, well you should see the looks you get when you cite “copyright” as a hobby! Nevertheless, it is something of a hobby of mine. I’m not a lawyer, but I’ve chatted to lots of lawyers, politicians, and advocates of all sorts about copyright, and I try to keep up-to-date with what’s going on in the exciting world of copyright reform. To me, this claim leapt out as completely outrageous.



Copyright is something that’s very tricky – ultimately, it’s a government-granted monopoly on expression. Indeed, the framers were pretty reluctant to include it in the US Constitution at all, and the beginning of April saw a US court rule that part of the Copyright Act is unconstitutional because it fails a First Amendment test. One thing that’s always been true, though, is that you can only copyright expression, not ideas. To be completely fair, let’s see what the US Copyright Act has to say (section 102(b), to be specific): “In no case does copyright protection for an original work of authorship extend to any idea, procedure, process, system, method of operation, concept, principle, or discovery, regardless of the form in which it is described, explained, illustrated, or embodied in such work.”. All very interesting, but DW is a Diplomacy zine, and so far, my link to Diplomacy is pretty tenuous. So let’s see if I can remedy that.

Let’s start with the game itself. Rulebooks and maps are great examples of works that are subject to copyright.

Reproducing either (among other things) is only legal with the permission of the rights holder. Actually, it’s not quite that simple. Because monopolies on expression were regarded as so risky, the US Copyright Act includes the concept of “Fair Use”, which essentially says that you don’t need to get permission if your use is “fair”. Whether your use is fair is ultimately a question for the courts to decide, and they will consider the four factors from section 107 of the Act. The Wikipedia article on Diplomacy includes a copy of the map and notes that their use is believed to be covered as “fair use”. An online adjudicator would probably on more shaky ground without permission because it could be argued to impact the market for Diplomacy board games, and a pay-per-play adjudicator would almost certainly fail a fair use test. As for the rules, I’d suspect that the rules themselves would fall into the realm of things that are not copyrightable (“procedure, process, system, method of operation”), although you might have a hard time expressing them in your own words without introducing ambiguities or errors (indeed, you could argue that that’s been true of Avalon Hill themselves). It’s also worth noting that each country has its own copyright law with its own unique twists and turns. I’ve focused on US law for this article, but for example Canada and the UK’s “fair dealing” is significantly narrower than the US’s “fair use”, so a use could be legal in the US but illegal in Canada.

Variants can be even more complex. If a variant creator comes up with their own map, they get the initial copyright on it. For a rules variant, a rulebook that contained the original rules with any modifications introduced by the variant would likely be a “derived work” where copyright is jointly held by the rights holders of the original work and the person who made the modifications. That means that you’d need permission from both of them to make a copy.

How many articles have you read about Diplomacy openings? How often have your Spring 1901 negotiations included discussion of specific named openings? How often have you asked Edi Birsan’s permission to use the Sealion? Of course Edi’s a nice guy, and I’m sure that he’d grant it if you did ask (unless he’s playing England, anyway), but just think of the implications if the first person to conceive of an opening were granted a monopoly on it. After all, there are only so many combinations of moves that are possible, so it wouldn’t be long before they were all taken. “Well, I’d love to open the way you’re asking, but Richard Sharp charges \$5 for it, and this beer cost the last of my cash”. Not the game we know and love.

What about game results? Well, despite what the various sports leagues would have you believe, you

can't copyright facts, and the way a particular game unfolds is factual. Compilations of facts, though, are a particularly interesting area because there's no international standard. Europe has a "database copyright" which allows you to claim copyright on a collection of facts in certain circumstances. The US doesn't. So it does matter that it's Laurent Joly, in France, who has the most comprehensive collection of game results. The individual results are still not subject to copyright, but a set of results could be.

Contrary to what you may read, copyright was not intended as a pension plan for aging musicians, or even to ensure that creators get paid for their work. That's actually the means to the end, not the end itself. It certainly wasn't intended to grant censorship-like rights to individuals or corporations. The purpose of copyright is very clearly stated in the US Constitution – "to

promote the progress of science and the useful arts".

The Diplomacy hobby, like academia, is far better off when we remember that articles (and rulebooks, and maps) are copyrighted, but the subject of the articles isn't. Let's give credit where it's due, but feel free to use, analyze and improve on all the systems, results, and concepts that others have come up with.

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Face to Face Tournaments: A Short List of Requirements

By Jeremie Lefrancois

This is just a collection of thoughts that came to me when reading the various (very lengthy) reports of the Bangor North American DipCon controversy (especially in Diplomacy World). Even if I doubt what I put here can be easily rejected (except for the controversial final table), I am sure there is probably more to add, and I would love to receive comments and suggestions. NOTE: These are only starting discussion points, and nowhere near complete. They state only my personal view.

Any face to face tournament (and on-line, to a certain extent) pretending to be a serious DipCon should abide the following requirements. This should not apply to informal tournaments which should have the freedom to be run as the organizers wish. In terms of this article, a "serious" tournament is one which is running for some official title. This article is suggested to be the basis of an addenda to the EDC (Europe), NADF (North-America) and DAANZ (Oceania) charters. See the table following this article for the justifications and reasoning behind the rules and suggestions.

Rounds and Advancement

- R1 Tournament will have at least three rounds
- R2 A player in several games at the same time scores his/her single best result out of all games
- R3 The tournament will have a final table. The seven best players from scores before the last round reach the final table. The winner of the final table wins the tournament. (There is no requirement on how many places the final table locks, it can be from one to seven)

Information.

- R4 Information about prior rounds is available to all players before the next round begins, including the current overall ratings.
- R5 Tie breakers for advancement and victory should be precise and known before tournament starts (or alternatively there may not be any tie breakers for victory if the title is shareable).

Rules and Ambiguities

- R6 A TD (Tournament Director) must be available at any time during the event for any rule issue (and this same person should be the individual used to decipher any badly written orders throughout the event).
- R7 For all ambiguities as listed in the DATC, the decision should be clear before start, and the document should be available from the TD. The DATC is an exhaustive document list all rule issues and possible interpretations.

Scoring System

- For any game :
 - R8 a solo scores better than a non solo
 - R9 a power eliminated scores worse than a non-eliminated power (note that in the case of a solo victory, all non-soling powers are considered to be eliminated).

Neutrality

For any given game :

- R10 a power with more centers gets strictly more points than another on same game
- R11 two non-eliminated players in the same game with the same number of centers get the same points (two eliminated powers may or may not get different points, usually something like 0.1 points per year survived).

- R12 Overall TD (Tournament Director), if involved, may not play the final table for a tournament victory (but may always – and should - play to get more tables filled if necessary)

Votes

- R13 Votes for end of game or for draw are secret

Requirement	Justification
R1	With two rounds, you may have a player lucky to win a game and get to the final and win the tournament.
R2	This avoids that a player filling many tables getting too many points and limits the side effect of this irregularity.
R3	Final table makes sure the 7 best meet and the best wins. It may lead to players making sure they get to the final table instead of doing their best, but at least one cannot complain the winner did not face a strong opposition at least at the final table.
R4	This will avoid players with information taking advantage of those who do not.
R5	This may avoid arguments in case of tie.
R6	This will avoid almost all rule issues.
R7	Idem.
R8	This tries to get close to the "original" idea that in fact actually only a solo should score.
R9	Obvious.
R10	Idem.
R11	Idem.
R12	One cannot be judge and a scoring participant.
R13	Because, for instance, some player may loudly ask for a draw they do not intend to pass.

Selected Upcoming Conventions

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

ManorCon – Friday July 17th, 2009 to Monday July 20th, 2009 – Stamford Hall, Leicester University, United Kingdom - <http://www.manorcon.org.uk>

Auckland Diplomacy Championships – Saturday August 29th to Sunday August 30th, 2009 – Onehunga Community Center, Onehunga, Auckland, New Zealand - <http://www.daanz.org.au/dip-tournaments.htm#aki2009>

PacificCon/Conquest - Friday September 4th 2009 to Sunday September 6th 2009 - Santa Clara Marriot Hotel, California - <http://www.conquestsf.com/>

Weasel Moot III – Friday September 18th to Sunday September 20th, 2009 – Chicago, Illinois - <http://umbrehodnydns.org/wcw/index.htm>

Sydney Diplomacy Challenge – Saturday October 3rd to Sunday October 4th, 2009 – Summer Hill Community Centre, Sydney, NSW, Australia - <http://www.daanz.org.au/dip-tournaments.htm#syd2009>

Championnat de France - Friday December 18th to Sunday December 20th, 2009 - Hotel La Louisiane, Paris, France - <http://www.championnat-de-france.org>

Grand Prix Watch

Sigal Wins Second Tournament, Opens Big Lead

By Jim O'Kelley

After winning Seattle's prestigious WACCon, the launching pad for former Grand Prix champs Andrew Neumann and the much beloved Jim O'Kelley, New York's Adam Sigal took a couple of months off to rest up for the large summer cons.

Rested and ready, he kicked off his summer with a lopsided victory at the venerable DixieCon, held Memorial Day weekend in Chapel Hill, N.C. Sigal picked up 70 points there, opening an 86-point lead over closest pursuer Dave Maletsky, the cat in the fancy new hat from the D.C. area.

Then, a month later at the World Diplomacy Championship at the Origins Game Fair in Columbus, Ohio, Sigal posted the first solo of the weekend, as England, and briefly held first place in the tournament. Alas, six more solos followed, knocking Sigal into fourth place. Still, he racked up 131 Grand Prix points and now has 361 points overall.

A whopping five of those solos in Columbus went to overseas players Dan Lester of England (two) and Andrew Goff of Australia (three). Those two duelled right up to the final minutes of the tournament, when Goff posted his third solo, this time as Austria, to go with French and German solos in the second and third rounds, respectively. Interestingly, in Goff's first game, he lost to Lester's first solo.

Upon the conclusion of Goff's game, Lester immediately settled for a three-way draw on his board, accepting defeat with dignity and formally ending the 2009 World Diplomacy Championship. Lester previously had soloed as Italy and France.

O'Kelley posted the weekend's other solo, playing Germany in round 2. That put him in third place for the weekend (and also made him the Western Hemisphere's highest scoring player...). O'Kelley also finished 10th in Chicago's CODCon Open, held in April, and is now in second in the Grand Prix with 258 points.

O'Kelley is also the Grand Prix administrator, so if he overtakes Sigal, we can all look forward to another

conference call.

Goff, meanwhile, is in third with 252 points, having finished second at the Boston Massacre the week before Worlds. Not a bad swing through the States for Mr. Goff. And it was also very nice of him to purchase champagne for his party following his world championship. (Lester, conversely, spent the balance of his evening on a park bench, bumming smokes from vagrants.)

Holding down the fourth spot is Conrad Woodring, currently of Texas, who's been in the hunt since finishing third at WAC. Woodring finished 10th at Dixie and sixth at Worlds on the strength of a two-way draw as Turkey. He has 250 points.

And in fifth is Diplomacy's Yoda, Edi Birsan of the Bay Area, with 188 points. He also placed fifth at Worlds, finishing with three three-way draws.

Rounding out the top 10 are Chris Brand of Vancouver (171 points), Maletsky (166 points), Lester (162 points), Jonathan Hill of Boston (160 points), and Christian MacDonald, a Canadian transplant living in Chicago (147 points).

Next up on the circuit is HuskyCon at the Woodring estate on the Long Island Sound the weekend of July 25. Then it's on to the World

Boardgaming Championship the weekend of August 8 in Lancaster, Pa., followed by Weasel Moot, the hobby's best-named tournament, Sept. 18-19 in Chicago.

After Weasel Moot, only three events will remain in the 2009 Grand Prix.

You can find the Grand Prix rules and schedule at its official website, diplom.org/~seattle/grandprix. Follow all the action at the World Diplomacy Database, www.eurodip.eu. Click Results, then Circuits, then North American Grand Prix.

Hope to see you at a tournament soon.

Jim O'Kelley is Diplomacy World's Club and Tournament Editor.

What I Learned at World DipCon by Mike Morrison

Mike Morrison of Chicago attended his first World Diplomacy championship June 25 to 27 at the Origins Game Fair in Columbus, Ohio. Here's what he learned:

- 1) "Ally or Die" -- I read that somewhere. Unfortunately, I misread "or" as "and."
- 2) Avoid playing on the boards with the eventual tournament winners, as they will insist on solo-ing you out. (Actually, I managed to avoid the unpleasant condition of being threatened by that -- my secret: die early!) (By the way, first-, second-, and third-place winners all owe me a beer!)
- 3) Don't -- for god's sake DON'T -- spend Friday night watching the game that ends just before the first round on Saturday.
- 4) Trust no one, especially yourself!

Battleships: A New 5-Player Variant Made in Germany

By Ulrich Degwitz

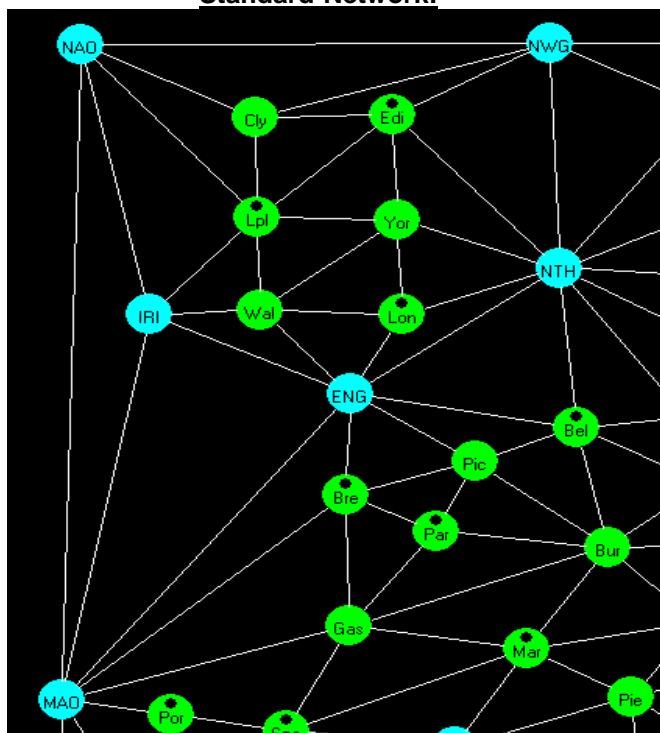
The basic question behind the creation of this variant was: what would a Diplomacy game look like in which every player starts with the same number of fleets, dispersed over a more or less standard map, but without any armies? It took me more than two years to work it out, and now I'm able to publish the results. So this article describes the genesis of the variant, which was not free from detours and even barking up the wrong tree once.

The first step was a brief categorization of supply centers (SCs), as found on the Calhamer-map: out of 34, only 7 are land-locked (PAR, MUN, VIE, BUD, SER, WAR, MOS), whilst the remaining 27 are coastal SCs. Thus it seemed suggesting to create a 9-player-variant with each starting with three SCs – certainly an interesting approach. But I didn't follow it; the main reason being BLA, the Black Sea. Since this peculiar sea space borders to 5 SCs (ANK, CON, BUL, RUM & SEV) it seemed to be a tricky thing to make the original map design applicable for nine players. However, it looked self-evident that something fine for five could be

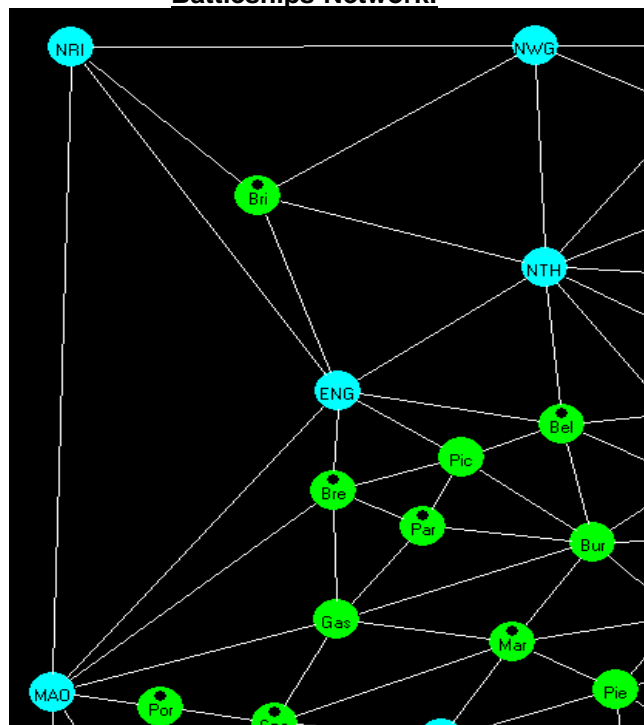
done.

Unfortunately 27 can hardly be divided by 5 without having something left over, so the next problem arose: should I make it 25 or 30 supply centers? Since I didn't want to invent new fantasy-centers, the preference was clearly 25, but which two should be subtracted? A more comprehensive analysis of sea and land spaces brought me to an acceptable solution: provided that the British Island as a whole is one single SC, the loss of two centers there makes it work. Imagine, the six English spaces merge to a single center called BRI(tain). Then you still have five centers around the North Sea (BRI, NWY, DEN, HOL & BEL), the same number as for the Black Sea. After this first change of the map, a second one was quite obvious: you don't need 3 sea spaces west of BRI any longer, so the North Atlantic Ocean and the Irish Sea merged to a space which I called NRI (well, what does that mean? The Northern-Irish Sea, perhaps). The new topology of the north-western dip-network as compared with the original shape:

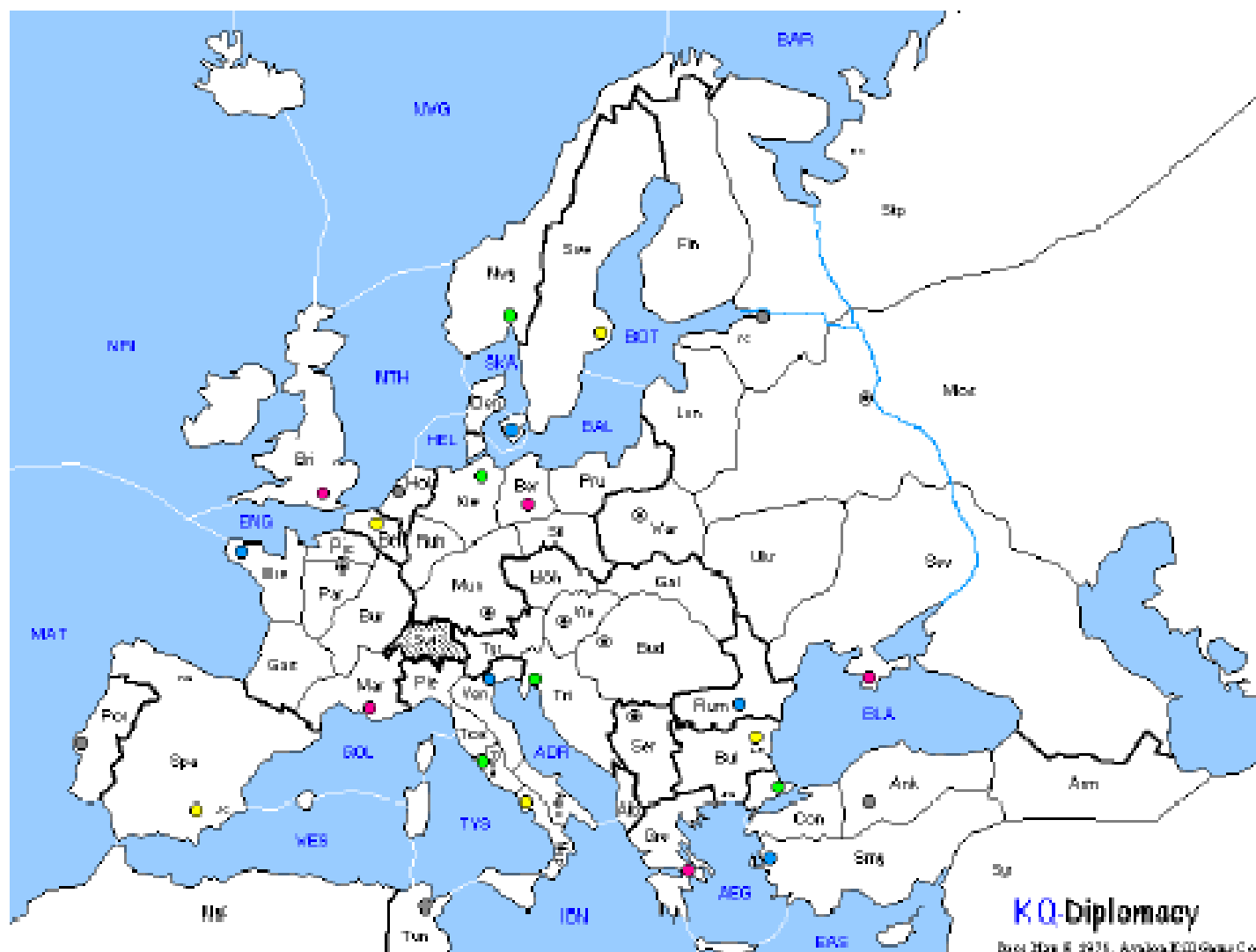
Standard-Network:



Battleships-Network:



With those few changes done, the new variant got a German working title (KQ = *Kapitänsquintett*) and a 1st map could be drawn. It looked pretty much like this one:



Attentive observers will notice a blue line, diagonally crossing the Russian territories of SEV, MOS and STP, which leads to another problem that was waiting for a solution: the St. Petersburg problem. As an opposite to BUL & SPA (where I rapidly found that the starting fleets had to be located at the east and south coast respectively), it was much more difficult to decide where to put the STP fleet.

Two possibilities existed, each with different implications:

- 1) F STP/nc can theoretically reach two other SCs within two moves: NWY and SWE, the latter only via Norway (provided that the owner of NWY has no intention to defend himself against F STP-NWY);
- 2) On the other hand, with F STP/sc it's even worse, Sweden being the single possible target for an attack. But it is unsecure and takes two seasons to sail there, which gives an unfriendly Norwegian neighbor two opportunities to enter STP during the first year, if he likes.

You may think neither are satisfactory. Both options don't look promising enough compared with the starting points of the other 24 fleets, indeed. To give this fleet

another option, I found myself on the wrong tack, introducing the above mentioned Russian Channel, navigable for fleet movements into Moscow (This idea was firstly outlined in Allan B. Calhamer's humorous article "The Coast of Moscow" - http://www.diplomacy-archive.com/resources/humour/coast_moscow.htm).

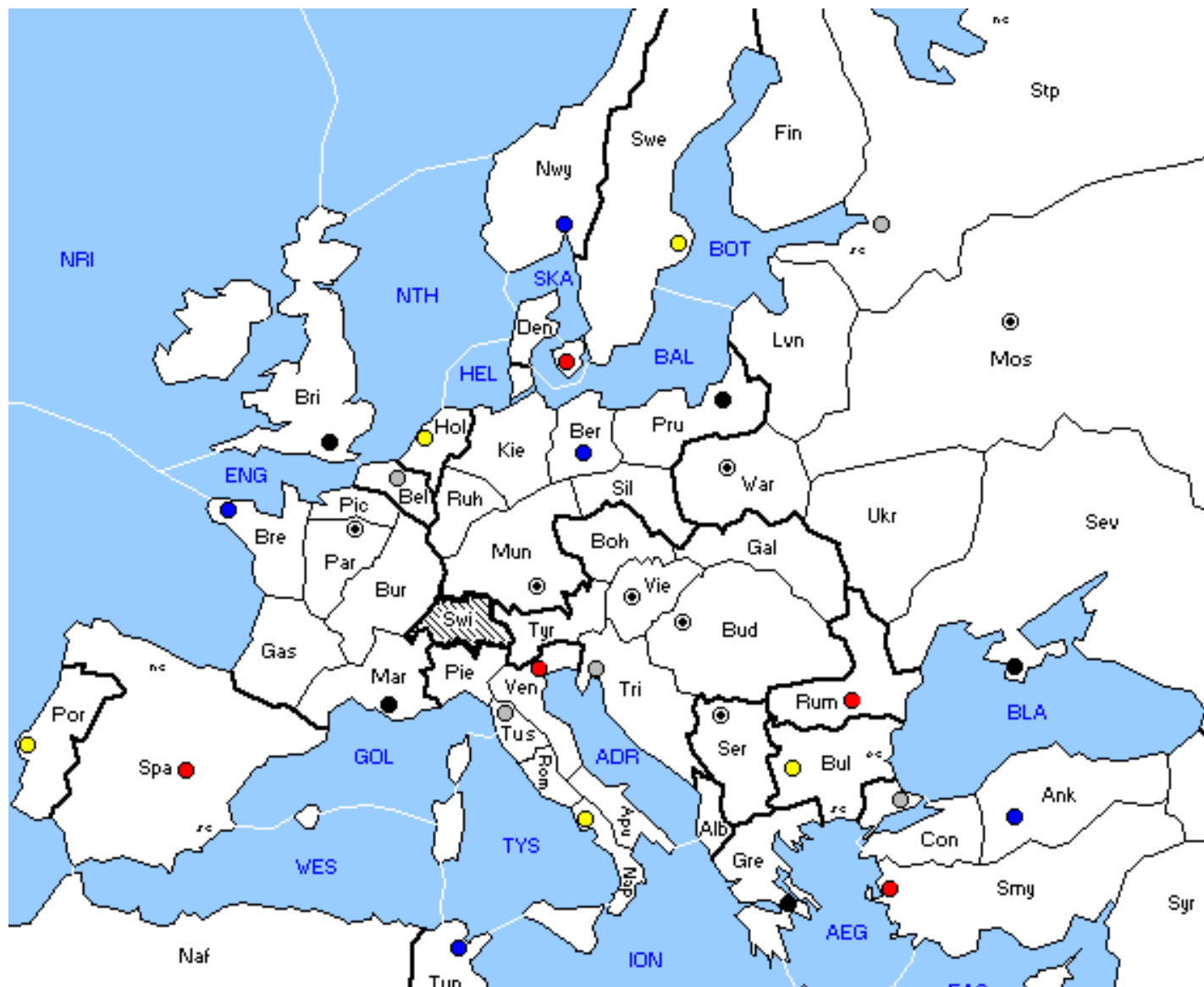
Thus, MOS was no longer a land-locked neutral SC and could now be reached by the SEV fleet from the south, with a likelihood of continued bounces on this attractive prey. But a look at the areas surrounding Sevastopol reveals that F SEV already had a lot of options before the introduction of the channel: RUM, BUL, CON, ANK (all belonging to different nations). Those should be more than enough possibilities, so why confuse this vessel by adding MOS?

Obviously, another solution for the St. Petersburg problem had to be found, and finally I decided to solve it this way: The Russian Channel was closed for the sake of F SEV, and the alternative option for F STP (ultimately positioned at the south coast) was found by transferring the Kiel supply center into Prussia. It looked like I'd killed two birds with one stone, since a fleet starting in

KIE is quite vulnerable to possible attacks coming from three sides, whilst PRU is a much safer place for her.

I also found it useful to make a final change of the original map in Italy: F ROM can attack only two centers in the 1st year: NAP & TUN, provided it may enter TYS in the Spring move and the following attack on TUN succeeds. This is another unlikely move, since F TUN cannot be far away from her home, and regarding the

projected build modus (Aberration) the owner of Tunis must be very careless not to defend it. So in this case the solution was simply to transfer the supply center from ROM to TUS. This allows the fleet to enter LYO/PIE alternatively, with the extra options of MAR & SPA. This also makes alliances between the two western Italian fleet owners more likely than in the original setting. To conclude, the final map design is presented:



Finally, giving the variant a name was almost the greatest challenge to overcome, since a variety of names (in chronological order: 25 Fleets, Captain's Five, Armadas, Coastal Conflicts) came into my mind. But then I got a helpful suggestion from by Martin Asal, the variant manager of the German judge DEUS.

In the beginning the KQ-map brought out the five powers in these colors: Blue, Black, Green, Red and Yellow. This created a technical problem for the planned introduction on that judge: since Blue and Black begin

with the same letter (B), it's not functional for judge-games, where the powers are usually recognized by this letter. So Martin's proposal was to take the colors as used in the Chromatic variant: **Blue, Dark, Light, Red and Yellow**. I was fond of following that advice, but still unhappy with the power names – which should represent something peculiar, certainly different from a Chromatic game. Then I discovered (by visiting Wikipedia - <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battleship> and <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schlachtschiff>) that famous battleships were named as follows:

- HMS **Dreadnought**, launched in the UK (February, 10th, 1906)
- **Littorio**, launched in Italy (August 22th, 1937)
- **Bismarck**, launched in Germany (February 14th, 1939)
- **Richelieu**, launched in France (January 10th, 1940)
- **Yamato**, launched in Japan (September 8th, 1940)

After this, the names were clear, and the starting positions were fixed as follows:

Bismarck:	Dreadnought:	Littorio:	Richelieu:	Yamato:
F Ankara	F Britain	F Belgium	F Denmark	F Bulgaria(ec)
F Berlin	F Greece	F Constantinople	F Rumania	F Holland
F Brest	F Marseilles	F St Petersburg(sc)	F Smyrna	F Naples
F Norway	F Prussia	F Trieste	F Spain(sc)	F Portugal
F Tunis	F Sevastopol	F Tuscany	F Venice	F Sweden

The game starts with the spring moves of 1941, according to the Yamato being operational (I am well aware that some people will bother about Japanese battleships fighting in European waters, but there was simply no alternative for the letter "Y" and at least those fleets are painted yellow ☺. 17 of the 32 centers are needed for a solo victory.

If anybody would like to propose improvements on this variant, he should feel free to send me a message. You can also get the complete Realpolitik-files after sending a mail to degwitz@graue-substanz.net. "Battleships" has also recently been installed on DEUS and can be tested there (www.lepanto.de)

Tempest in a Teapot!

When: 10/09/2008 - 10/11/2009

Where: [Westin Tyson's Corner](#)

Cost: Early Registration through 7/31: \$30 to PTKS members, \$40 to non-members.

Contact: [Joseph Wheeler](#)

Tempest is the flagship annual event of the Potomac Tea & Knife Society. We have previously hosted both DipCon and World DipCon at Tempest, attracting players from all over the world.. This year's event will take place at the Westin Tysons Corner in Falls Church, Virginia. The hotel is offering an event rate of \$99 a night - just specify PTKS Tempest event when booking your room. Questions about this event should be directed to Joe Wheeler, our Director of Tournaments.

[Register](#) early because the rate will go up on August 1, 2009.

Ambition & Empire: A Strategy for Prussia

by Chris Dziedzic

I love the variant *Ambition & Empire*. I have played eight games of the variant over the past few years as different versions of the maps and rules have been perfected in numerous play tests by the designers, Jeff Kase and Baron Powell.

There are two great additions to the normal diplomatic milieu we can all enjoy in *Ambition & Empire*. First, there are armed neutrals. Second, there is a new rule allowing the ten players to spend "diplomacy points" and bid to get the support of those armed neutrals to support their offensive actions. Both of these rules add layers of complexity and intrigue to the variant.

A group of fans of *Ambition & Empire* have already begun writing a series of articles for submission to various hobby zines. We have begun by trying to calm unwarranted fears by those new to the variant that the smaller powers that begin with two units and two home supply center powers are unplayable. While those powers do face challenges, the additional rules of the variant level the playing field and give all ten powers a chance at success. You can check out this ongoing series of articles at [here](#) and [here](#)

It is not only the smaller powers, that start with two units and two home supply centers, which intimidate players trying to get a handle on this variant. Prussia, one of ten playable powers, starts out with three units and home supply centers at game start. However, there are some restraints on the Prussian starting position that sometimes gives newer players trepidation:

- Prussia has no buffer provinces. Its starting territory is exclusively comprised of its three home supply centers, Berlin, Breslau and Konigsberg.
- Prussia's starting units and home supply centers are not all contiguous. The province of another power, Poland & Saxony, breaks up Prussia. This province, Posen, separates Berlin and Breslau from Konigsberg.
- Another power, Britain & Hanover, has a starting army and home supply center contiguous to one

of Prussia's units and home supply centers. Much as Venice-Trieste creates tensions in the Austrian-Italian relationship in standard *Diplomacy*, Hanover-Berlin will cause some tension in the Anglo-Prussian relationship in *Ambition & Empire*.

One of the things I propose is for Prussia to strongly consider a westward expansion across Northern Germany. To misappropriate and mangle a line by Horace Greeley, Prussian players should consider the advice, "Go west junger mann."

Now, it's probably appropriate for a quick disclaimer. This article is not intended to be an exhaustive and thorough account of all Prussian options. This is an advocacy piece, explaining why Prussian players in games of *Ambition & Empire* should consider this strategy of westward expansion. I can give you a nice variety of reasons that recommend this approach.

I. Caissic Analysis

We can use Caissic analysis. In his pioneering article, [Geography is Destiny](#), Paul Windsor counted the tempi, or unit moves from province to province, it would take each of the seven powers on the standard map to most quickly and efficiently reach the magical number of eighteen supply centers for a victory from their home supply centers. Furthermore, he challenged us "Indeed, why stop with the standard map... perhaps someone who is [a fan of variants] would care to analyze their favorite variant's map, using this kind of analysis, and present their own analysis."

I successfully used Caissic analysis when I was developing playing strategies for both Spain and Turkey in my solo wins as each power in previous games of the *Ambition & Empire* variant. When we look at the map of this variant and plot out the most efficient route to 15 supply centers (the victory conditions in *Ambition & Empire*), this is what we get.

	Starting supply centers	Supply centers reachable in 1 Tempo	Supply centers reachable in 2 Tempi	Total Tempi for solo victory
Prussia	Berlin, Breslau, Koenigsberg	Hanover, Hesse-Westphalia, Mecklenburg, Courland	Austrian Netherlands, Baden-Wurtemberg, Bavaria, Budapest, Copenhagen, Crimea, Dresden, Kiev, Moscow, Stockholm, Vienna, Warsaw, United Provinces	21

Prussia is one of those lucky powers that do not need to go beyond a two tempo radius from its starting position to obtain fifteen supply centers for a solo victory. It has three centers that are a single tempo away from its starting position. It has a further **fourteen** supply centers from which to choose in order to reach the required fifteen supply centers.

When we look at the chart, the first block of supply centers, those only a single tempo away from Berlin, three quarters of them are in Northern Germany. Here is our first reason. Why should Prussia strongly consider this westward expansion across Northern Germany to start the game? Because this is the most efficient route to early growth for Prussia.

II. Historical Outcome

One of the great things about certain Diplomacy variants, and *Ambition & Empire* is one of them, is that they are designed to allow for various historical outcomes, even though they do not force any specific outcome. The designers have put a great deal of thought and analysis into their creation. Every rule and map alteration over the course of extensive play testing, no matter how subtle, was scrutinized for its effect on the game.

The design of Prussia is one such example. Take a long look at the area of Prussian expansion highlighted in Figure 1. This illustrates the growth of Prussia into those supply centers that are a single tempo distant.

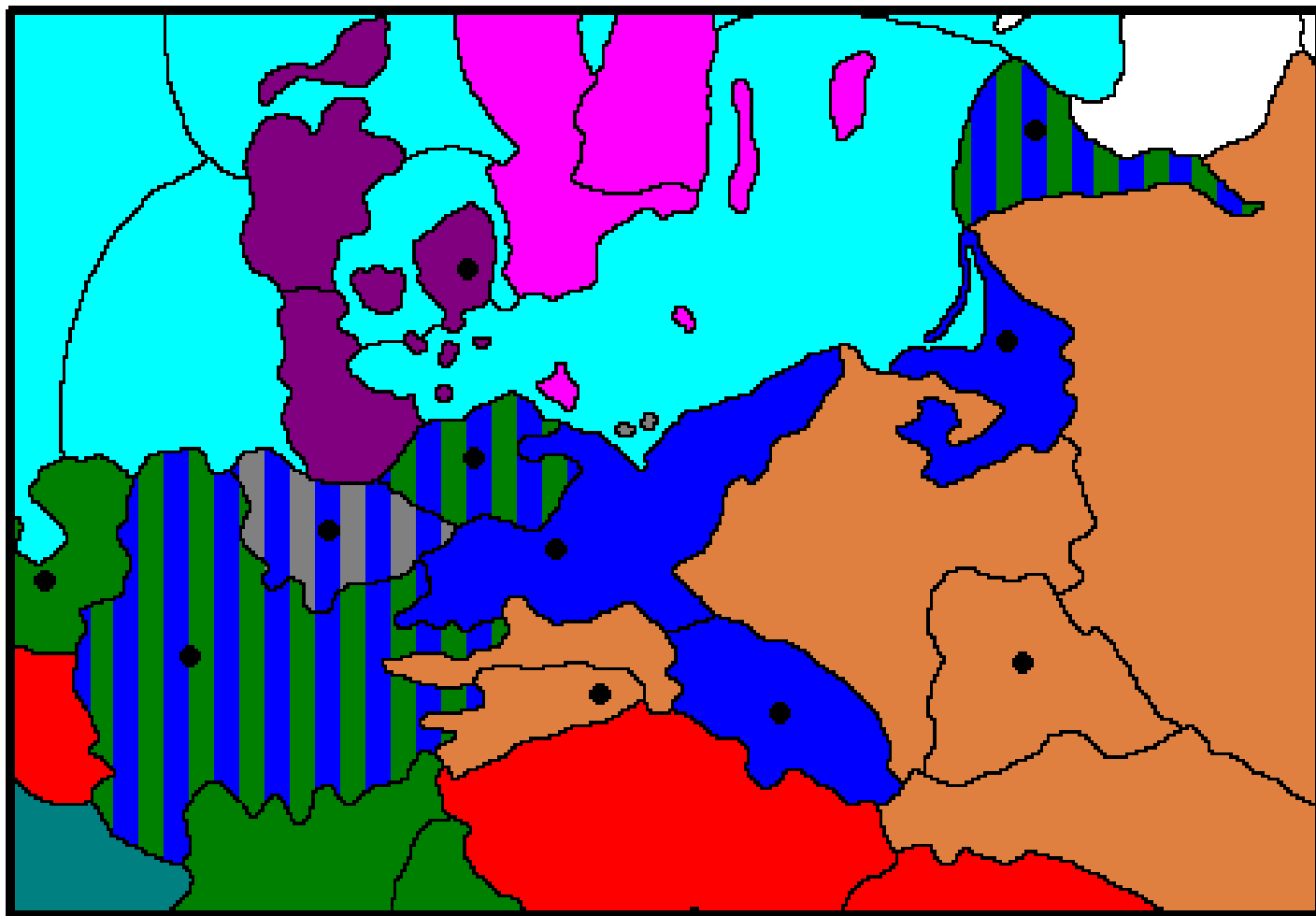


Fig. 1 A portion of the *Ambition & Empire* map illustrating Prussia (solid blue) and the four supply centers only one tempo distant from the Prussian home supply centers (heavy blue stripes).

Historically, this route of expansion is one followed by the Hohenzollern rulers of Prussia. Four over two hundred years they clawed and scraped their way into possessions throughout Northern Germany. They obtained Cleve, Mark and Ravensburg in 1614, Minden in 1648, Bentheim-Lingen in 1702, Upper Guelders in 1713, East Friesland in 1744; and occupied Hannover

with Napoleonic permission in both 1801 and 1805-1807. At the Congress of Vienna, they were given Rheinland-Westphalia. This strategy of growth in Northern Germany came to completion in 1866 with the formation of the North German Confederation with Prussia as dominant hegemonic power as shown below.

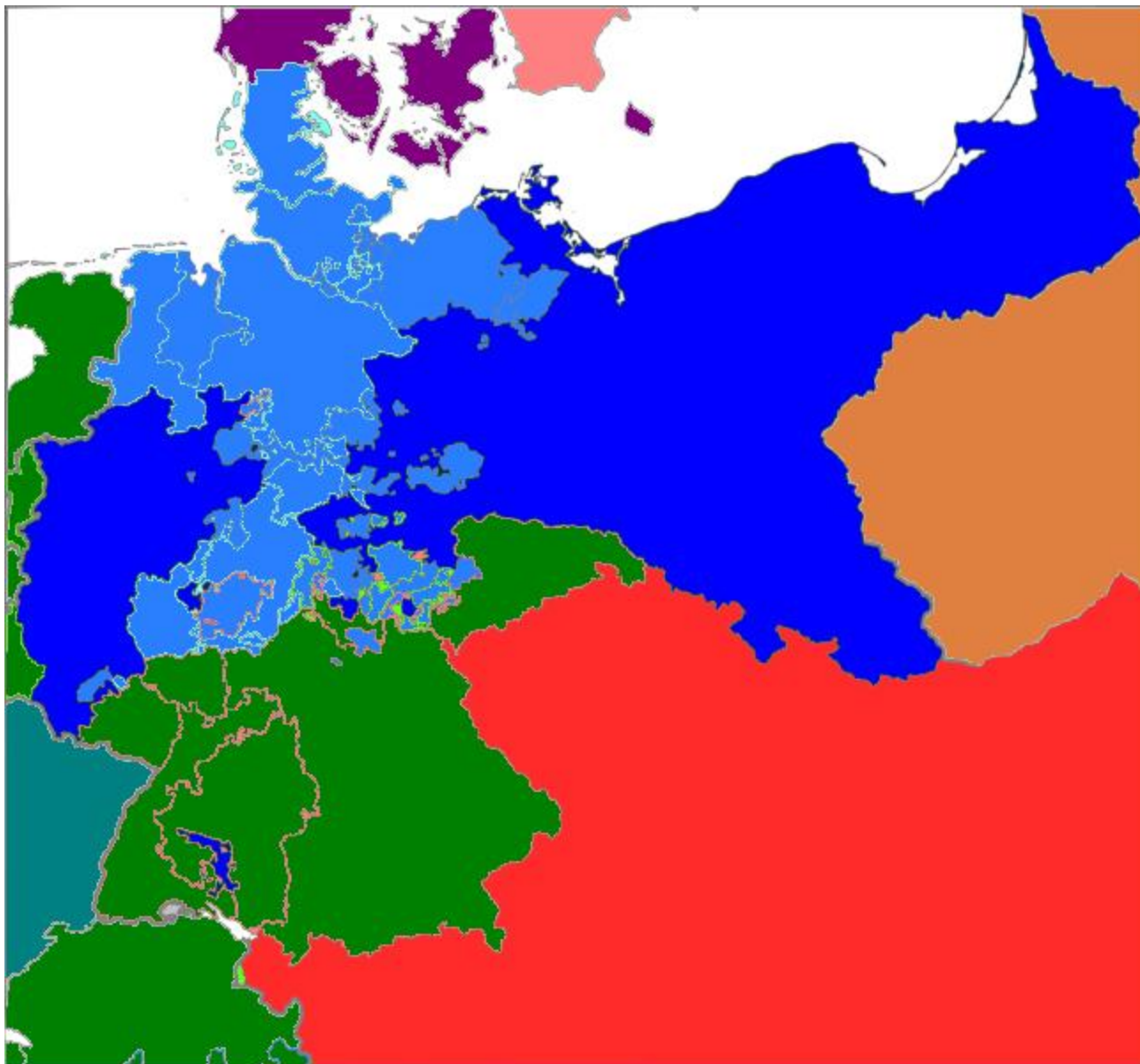


Fig. 2 A map illustrating Prussia (dark blue) and the North German Confederation (light blue) in 1866.

The visual parallel between the North German Confederation in Figure 2 and Prussia augmented by the supply centers of Hanover, Hesse-Westphalia and Mecklenburg in Figure 1, is startling. This provides our second reason. Why should Prussia strongly consider this westward expansion across Northern Germany to start the game? It is an historically accurate outcome and one that was proven to work in our own timeline.

III. Elimination of neighboring threats

Another rationale for strategy is that it allows for the removal of the British army in Hanover as quickly as possible. Why is this removal in the Prussian interest? As discussed earlier, Hanover is contiguous to one of Prussia's units and home supply centers. Much as Venice-Trieste can strain relations in the Austrian-Italian

rapport in standard **Diplomacy**, Hanover-Berlin will can likewise strain relations in the Anglo-Prussian association in *Ambition & Empire*.

This is only increased by the nature of that British home supply center. Hanover is not contiguous with the rest of the British starting territory and unit positions, so there are greater chances that a British & Hanoverian player will engage in more aggressive and risky adventures with that unit.

Risky and aggressive is not what any player wants to hear about a unit located next to them at game start. Thus taking out the British army and taking that supply center removes one wild card from the constantly fluid situation in a diplomacy game. Furthermore, the British, if based on Hanover, will look to expand their power along the North Sea shores, taking in Copenhagen, Hesse-Westphalia, and the United Netherlands; any

such British interest in continental possessions will conflict directly with any Prussian desire to grow and expand and cannot be tolerated or encouraged.

There is another latent or potential threat that this path of expansion nips in the bud. It denies the neutral supply center of Mecklenburg to Denmark-Norway and Sweden. This is important to Prussia for a couple of reasons.

First and most obviously, a Prussian player does not want to encourage expansion by either Scandinavian power across the Baltic Sea into Northern Germany. Also, because of the special rule for **Ambition & Empire** that allows for the two supply center powers (including both Sweden and Denmark-Norway) to acquire a third home supply center during the game from their first conquest, it is crucial that Prussia allow neither of those power make Mecklenburg as their first captured supply center.

To allow Mecklenburg to be the first supply center either Scandinavian power captures would change the neutral into an enemy build center contiguous to Berlin and give that power a powerful bridgehead into Germany that is final for the remainder of the game. Just as Hanover is dangerous and a threat to be removed, a second Hanover popping up in purple (the Danish-Norwegian color) or pink (the Swedish color) in Mecklenburg must be avoided at all costs.

Therefore, we also conclude that Prussia should seriously weigh this westward expansion across Northern Germany into Hanover and Mecklenburg to start the game. It is a defensively sound strategy that eliminates and minimizes threats to Prussia.

Perhaps we can convince Chris to write on some other Ambition & Empire variant strategies?

Tabletop Diplomacy

by Bill Coffin

I have been a longtime Diplomacy enthusiast, but I have never actually owned a Diplomacy board. During high school and college, numerous friends owned sets, and whenever we got a game going, inevitably more than one of them played. So there wasn't much need for me to buy the game. Later, my Diplomacy playing was entirely online (mostly through BOUNCED), which further obviated the need to shell out \$50 or so on a set I'd never actually use. Plus, when I think Diplomacy, the set I have in mind is the one that was available in stores during the mid to late 1980s – the newer, fancier sets just don't inspire me to buy.

Despite all of this, I really wanted some kind of diplomacy setup so I could look at the board offline, and perhaps move some pieces around as I considered my next move on sites like BOUNCED. Then it hit me: why not create an end table that had a Diplomacy board built into its surface? Thus began my Diplomacy Table project.

My journey began by getting an end table I could work on. My logical choice was Gelco Woodcraft (www.gelcowoodcraft.com), a local retailer that specializes in selling unfinished wood furniture. I spent a lot of time at Gelco, explaining to them what I had in mind, and they were really helpful in advising me on what kind of wood I might wish to work with. They even gave me a few samples of scrap wood to work on at home before making my purchase. My plan had been to draw a Diplomacy map on the tabletop using a garden variety wood burning kit, which can be found at any arts and crafts store. But I needed a wood that would not blacken easily, since I would be drawing lots of rather thing squiggly lines, and if I slipped or if the tip of the

wood burner got caught on the wood and a big burn spot developed, it could ruin the map. So wood choice was important.

I settled on parawood, which is not only great to work with, but it's extremely durable and relatively cheap. Parawood is all the rage in Asian furniture manufacture, and I can see why. It's the wood of an exhausted rubber tree; once it has no more latex sap to give, the wood itself is harvested. For you environmentalists out there, parawood is also a rather Earth-friendly wood, since it is harvested when the rubber tree is going to be cut down anyway, so the wood is being put to good use rather than being discarded. Given parawood's nice texture and easy-to-finish surface, throwing this stuff away would be a tragedy.

Since parawood is so dense, its extremely durable as well as resistant to heat. I tried a few test burns on the parawood scraps Gelco gave me, and the smooth, uniform nature of the wood (there is no noticeable grain to it) made drawing on it with the wood burner very manageable. Moving in a slow, inward stroke, I could control the wood burning stylus with ease. And, I could also stop a line and start up again and not create a big burn dot where the lines joined. For me, this was key. I didn't want my map to have all sorts of reminders of where my work stoppages occurred.

Having decided on wood choice, I bought a nice little endtable from Gelco that had a handy square interior marked off by a thick groove, so this thing was just begging to have a design put to it. With a table at the ready, I began work on the map itself.

I looked at a bunch of different Diplomacy maps, and right away, I discovered a problem; most Dip maps are rectangular, not square in shape. I had a square table, so I needed a solution. Most maps, I could try to cut some space off of the east or west, but I find that the vastness of the Russian territory lends a certain psychological element to the game – I've lost count of how many times players have gone after Russia early because the sheer size of the country frightened them. So I didn't want to lose that. Likewise, I have seen France and England duke it out over the western sea lanes in part out of appearance's sake. Seeing France parked in the MAO takes on more significance, when the MAO itself is larger than all of England. So I wanted to preserve that, too. What to do?



Figure 1. This is how the table looks on a typical day in my living room. The arm chairs flanking it were chosen, in part, for how they would match the Diplomacy Table. The table is Alli's spot for knitting sweaters and such, which is why the can of needles is there. The whole table has become a sort of sewing and knitting center, especially in the run-up to Christmas.

Thankfully, Hasbro has on its Diplomacy site a number of maps, including some used in a series of instructional articles on how to play the game. These were really close to square, so I copied a few to my hard drive, fired up Adobe Photoshop, and altered the image just a little so it was a perfect square. It required very little alteration, I'm happy to say.

Next, I altered the image so it would be the size of the area of my end table. This required me to tile the image as I printed it, which was not a concern to me. With the map printed out, I then laid it on the tabletop (the end table came unassembled, so I could work with just the tabletop for most of the project) and put sheets of graphite contact paper underneath it. Contact paper is also available at any arts and crafts store, and it's very helpful for a project such as this. I taped the map to the tabletop and then simply traced all of the lines on the

map with a pencil. The pressure of my tracing pressed against the contact paper, leaving a light graphite outline of the map on the wood of the end table. Once done, I had a lightly penciled version of the Diplomacy map drawn on the end table.

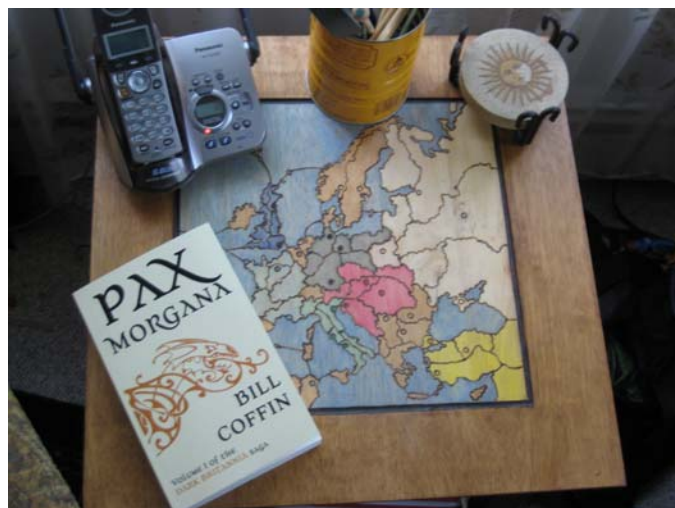


Figure 2. An overhead shot of the table. That book you see, covering up SPA and POR is *Pax Morgana*, a King Arthur novel I recently published. You can order it online through Amazon, Barnes & Noble and Borders. You'll also be able to buy it soon over at www.billcoffin.com.

The next stage was to power up my wood burning kit and trace over the graphite version of the map on the table. The graphite lines were thin enough that the wood burner obliterated them entirely as it passed over. Even if it had not, any excess lines could be erased easily, since they were light and the parawood resisted impregnation by the graphite itself. I took care to make sure to burn noticeably thicker lines for national boundaries (including those of all neutrals) and then switched tips to something smaller so the province lines would look like province lines.

At this point, it's worth noting that I tried for a more cartographic feel for the table, so the lines are fairly curvy as I tried to replicate natural coastlines and all that. Were I to do it again, I might take more liberties with the map and render the borders a little more geometrically, but that's an aesthetic decision. My wife Alli liked the cartographic look, so I went with her on this. Men, take notice: when your wife shows enough interest in your geeky project to offer a helpful creative suggestion, listen to her. She is both doing you a favor and encouraging you on your strange hobby, and you owe her some flowers at the very least. Guys, if this is your girlfriend helping you out like this, begin saving for a ring. Do not let her get away.

Anyway, back at the table, the wood burning went relatively smoothly. The thickness of the national boundaries caused a few tight spaces in the Low

Countries, since I wanted an open circle to represent all power centers. Getting them in without having them spill over the boundaries was a little tricky. Also, the space I had on the board prevented me from actually labeling the map, so were you to play on this, you'd have to be familiar with the game already, since the average rookie would find the lack of labels most confusing. I know I would have.

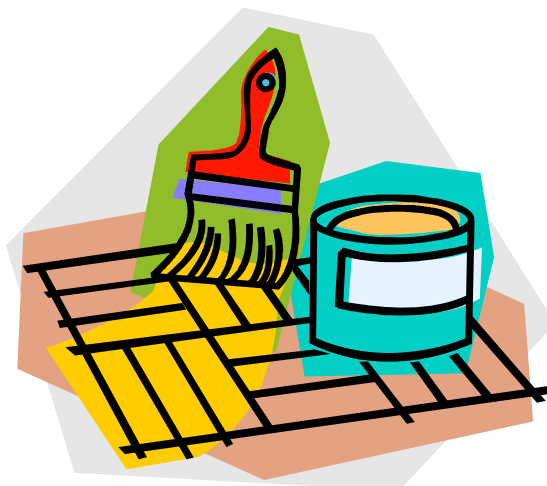


Figure 3. A close-up of the map itself. I like how the grain shows through the color, but that's just me. You can see, especially in the case of Denmark, how the power centers kind of got in the way of the national borders. Something to improve upon should I ever make another one, I suppose.

With the map drawn in, I then purchased a bunch of wood stains from Gelco to color the map and to give the rest of the table its stain. Alli took over at this point, since she has a degree in theatre set design, and frankly, is much better at painting and staining than I could ever hope to be. Plus, at this point, she was cool with this table residing in our living room, so she wanted to make sure it looked its best. What a sweetheart she is! Did I mention she's also an incredible baker and likes to brew beer? This makes me the luckiest guy in the Diplomacy hobby.

The color staining took two passes to make the colors really stand out. We gave each power center a third pass so it would be an even darker shade of the national color. The exception to this was Russia, which we stopped at only one pass of white stain. The reason for this is the look of the parawood came through the first layer of white stain and looked really neat, we thought, so we preserved that look for Russia. I ran the wood burner along the square groove in the end table to darken the map's border and after that, Alli stained the rest of the table in a natural wood tone. Parawood on its

own is very light in color, almost like a light beige, so it's great for staining – almost any color will play nicely on it.



After a round of wood stain and then a coat of matte varnish to protect the tabletop, we let it dry over a few days (I think I let it set in my basement for about a week, just to be double-triple sure). Once dry, we assembled the table (child's play, especially if you've ever put together something from IKEA) and put it in place.

The table now sits proudly in my living room, and it gets a lot of use as everyday furniture. I am still on the lookout for a set of gewgaws I can use as homemade pieces, so I suppose as a true game table, this project remains incomplete. But for now, I like having a constant reminder of the World's Most Devious Game right in my living room. It's wonder conversation starter, and I'd be lying if sometimes as I pass it, I don't think of past games, recreate the scene in my head and wonder how things might have been different had I not stabbed Turkey in '07, or had I bothered to finish off France in '04...

All told, this was a moderately expensive project, relative to just buying a Diplomacy set. The table cost about \$80, the wood burning set, graphite paper and a box to hold it all probably cost me about another \$20, and the stains probably cost me another \$50, since we got so many different colors. All told, \$150 is a lot for a Diplomacy set, but for a piece of custom furniture with this level of geek appeal, I am quite happy with the final result.

[[Bill Coffin is now both a literary and a Diplomacy powerhouse; our own Norm Abrams. Kids, if you're going to use a wood burning set, get your parent's permission. And remember, there is no more important safety took than these: safety goggles.]]

Moot: *n* a deliberative assembly primarily for the administration of justice.

Weasel: *vb* to escape from or evade a situation or obligation. *n* 1: small carnivorous mammal that is able to prey on animals larger than itself. *n* 2: cunning Diplomacy player indigenous to the Chicago area.

Weasel Moot III Diplomacy Tournament

September 18-19, 2009

Day's Inn Chicago - 644 W. Diversey Pkwy.

Chicago, Illinois 60614



Play Diplomacy the way it was meant to be played in a world-class tournament setting! Last year, Diplomacy designer Allan Calhamer was our special guest. This year, we're welcoming back to the hobby the Old Guard of the 1980s. Come play with legends Melinda Holley, Gary Behnen and others!



When: September 18-19, 2009.

Where: Day's Inn Chicago, 644 W. Diversey Pkwy., Chicago, IL 60614.

What: A three-round Diplomacy tournament. Best two rounds count for score. It only takes one round to be eligible for awards.

How much: The entry fee is \$40. Preregistration fee is \$35. (\$20 for students and kids; \$18 if they preregister.) You may preregister through September 11 by PayPaling to wcwsneak@gmail.com.

Room Reservations: Call 888-LPN-Days. The group code is DPTM.

Schedule:

Friday, September 18

Round 1

Registration: 5:45 to 6:15 p.m.

Board Call: 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, September 19

Round 2

Registration: 9:00 to 9:30 a.m.

Board Call: 9:45 a.m.

Round 3

Registration: 5:15 to 5:45 p.m.

Board Call: 6 p.m.

The tournament will end at a predetermined time between 3 a.m. and 5 a.m. A brief awards ceremony will follow within 15 minutes of the completion of the last game.

Questions? Contact us at weaselmoot@gmail.com or visit our Yahoo group at games.groups.yahoo.com/group/ChicagoDip/ or our website at umbreh0.dyndns.org/wcw or our Meetup group at diplomacy.meetup.com/30/.

Sponsored by the Windy City Weasels.



Werewolves Diplomacy : A Variant

By Jeremie Lefrancois

This is an adaptation (an attempt) of famous French game « Les loups garoux de Thiercelleux » It was inspired by the article Dots of the Dead: A Zombie Apocalypse Variant by Chris Sham which appeared in Diplomacy World #104.

This is an ordinary game of Diplomacy, but strange things happen at the council of European leaders. Before the game starts, two players are secretly selected (randomly preferably) by the game master to be werewolves. Amongst the others, there are (secretly as well) a spy, a scientist, and a witch. The game master tells every player in private his or her status.

Presidential Election : Before game start, players must vote for a power to be President of the Union. There may be negotiations before the vote. The game master collects the votes. In case of a tie, the game master selects the president randomly. The details of the voting are kept secret, but the ultimate result is public so everyone knows who is elected President.



Werewolf Fright : At every adjustment adjudication, all werewolves secretly vote for a power to frighten. If there is unanimity on the power (they may negotiate on this issue at any time), the selected power goes into Civil Disorder (CD – all units hold) for the next whole diplomatic year. Any given power may not be frighten twice in a row (nothing happens the second time if the same power is selected twice in a row). Powers just turning werewolf have to be so for a full Diplomatic year before they can take part of the werewolf fright vote. Whenever a werewolf has voted for a werewolf power, the game master tells the player of his mistake (“Failed”) after having collected all the results, and the whole vote

fails. (Note : This is the way the werewolves may positively identify themselves.) Whatever the result of the vote is, the game master does not give the information to the werewolves.

European Court : At every adjustment adjudication, all powers secretly vote for a power (presumably werewolf) to punish. The power with most votes is in CD for the next Spring (or Fall if the power was in CD the previous Fall adjudication). In case of a tie in the votes, the vote of the President makes the decision (only if the President’s vote is part of the tie, otherwise the vote fails.) The poll result is published before the negotiations for the next Spring start, so all players know exactly which the punished power is and when it will be in CD – this is the only case of a CD known in advance.

The Spy : *This power uses “echelon” technology.* Whenever this power builds, it may ask the game master to perform some spying. The game master then throws a single 6-sided die:

- 1: The spy gets the name of all the werewolves
- 2 or 3: The spy gets the name of a randomly chosen werewolf
- 4: Nothing happens
- 5: One randomly chosen werewolf gets the name of the spy (bad luck)
- 6: All werewolves get the name of the spy (very bad luck)

The President : *This power has a bit of influence it may use at the European court* – see the European court paragraph.

The Scientist : *This power has built an atomic bomb.* Whenever frightened by the werewolves, attacked by the witch, or punished by the European court, this power may choose another power to be in CD at the same time as itself (the scientist must always provide, with the orders, the power he would retaliate on if necessary). This may not be negated by the witch.

The Witch : *This power uses black magic.* Whenever this power builds, it may ask the game master to either:

- Make a power to be in CD for a given season of next diplomatic year of the witch’s choice,
- Make a power supposed to be in CD to avoid being in CD for a given season of the witch’s choice (except a power victim of the scientist).

So whenever the witch builds, the game master tells the witch player about all next expected CDs to happen. Then the witch tells the game master which power she wishes to use, but this information remains confidential – yet the witch may tell the other players or someone who is not the witch may pretend to be and do so to seed confusion.

Werewolf Contamination : Any werewolf that captures a home centre of a non werewolf (that was previously owned by its natural owner) contaminates the player. The game master immediately sends an email to the contaminated player to let him know of his terrible predicament, but this information remains confidential as well. The contaminated power becomes a werewolf, but as noted in the Fright rules, must wait a full Diplomatic year before being able to vote in the Werewolf Fright.

Retreats : Powers in CD for a move season are not in CD for the retreats, except when frightened by werewolves, in which case all their retreats are off-the-board.

Game stops : either when :

- a solo occurs,
- there are no more werewolves left or there are only werewolves left.

Scores : (werewolves score more if few, non werewolves score more if many)

- for a solo : 100 for solo'er, 0 for all the others,
- otherwise : $K \times 3 \times \text{number of owned centres for everyone where :}$
 - non werewolves survived : $K = (\text{number of survivors} - 1) / \text{number of survivors},$
 - werewolves survived : $K = (8 - \text{number of survivors}) / (9 - \text{number of survivors}).$

Strategy : The first aim of the werewolves is to identify themselves to each other, and not be uncovered by the non werewolves. Then they must contaminate one or more players, identify and eliminate the spy and the witch before they can overrule Europe. The only aim of the non werewolves is to stop the werewolves and get as few contaminated or eliminated possible amongst themselves.

Having a go : A game will be run on www.stabbeurfou.org if the players are found. Contact me directly!

Ask the GM

An Advice Column for Diplomacy World

Dear GM:

Can you recommend any variants to me, and what are your favorite variants?

Variant Fan

Dear Variant Fan:

Check out the listing of the Variant Hall of Fame at the Variant Bank at:

<http://www.variantbank.org/halloffame.htm>.

Most of the variants there are well balanced and quite playable. As for me, my personal favorites are, in no particular order: Diadochi V, Colonia VIIb, Modern Dip, World War IV, Imperialism and Ancient Mediterranean.

Variants are the spice of Diplomacy life when you become bored with the same old openings and the same old alliances. The best sites for variants are the Judge sites or, if you prefer a more human GM, I prefer the Diplomaticcorp.com.

Your Pal,

The GM

Dear GM:

The summer convention season is upon us again and I want to be sure of winning. Any advice to us players about how to ensure victory?

Winning is everything

Dear Winning is everything:

Host a house con and be like the hobbyist of old. Use your ability to ensure who sleeps where as leverage to get what you want in games. If you're not able to host than buy food for allies and deny rations to enemies—vote against any breaks unless you get your way—remember Kathy Caruso's famous starve-out game at Detroit 1983 Origins—have a toady buy food for you and your allies and then vote down meal breaks until the enemy cracks.

Your Pal,

The GM

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

“Coughing Up Two Solos” and More Fun at WDC 2009

By Steve Cooley

During the last round of the World Diplomacy Championships, someone made the comment that I had “coughed up a solo.” I thought for a second, realized that I’d actually been soloed on twice, and ignored the accusation. However, I’d like to address it here by using the situations of my games to point out valid reasons why solos take place and why I can occasionally “cough up a solo” and have no guilt about it.

First, let me be clear: my goal in every game is to win and that means a solo, 18-center victory. My secondary goal is to make sure someone else doesn’t solo. So, how could I be on boards where the first and second place finishers (Andrew Goff and Dan Lester, respectively) soloed?



My First “Cough”

The game with Goff was round 2. I drew Austria, which is okay by me. Actually, I tend to like Austria and Germany because they are rarely boring countries to play. Goff was France, John Hill was England, Andy Bartalone was Germany, Kai Hsieh was Italy, Elizabeth Boudreaux was Turkey, and “Joe” (can’t really remember much about him—except as follows) was Russia. The early buzz was about how much Andy and John don’t get along. This meant that Goff, the Australian champion, was going to have his pick of allies. I figured that would mean the West would sort out quickly and I’d have to buzz saw the East to have any sort of chance.

I probably should have put more effort into trying to get an FG (as this would point forces away from me), but I had problems of my own. I spoke to Russia and asked what he wanted to do about Galicia. I told him I was fine

with bouncing or dmz’ing there. He looked puzzled, walked back to the table, looked at the board, found Galicia, and agreed to bounce me there. Needless to say, a Russian who could not find Galicia without a map was not going to help me against whichever alliance developed out of the West.

Having seen Kai decimate my hopes for a Dipcon win in 2006 by voluntarily cracking a stalemate line, I spoke to Elizabeth next. Turkey would typically be my last choice as Austria, because only an experienced and patient Turkish player will pass on an early stab of Austria, which is frequently present in an AT. She seemed willing to consider it, and said she was going after Russia. That seemed promising.

Kai was anxious to speak. He asked what I thought. I gave him the overall approach I like for Italy. Then I suggested we might be able to work closely together. I suggested he move to Tyl, eventually taking Warsaw in Fall 1902. Kai agreed. So, I thought I might have two viable options.

After Spring 1901, Bartalone asked Kai what he was doing in Tyl. Kai told him he was heading for Warsaw and Bartalone scoffed, “I know Cooley. There’s no way he agreed to that.” Perfect. Well, except that Andy went back to Munich, which probably weakened his defenses. I probably should have assured Bartalone, but I wanted to make sure Russia was unaware of the plan. Keeping Bartalone in the dark was probably a bad idea, in retrospect.

Russia had failed to bounce me out of Gal—as we had agreed. He moved War-Lvn instead. I guess he was setting up for the old Lvn-Swe convoy??? In any event, he was upset with me because I was in Galicia. We agreed I would support his army in Ukr to Rum while he bounced Elizabeth out of Bla again. At this point, I thought I could use Russia and Kai to take out Turkey, then turn on one of them. Elizabeth was still committed to going north—even though we were both surprised by Russia going to Bla after telling us he would not.

Fall 1901, as it usually is for Austria, was a turn to hold my breath. What would Kai do? Would Russia and Turkey cooperate? Actually, everything went perfectly, including Kai moving to Bohemia. Well, almost perfectly: Russia had moved Sev-Rum with support from Ukr. Obviously, he did not trust me.

Winter 1901 was not too eventful. In fact, I was encouraged by Turkey building an army. This meant Italy would be able to advance in the Med unopposed. It also put a final nail into any thoughts I had of working with Elizabeth. She was not going to make headway against

Russia after he built, to my surprise, F Sev.

1902 was just wild. It began with me taking Rum from Russia and Bul from Turkey, destroying Turkey's army in the process. However, Russia did not move as promised again, so I did not "box" his fleet. Still, with Kai now in Silesia and Aeg, things were lining up well. In the fall, Kai took Warsaw with my support. However, he tried for Smy instead of the agreed upon Con, which I supported. This resulted in a bounce. So, instead of AI being at 13, we were at 12, and RT were at 7 (rather than 6), I believe. Worse, Kai built an Army in Rome! What???

I should have seen this coming. As soon as I took Rum and Bul, Goff began planting the seed that I was in danger of running away with the game. Still, why would Kai turn on me? We'd worked together like a well-oiled machine. France was hovering and could stab him at any time—and had shown no proclivity toward stabbing England. Surely, Kai would not move against me, would he?



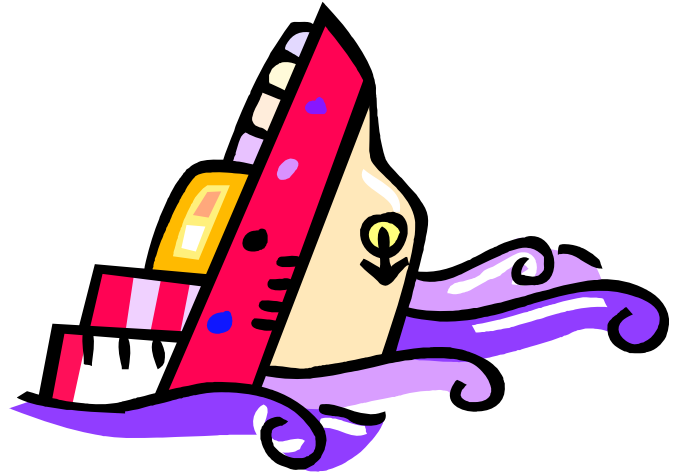
Yeah, yeah he would and don't call me . . . okay, old joke. He stabbed me for zero dots in 1903, actually losing Warsaw to Russia for a net minus one.

Kai told me he got nervous when I built a fleet and when I told him I was moving Vie-Tyl to bolster Germany. After the spring stab, I tried every approach available, to no avail. With RIT united against me, they whittled me down, even as France stabbed Kai and began moving through Bartalone. There was really nothing I could do, so I figured I would try ramping up the pressure on Hill (England) by making sure Goff was getting a lot of centers. I was going to be eliminated if I could not get them fighting and I could not touch England. If that's "coughing up a solo," I'm guilty. Still, I was off the map long before Goff got to 18.

Cough, Cough: Round 3

Drawing Germany against Lester's France seemed a bit of nice draw—at first. Mike Binder was Italy. Russia was Peter Yeargin. Honestly, I don't remember who the other players were. Lester agreed to open to Pic and I opened

to Ruh, Ber, and Den. As the plan was to go after England, I let Peter into Swe. We also let England put his army in Bel as I "misordered" Ruh. Lester and I got on well and I was feeling pretty confident—a bit too confident as it turned out.



I think it was Fall 1904 when disaster struck, although it could have been 1903. Someway, somehow (actually, it was a series of forward "retreats"), Turkey had an army in Bohemia. In the spring, Italy had moved to Tyl. This happened to be the same move I went to Sil AND Pru with Lester's blessing, of course. England was on his last legs and Russia was a bit greedy, so it was time to teach him a lesson. Or not.

When I spoke to Mike, he was unequivocal—he would not go to Munich, with or without Turkey's support. When I spoke to Turkey, he promised me he would not support Italy in either. Just to be safe, I sent Sil back to Mun, figuring one of them might grab for the dot. Italy and Turkey had been at odds for a number of turns and there was no reason to think that would end now.

However, that is exactly what happened—but only in Munich! Italy pressed his attack on Turkey and simultaneously accepted the Turk's support into Munich! Ouch! Instead of building, I was even. Lester had great position and I was pretty nervous. I think he said, "No worries, mate." That must translate to "You're dead meat, pal" or some equivalent. Russia, Italy and France began a bit of coordination against me—mostly Mike and Dan.

I had the opportunity to take Denmark back from Lester. I told Peter what I was going to do. However, Lester had promised support for Peter into Denmark. Based on the moves I told Peter I was making, he knew his attack on me would fail. However, he still went forward with it. Peter made one more move against me and I'd had enough. I failed in an attempt to convoy to Lvn. My hope was to maybe take up residency in Stp and survive that way.

I was now at 3 sc's. I could defend Berlin (only) of the three and that only for one year. So, I approached Lester and offered to convoy him to Lvn. He said, "brilliant." Again, knowing my only remotely defensible sc was Berlin, this was not a reach. Berlin would be behind Lester's line. He would either win or, failing that, keep me alive. He wound up winning.

Was it my fault? Sure—and Italy's, Russia's, Turkey's, etc. Italy did nothing to stop him or slow him down. In fact, Lester could hardly have hoped for a better situation than Italy chipping at me while keeping Turkey in check and wiping out Austria. Russia was angry with me and disregarded the threat until I was about to be eliminated. At that point, he asked me to use my last unit to cut one of Lester's pieces. Should I use my last move to prevent the solo? Not in my opinion—since none of the other players seemed interested until we were on the precipice of Dan winning.

Bigger Picture: Seven Solos?

Some will surely look at the WDC 2009 results and ask, "How could there be so many solos? Seven in, I believe, 20 games? How is that possible?"

For the most part, I believe this was because of the experience and knowledge gap between the best players and the "pack." Some of the players have little or no idea what a stalemate line is, how to form one, or why it is important. If they don't win, they "lose." There is no compunction to stop a solo in them.

That two players combined for 5 solos is, at the end of the day, a bit shocking. Again, I think part of this is due to the lack of a "take down the leader" mentality among newer and/or less knowledgeable players. However, for one player to solo three times is, frankly, a bit sick. From what I understand, in one of Andrew Goff's games, he went from 11 to 18 in the last game year. If that was against a complete novice, it might not bear any serious scrutiny. However, the player in question is an expert. In another game, Mr. Goff seemed to benefit from time pressures—he ran a high-stakes game on the other players on his board and, because another round was about to start, at least one player appeared to give him a few dots to end the game and thus be eligible to play in the final round.

I don't know that anything can be done to stop such things from happening, especially if several players don't much care about winning the tournament. I think some players will campaign for Dipcon as an "invitation only" event. After this con, I would certainly be open to voting for "Dip only" Dipcons in the future. The inexperience

factor turned this into more of a "luck of the draw" tournament than a Dipcon should be, I think.



My Other Games

I wasn't a complete loser. I had a 3-way draw in the first round as France. We finished the game in 5 years. When it ended, I had 10, Don Del Grande (England) was on 8, as was Turkey (Christian MacDonald). I've been chided, since this was Del Grande's best-ever finish. Fair enough, except I never had an ally in this game. Germany (Nate Cockerill) seemed an ally, but, eventually, in Fall 1902 negotiations, it became clear he was actually proposing a de facto Western Triple. Don and I agreed, only to see Nate self-destruct with a misorder. After that, he came to me with a proposal to attack Don, which I agreed to. Nate put a fleet in Nth and I put one in Eng. I was to walk into Lon with an army. The problem? Nate got hammered that turn and would not survive. Did I want to get into a slugfest with England while Turkey was advancing rapidly? No, so I convoyed to Belgium instead and took Holland (formerly German). Don built an army, so had two in England proper. I had no desire to continue the game and hope for a better result.

The final round was another 3-way with me (England), Edi Birsan (Turkey), and Tedd Trimbath (Russia). The most notable (for me) part of this game was me stabbing Adam Sigal (France). Adam is an exceptional player and fought to the end, but with Elizabeth (Italy) and Edi turning on him, he had no chance of surviving.

The External Powers System Advancing Beyond the Central Powers System

By Stanley Rench

Here in Biloxi, with our burgeoning Diplomacy hobby (we field 12-15 boards on our first Saturday of the month meetings, and 25-30 boards in our semi-annual Mississippi Mud tournaments. Modesty should prevent me from telling you I've won the last five running, but I digress). My father tells me that in his day, in the late 1960's, the Central Powers System (CPS) was all the rage. In fact, he said he put a whipping on old Trent Lott, the former Senator, using it with some of his friends.

However, by the time I was a junior in college, the CPS was passé. What happened? Well, the 4 powers excluded from the CPS apparently got tired of getting thrashed by the same opening over and over again, so a few of our better thinkers did the calculations and realized to their surprise that the External Powers (EP for the sake of brevity) controlled 13 units initially, compared to the paltry 9 units the CP (Central Powers, for those having difficulty keeping up) control. How was it that 4 countries were getting bulldozed by three and why did anyone continue to play the game since it was, essentially, "solved?" If there was only one way to play and that way always won, well, why not go back to backgammon?



It took months of experimentation to perfect the EPS (External Powers System—you are really slow, aren't you?). I was checking on the progress the EPSTT (External Powers System Think Tank) was making one night, when lightning struck. I said, "Okay, this is going to verge on insanity, but what if the External Powers move in a way other than those upon which the CPS is predicated?" Quite naturally, the EPSTT members presumed I had been drinking and offered to drive me home. "That just can't be done," they said, "England, France, Russia and Turkey moving as an opposing alliance to the mighty CPS? They'll be crushed! Why,

poor France won't even get Holland!"

Recognizing that my idea not only sounded crazy, but diverged from all accepted practice, I knew I was going to have to make a compelling case. So, I took a deep breath, set up a board, and began brainstorming. I was balancing on the ledge, and I knew it. In the beginning, it was part bluff and part intuition, but as it took shape, even I had to admire my brilliance. It took the others a while to catch on, but at some point a few of them were able to contribute, albeit modestly.

The first objection, sadly, was from one of my Dad's best friends. To protect his identity, I'll call him Billy Bob Thornton. Billy Bob was worried about the French moves. After all, under the CPS, if France doesn't move as instructed, the CP (Central Powers, remember?) turn on him and give him a crushing the likes of which he's never seen. I said, "Billy Bob [really, this is NOT his name!], the CP are too powerful to be given the 'kid glove' treatment, so let's name this move, Mar-Pie, 'The Iron Fist.' Trust me, from here we'll move to another maneuver I'll call 'The Goose' as in 'their goose is cooked.'"

Billy Bob gasped, but the rest of the room began chortling. They could see where this was going. To use a Chess analogy, so ineptly botched in other tedious explanations of this worn-out theory, it was as if our group had always used Queen Pawn openings and then I opened their eyes to the beauty of opening with one's King pawn.

One of the other theoreticians in attendance asked about England moving to the Channel. I said, "Now you're cooking with gas!" The plan was beginning to fall into place. It was, as it were, the beginning of a Renaissance of Strategy.

Spring 1901

Austria: A Budapest Supports A Vienna – Galicia;
F Trieste – Albania; A Vienna - Galicia

England: F Edinburgh - North Sea; A Liverpool – Wales;
F London - English Channel

France: F Brest - Mid-Atlantic Ocean;
A Marseilles – Piedmont; A Paris - Burgundy

Germany: A Berlin – Prussia; F Kiel – Denmark;
A Munich - Silesia

Italy: F Naples - Ionian Sea; A Rome – Apulia;
A Venice - Trieste

Russia: A Moscow – Ukraine; F Sevastopol - Black Sea;
F St Petersburg(sc) - Gulf of Bothnia;
A Warsaw - Silesia

Turkey: F Ankara – Constantinople;
A Constantinople – Bulgaria; A Smyrna – Ankara

The careful reader (and even a few of you who are not) will see that although the CP (if you don't know by now that CP means "Central Powers," maybe you should get flash cards) use precisely the openings in the standard CPS, they are at a small disadvantage. This disadvantage, though minor, will grow to disastrous proportions. Think of it as a small hole that will open rapidly until its gaping maw takes the CP straight into the fires of hell. If the CP insist on proceeding with the CPS (*sigh*) even after getting the "Iron Fist" in Spring 1901, they will meet their doom, and quickly.

Fall 1901

Austria: F Albania Supports A Apulia – Greece;
A Budapest – Serbia; A Galicia - Ukraine

England: F English Channel Convoys A Wales – Belgium; F North Sea – Denmark; A Wales - Belgium

France: A Burgundy – Munich;
F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - Spain(sc); A Piedmont - Venice

Germany: F Denmark – Sweden; A Munich – Burgundy;
A Prussia - Warsaw

Italy: A Apulia – Greece; F Ionian Sea Convoys A Apulia – Greece; A Trieste - Venice

Russia: F Black Sea – Rumania;
F Gulf of Bothnia – Baltic Sea;
A Ukraine Supports A Warsaw; A Warsaw Hold

Turkey: A Ankara – Constantinople; A Bulgaria – Serbia;
F Constantinople - Aegean Sea

For those of you familiar at all with European history, and I am confident a few of you rubes will have at least read the dust jacket of a "European History for Wannabe Diplomacy Players," you know that Jan Hus was burned at the stake for heresy. He was known as "The Goose." Well, have a look at the board. It's 1901 and Austria is "The Goose." She has only 2 supply centers, having allowed her "ally" Italy to take Trieste and Greece. Austria, to push the metaphor, is "cooked." It's Austrian flambé!

Winter 1901 (The Goose)

Austria: Remove F Albania!!!

England: Build F London, F Edinburgh

France: Build F Marseilles

Germany: Build F Kiel

Italy: Build F Naples, A Venice

Russia: Build A Sevastopol

Turkey: Build F Smyrna

For many veterans of the CPS (trust me, you will not want to remember this acronym after this article), this is often the first time they have tasted defeat. It's a bit like an intervention—the victims can scarcely believe what they have just seen and heard. We have even had Austrians leave the game and go home. Some just begin a low, almost inaudible, wailing. It can get really pathetic.



Note well what I like to call “The Great Wall of the Ukraine,” armies in Warsaw, Ukraine, and Sevastopol. That wall will hold back the feeble attempts of Austria-Hungary to clamber back into the game. A good Italian at this point will likely be tempted to head West to defend his coast. If he doesn’t, so much the better, as France and England continue to close the vise. Think of it as a chess match between Darth Vader and Bobby Fischer. Sure, Fischer might have the edge in chess knowledge, but he’s no match for “The Force.” When Vader holds his hand up and begins closing his thumb and his finger—well, it is going to get ugly.

A good German will likely go into what I call “The Panic.” The player exhibits a frantic shaking that is generally only seen in those prone to seizures who also dabble in methamphetamine use while huffing paint thinner. In any event, he either sends all of his units toward “Deutschland” or performs a maneuver known as “The Flail.” The latter is a vulture-like swoop at any dot the German thinks he might be able to get to—for example, he might try to beeline for Moscow. All of these mini-flails will, of course, fail. Like his Hunnish partner, Germany is ready to circle the drain. All that remains is to cut Italy to ribbons.

Italy’s seemingly solid position is an illusion. He has too few units and too many problems.

Spring 1902

Austria: A Budapest Supports A Galicia – Rumania;
A Galicia - Rumania

England: A Belgium – Holland; F Denmark – Kiel;
F Edinburgh - Norwegian Sea;
F English Channel - Mid-Atlantic Ocean;
F London - North Sea

France: A Burgundy – Munich;
F Marseilles - Gulf of Lyon; A Piedmont – Tuscany;
F Spain(sc) - Western Mediterranean

Germany: F Kiel Supports F Sweden – Denmark;
A Munich - Ruhr; A Prussia – Berlin,
F Sweden - Denmark

Italy: A Greece Hold; F Ionian Sea – Tunis;
F Naples - Tyrrhenian Sea; A Trieste – Serbia
A Venice - Piedmont

Russia: F Baltic Sea Supports F Denmark – Kiel;
F Rumania - Black Sea; A Sevastopol – Rumania;
A Ukraine – Galicia; A Warsaw - Silesia

Turkey: F Aegean Sea Convoys A Constantinople –
Greece; A Bulgaria Supports A Constantinople –
Greece; A Constantinople – Greece;
F Smyrna - Eastern Mediterranean

With the forced retreats to Hel and Alb, the once-mighty Central Powers have been relegated to the dustbin of Diplomacy. Austria cannot hold its ill-gotten supply center in Rumania (for those struggling to keep up with the pace of this attack: Black Sea Supports Sev-Rum, Galicia cuts Budapest, Greece cuts Serbia, while Aegean goes to Greece with Bulgaria’s support). With Turkey closing in on one side and France and Britain bravely marching from the other, Italy can only stay even in 1902. After that, abandoned by her ineffective and decimated allies, Italy will soon exit the world stage—talk about historical accuracy!

The EPS has become so favored in Biloxi that we rarely even talk about it. When we see those who have drawn the CP winking, blinking, and nodding at one another, we merely guffaw heartily 3 times. That is all the “signal” we need to tell one another the EPS is in effect. In fact, the EPS is so dominant, many players simply forfeit when they draw one of the CP. This makes the tournaments go so much faster! We can sometimes get 8 or 10 rounds in a night!

Of course, I rarely travel outside of Biloxi. Why would I? To be “challenged” by players who have yet to master the revolutionary EPS? Please. That would be about as idiotic as us offering to host a Dipcon. Why would we do that? We Southerners pride ourselves on hospitality (and fine whiskey), so why would we invite people down here for a good old-fashioned thrashing the likes of which they have never experienced? I believe even players as “knowledgeable” as Chris Martin, David Hood, Edi Birsan, and Doug Moore would be overwhelmed in short order. I suppose we could hold a Thursday session to bring the more industrious visitors up to snuff. I mean no disrespect to them, of course. But, it is a bit like inviting your 8 year-old to catch a pass over the middle during an SEC title game. He can play football, right? In the same sense, Martin, Hood, Birsan, and Moore can “play” Diplomacy. They know the rules and can write orders.

Very well. After considering it, I believe we need to make a bid for the next Dipcon. Details to follow, but don’t pressure us. We don’t respond well to inquiries via email or telephone for that matter. We get things done our own way—with a Southern accent—where I come from.

It goes without saying, although I will say it, that I will have to TD (that’s tournament director—do you people not use abbreviations?). It is a virtual certainty that one of our players will win because of the dominance of the EPS. It will take someone well-versed in it, such as me, the humble inventor of the system, to explain to the helpless travelers why they are being so forcefully routed. Maybe I can get Billy Bob (not his real name) to charter a jet for them. He’s got all sorts of money.

Stanley in the main contact for the Biloxi hobby, and a new contributor to Diplomacy World.

The DNWC – The Players' Perspective

Collected by Jeremie Lefrancois ; Edited by Jim Burgess

Editor's Note: We asked for some Endgame Statements from the Individual Players in the DNWC final seven games, and we provide excerpts from them here to offer a flavor of how the games went, as well as to convey some nature of the national competition. Thanks to Jeremie for assembling these for us, the players were uniformly appreciative of his efforts in these statements, but we edited many of those comments out to save space and repetitiveness, and to focus on the games themselves.

Game Draco

GERMANY

[Fang ZHANG \(airworthiness\)](#) China Captain

We want to tell the rest of the world that it meant a lot to the Chinese team to participate in the first ever DNWC tournament and we will come back in the second DNWC with higher level of playing and better understanding of what this diplomacy tournament is all about. Personally I would like to say that this experience was great just for the opportunity to play two games with world class players, and also to say I also got to know many people in this hobby.

AUSTRIA

[Marco NOSEDA PEDRAGLIO \(hokahey\)](#) Italy

I'm very happy to played this game. I got to know some very kind players, and found some friends. This was a tournament game so with my team we chose to play it not as we usually would. Giovanni (my captain) asked me to have only two goals: survive and work for the team. At the start we played a conservative set of orders because we needed to choose our allies and we had the fear that everybody would fight against us because of the France/Italy deal we made in the first round. We changed more one time our position because we wanted to try to use the game to search for a deal with another team. We closed the deal first with Alex (Turkey), and Ruben (France), so I didn't fight with them. I was unhappy because we had no relationship with Argentina so the only target was Russia. I could have done better on centers, but we worked for a shared victory for Alex and Ruben. So now you can understand some of my orders: the best thing was the final position for Italy and I worked only for that.

Ruben: you and Alex were my public enemies at the start. The agreement for A Ven - Tri was very, very hard for me but at the end you were a very good ally for me.

Alex: you are also a friend and you knew that at the start

you had a big X on your back. I trusted you so I work to clear the X with the team, and I think we did some good moves and you were another very good ally.

Marcelo: you arrived too late. I think that you are a good player but with AIT against you, it is very hard to play a good game without the help of Germany, who arrived too late also.

Fang: you were the biggest writer of the game! I never fought against your land because I needed some help against the Australia and Germany teams. I think that now you can understand my choice much better!

Bill: in the first round I stabbed you; in this game I didn't leave you the victory. I apologize because you are a very kind person and a good player.

Ulrich: I understand that you waited until the deadline to watch the ballet in the east! I could not help you more because your team was very close to us so I went to the north.

Game Ginny

ENGLAND

[Mitya IVANOV \(Kletka\)](#) Russia

I am totally flabbergasted by two facts in this game:

(1) Why would Turkey not indicate to England that it is going into Armenia in 1901? Without a possibility of Ank-Arm, Edi-NRG was not an option for me either.

(2) Why would Germany attack an apparently pro-German England without any benefit (as of 1904) to itself? Germany was communicating clearly via various channels that England would not be defending against France and this is what happened.

Otherwise, I am satisfied with the game. My only mistake was insisting on a bounce in ENG in S1901 and my fate was sealed with the 1901 builds.

GERMANY

[Markus PAEUSER \(MP\)](#) Germany

First of all, congratulations to Turkey for winning the board. It was a difficult game as Germany. Very soon I found out that I was surrounded by the strongest players on the board. Brian in France and Davide in Russia were very strong and hard to handle. Quickly I found an alignment with Brian to take out England. But later I had to stay in some kind of dance between them that lasted the rest of the game. If I ever had decided against one of

them, the other one would have won. Normally I don't like this style of gaming, but I didn't find a way out. Sorry guys. To Jean Pierre I never found a good relationship. I think Team France imagined Team Germany as an enemy very early. But never mind.

Later in the game we got in metagaming trouble with Australia. I had to stab Brian. It was not the best move for my game, but the captain also has to walk his talk. Also Davide got replaced by Filippo. I took one season until Filippo and me came together and started to have a good game. Brian instead went completely against me. Hmm, okay, but I think he threw away the game with this decision. But afterwards everyone seems to be smarter, including me. :-) Honestly, starting from this point in time, I was just defending my position against the upcoming alliance of Turkey and Austria. But again there was no chance for me. Austria was so focused on stopping me that Turkey got an easy path to win. That's the story in short words from my view. My lesson from the game is also that metagaming is not really my style of gaming. But okay, the game is over and I hope that no one is injured. Always keep in mind, it is just a game!

Game Harry

FRANCE

[Yuri HRYNIV \(Flame\)](#) Russia

I congratulate Fab and all his teammates! As to this game, I wish to say that Marko and I created quite good pairing and kept together till the very end. Thanks a lot to you, man.

Zhong was really great (after Fab. of course). In the middle of the game I didn't support him and I thought he was dead. But he managed to gain several centers in next few seasons. That is that what I call "Diplomacy". Perfectly done! Sorry for that Zhong let Fab to take the Solo. I struggled bravely and got a good position but the result is still the bottom of the table. I think C-Diplo system is not perfect and it surely must be able to be improved.

Diplomacy is a game not of promises but deceits. This tournament has once again shown to me that I haven't learned how to deceive well yet. My EGO does not allow me to do it. But Fab's and French's EGOs have coped with this problem quite well!

ITALY

[Marco HOPP \(Marco\)](#) Germany

First, my congratulations to Fab and Team France for winning the Tournament. They played great on all boards and therefore I think the French Team earned the Trophy. I hope to face you soon again :)

Thanks to all of you who played on Harry for a very interesting game and all the debates we had. I honestly

find it difficult to hide my grin while reading that Zhong gave the solo to Fab in the end. Zhong, you always blamed me so much because of the solo for Fab. Now, I am happy to see that you have done it ;) I hope you and me have learned something about it. Yes, Giovanni is right that I put little too much trust in Fab and Zhong. I think Fab played it smart and perfect. And Zhong was a very difficult partner. One can never trust someone while one is always complaining and winding. In the end it was only my goal to get in front of Team China. The solo was sole way to put Team Germany to get in front of Team China. It was all the result of Zhong's stab in 1907. Otherwise we would have had the perfect alliance. In the end I am happy to get third for Team Germany and fourth for Team China.

I hope to see some of you soon in a Ftf tournament somewhere, and we can keep on playing a wonderful game! That's what it is, just a game :)

RUSSIA

[Fabrice ESSNER \(DLD\)](#) France

First, I had played Russia, because nobody in my team wanted to play it! So, like in the first round, I had played another power than my preferred one: ITALY!

My first goal in this game was to let Turkey to a maximum 4 SC as long as possible because I'm always afraid by a powerful Turkey. It was very special for me, because we had an agreement with team Italy, but I had chosen to play this game as I wanted, and not as my team wanted!!! So, even if Giovanni would be my best ally in this game, it would be too dangerous to me to see him BIG. Giovanni is a good player. Giovanni with Turkey was a big threat. So, my first negotiation was to make a big alliance against him: AIR vs. T. And I had reached my first goal.

I was in trouble when Zhong stabbed me on RUM. I think, one of my best negotiations in this game was to say to him: "OK, take RUM it's a gift, but please next time ask me... before you do it!" :-) After some big efforts, I had convinced Zhong, with the help of Marco to stop his stab and go ahead vs. T.

THE STAB:

I remember I had talked a lot with my captain (Gwen) in the French NDC about the stab on Ismael. Ismael was a very fun player and I would like to play more and more with him. But with a big stab on him (4 SC) and a stab on Zhong, we were thinking the game was over. And it did end after the stab.

All the end of the game is about the SOLO. I had played for it, and I had played just for win, and I had played for it, etc... each turn, I had a different deal with my captain about it. We definitely had chosen to not play for the solo after having talked together, but Marco had contact with me before I did it. So, we had chosen to play for the

position to win it and but to wait. I did it (wait), Zhong had chosen (solo)! :-)

Thanks to all for this game. It was a pleasure to meet all of you. Really. I hope to see you soon in another game, and perhaps in another DNWC.

TURKEY

[Giovanni CESARINI \(kaesar\)](#) Italy

To Fabrice who just soloed:

Two solos in two games you'll be having such a big X in your back in the future! My congratulations to you and to your team. I agree that Zhong gave the game to you, when he decided not to go for your kill after the stab he did in Rumania in 02 or 03.

You were also lucky to have such a good Germany and that England and France weren't able to see it coming early enough. Marco also set up the solo by trimming my position and trusting Zhong (and you) a little much than needed.

Anyhow it has been a pleasure to play with you and I hope to meet you all in a FtF tournament (for example in the Italian EGP step we are going to play in Como on 13-14 July, where we played the EDC last year)! I am very interested in reading your comments sooner or later.

Game Hermione

ENGLAND

[Luca PAZZAGLIA \(cranberry\)](#) Italy

I want to thank ALL the players of this game, it has been a pleasure to play with you. Special thanks to:

Leonardo Colangelo: my great ally in this game (I was just a little bit stabbed in the final game :-)) Thanks Leo, it's a pleasure to play with you.

Her Majesty Cyrille Sevin: I have a lot to learn from you Cyrille. Thank you very much for your long mails and my apologies for my short replies :-)).

The two Chinese players Worden and Fang: congratulations for your result in a game not so easy to play as Russia. I hope the Chinese hobby will grow up in the next few years.

Daniel Leinich and Arne Senftleben: thanks to Daniel for your funny mails, hope to see you and Arne in Bonn for the EDC 2009 :)). I will do my best to come (and win again!! :-)).

Craig Purcell: thank you Craig for playing in this game, hope to meet you again in a pbem game. :).

Deep Walia: Hi Deep, I think you are a good player but in a game called Diplomacy you have to spent more time in diplomatic relations :-). Hope to meet you in a Russian tournament (rumors from Alex Lebedev says that it could be possible next year :-)).

ITALY

[Craig PURCELL \(Craig\)](#) Australia

I have been following the past 2 years of activity wanting to express my thoughts on the game – but being eliminated I felt best to hold my tongue. My Thoughts on the game (a real marathon) are briefly listed below.

Cyrille is a master. What should have been a straight forward elimination of Turkey ended with a solid 7. Not once but twice Turkey was on the canvas with the count at about 7 and he got up and quietly went about his business of survival.

Luca – I don't believe you had any significant pressure for the whole game, a testament to how well you played the game. Early on we built 3 way pressure on France while in the north there was little pressure.

From an Italian perspective the early push into France seemed half hearted from Germany and so a rethink meant an alliance with the Austrian who had been tentative about an attack on Turkey – we got agreement and Daniel then got very busy with Work and Life and I stabbed him (contributing significantly to my demise) – bad move.

We then got into the mega-dip stuff which sort of took the fun out of the game, but added another dimension to the tournament/Game which I had not experienced before – not sure whether I liked this or not – I remain open minded to the idea.

Leo was kind enough to leave me alone until the end and considering the start is probably the outstanding performance of the game. Probably a little slow, in terms of the pace of the game, but I also needed that extra time a couple of times during the game due to life issues – they were accommodated through the wisdom of the TD.

Game Luna

ITALY

[Ilya GUZMAN \(tarakashka\)](#) Russia

Thank you very much for the game. Treat my people well. :)

AUSTRIA

[Tom TIAN \(Tom\)](#) Australia

Thanks for a wonderful game everyone, even Bjoern, though you stabbed me horribly! I'll run through the

game as I saw it, as it involved a great deal of meta-dip politicking that may not have been apparent throughout.

1. Game start with 2 strong alliance choices for me, Italy or Russia. I chose Russia, as Australia/Germany at that point had a meta-dip agreement. I faked a conflict with both Italy and Russia, trying to keep both players friendly - very risky, but I used the fake conflicts to then draw Turkey into closer agreement with me. Turkey became my backup in case either Russia or Italy turned against me. I used the fake conflict with Russia to get Italy to overextend himself, after which I stabbed him.

2. Meta-dip agreement with Germany was broken very early on by an Australian player. We honestly tried getting him in line, but this failed as he was unavailable and so we could not contact him, but we thought it unfair to replace him. Nevertheless, I had always agreed with Bjoern that our alliance would not rest upon the meta-dip agreement.

3. In Luna, conflict became Austria/Russia vs. Italy/Turkey very fast. It seemed like we would bulldoze over the other two. Russia forced Turkey to help me against Italy in the Mediterranean. At this point I was holidaying in Europe, and my activity was terrible - I made a number of mistakes which cost me quite severely. Thus, I became tied up in a conflict trying to break Nap and Tun. I'm not sure if Turkey/Italy were working together with Russian oversight - but they did everything I asked of them, just the orders I suggested were terrible.

4. The meta-dip agreement at this point was reinstated, largely with my assistance unfortunately! I pushed for this quite heavily, as I saw Australia had a good chance of winning, or coming 2nd with Germany's help. Two boards at least were doing well. Also, we replaced the player that had attacked Germany with a more pro-German player. The alliance looked solid. I relaxed...bad idea...

5. Russian stab! This was horrific - the alliance was over, the stab was incredibly brutal and destroyed two other Australian boards. We formed a mega-alliance, mainly with Nicolas's help, to prevent a Russian solo. This was successful for 2 turns. I made the second tactical mistake in my game at this point - my orders for the Fall of 1907 are absolutely impossible to understand. I don't know what I was thinking, I blame it on study stress - :)

6. Next was my plan to retake 1st place - I really saw my chance in the final year. I needed cooperation of all the players, and I was quite busy with other things, but focused my diplomatic effort on France, as I thought he was most likely to break the anti-Russian alliance. Unfortunately, it was Germany who stabbed France - ending the mega anti Russian alliance. Germany in this game was always friendly, though I had attacked him - he had never once threatened me. I always felt safe

from an invasion from the North. This stab was completely unexpected, and my final turn's moves were destroyed.

7. Even so, I did not give up! I thought there was a chance I could take enough centers - but I needed to be able to speak to people. Unfortunately, it was at this point everybody except France stopped replying to messages. There was no trust between Germany and France, so I could not get the required supports for Boh-Mun or Eng-Bel. Turkey did not reply to my request for Con-Bla (but ordered it anyway!) Hence the debacle you see. Obviously it was all for nothing, there was nothing I could do with those orders, even if I had prevented Bjoern from winning the 3, it would have ended 11:12 - I really needed either Con or Mun to tip the scales.

RUSSIA

[Bjorn BECKER \(Rinzputin\)](#) Germany

Friends and Foes! It's been an honor to have played with you. Congratulations to Team France. Excellent team effort that lasted over a year and a half! The DNWC offers with the Meta-level a new and unique feature that I find very interesting and fascinating. I will register with no hesitation for the next DNWC. Will there be one?

To the game: After the impressive performance of Team France in the first round, it was clear for me that Nicolas (Team France/ England) would have to be "under close observation". I was sure to get Mike (Team Argentina/Germany) and Leonardo (later Enrico and Andrea) (Team Italy/France) in line for that and it all looked great at the beginning.

After a very good first round game with Craig Purcell from Team Australia, I was hoping for a good starting point when talking to "my" Aussie (Tom) on board. It went well and I lobbied my team to go for the Aussies as a meta-partner. But the team had agreed to leave all options open as long as possible and to go for the best overall partner once we saw all the games and the likely outcome clearer. I agreed, but would say now: if you have a good feeling about a team you could (should?) go with it right from the start. It's like with a usual match of Diplomacy: check the others, listen to your guts feeling and risk a bit. It gives you a first mover advantage and, as you will see below, a solid start that can take you far into the endgame.

So, with Mike helping me against Nicolas, and Tom being my ally, where should I grow? First, talks with John (Team China/Turkey) went also very well. I was in a first round dilemma and decided for a risky "everything can happen" strategy.

I guess Craig had some impact when I decided to go with Tom for a very open tell-all alliance, but with faking a conflict between us. That demands for a lot of confidence and trust in each other. We both could have

stabbed the other badly in the first rounds. But it worked well. We had a solid alliance (for a very long time) and that was the basis for us getting first and second spot. It really amused me to see that for a very long time no one on board had an idea how close and well Tom and I worked together. It has been a pleasure, Tom!

John made a move against me (influenced by Tom as I understand) and I immediately turned it into "You stabbed me!". His fate was sealed and I seriously had the intention to keep him alive till the end, but as my vassal fighting in the Med against the Italian and later the French. I was serious about it, but it was stopped by Fang (Chinese captain).

Ilya was on a kind of a mission to especially bother me. Pardon my self-centeredness. But his moves were very annoying and somewhat confusing. I was expecting the big bang, but fortunately it didn't come. The alliance with Tom grew even closer in this time.

Mike and Andrea decided to let Nic alone. Most certainly the meta-level played a role here. I got a bit scared as Mike could turn against me. It didn't happen. The natural alliance between Prussia and Austria kicked in and we had a very close APR without P really knowing it, I suppose. Tom and I were still faking distrust and conflict.

Team Germany had a Meta-level deal with Australia, but it got challenged a couple of times. Mainly by our Southern hemisphere friends, I need to say. Unfortunately we never made it back to a good level of trust.

Tom and I tried hard to re-launch the alliance and it seemed to have worked, when I got news that two important boards for us weren't doing too great and our Australian ally wasn't really much of a help. Au contraire.

I had long discussions with my captain and we finally decided to go for "grab what you can". Tom, believe me: there was no long term planning. Team Germany suddenly had lost all (tiny) chances for the title and even a podium finish, so that the motto was: free for all. And then...

Just about when Tom was about to finish Italy and Turkey was reduced to one fleet, the unthinkable happened ;-) – I saw the potential for a nasty stab! I didn't see that before. I saw some opportunities for Tom to stab me, but I had really no eye for a stab on my best ally in years (real calendar years that is). I knew my chances were slim, but I wanted to go for it anyway. In the worst case, I calculated, I would end up first. That's a no brainer. Another advantage: communication goes to zero. No more diplomatic talks. Peace of mind ;-)

My big hope was actually on Mike and Fang: Smaller nations can easily be convinced that a solo is in their favor. They will get -15, but if they have 6 points anyway,

they lose -21, which is nothing to the second or third nation that could easily lose 40-50 points. Mike understood. Even Nic made such an offer. If Fang had agreed they would be 4th now....

Well, it didn't happen!

I found myself defending against all and not only once I was really scared to lose it all. Sure Tom hates me and he will do everything to get back at me. And as much as I had a chance for a solo, he had a chance to take first place. I made my life difficult myself as I hoped to appease him with building a useless fleet in STP. What rubbish! What was I thinking?!? I was hoping that he really would turn nice again and let me go. Ha!

But I was still lucky: some good guesses and some not so good coordinated moves by his allies assured me my victory. On the last stretch, I had solid support from Mike who saw big potential in my solo. We tried. I promised him three centers in case a solo was impossible. FORTUNATELY I saw during the last year that Argentina had overtaken Germany. That was it for Mike. Sorry, mate!

Good game over all. Communication was very good. I never really connected with Ilya. Next time. John/Fang: I know how hard it is to be reduced to a vassal. But that could have worked well. I was 100% honest about my offer. It was a pity that Team Italy changed their players so often. Definitely that was not an advantage. I still connected well to Enrico.

After our assault on Nicolas, our relationship was done. He never gave up and even with two units was heavily influencing the game. He knows how to play. Mike and I never had any problems. I think he even understood my very last moves. And agreed ;-) It was really good playing with you. Next time with a different setting we will rock! Tom, my closest ally in years: I'm sure that if we had actually met during your trip to Europe this winter, I would have never stabbed you. That was the most difficult stab I had to do in a long time. At the end, we didn't even make it to a podium finish. I'm somewhat proud about my overall 3rd place, but the price of stabbing you was high. I hope there will be a next time.

Jeremie did amazing things: When I came up with the thought of an individual note area on the site, it took him some days and it was up and running. And I thought "I will see what I can do" means "forget it!". It's nearly perfect: just make it scrollable! I'm sure it will be in 48 hours! See you all next time!

P.S.: and now, who was the masked man?

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Game Neville

RUSSIA

[Alan GEE \(Dog\)](#) Australia

Congratulations to the Chinese player (players?) on their victory in Neville. Thank you all for the game, it has been rather loooong! It has been a pleasure to meet you all in cyberspace.



Game Ron

RANCE

[Hohn CHO \(hohncho\)](#) China

FRENCH EOG

This will need to be brief, as I am swamped at work... but then it's a pretty brief story, too.

Germany played a fantastic game, foiling my efforts at every turn. I played a bad game, not spending enough time on diplomacy due to external commitments, guessing wrong 3/4 of the time, and losing tactical focus as the game wore on and I became less invested.

England obviously should have gone with me on the critical turn, but he seemed somewhat distracted by real life as well, and the fact that I wasn't able to persuade him is my own failure (as well as Germany's success). Had he gone with me, I firmly believe we could have halted Germany, and both England and I would or could have survived.

Italy, I don't blame at all. Every game populated by competent players should end in a three-way draw, and after I outlived my usefulness, the writing on the wall would be clear. Wish I could have survived, but then my play didn't really deserve it. This is my third game with all or mostly non-American players, and in all three, I've fared poorly. So my guess is that my style doesn't play overly well outside of the US. :-) All my best to everyone, and congratulations to Gwen! You played a masterful game.

GERMANY

[Gwen MAGGI \(Edmond Dantès\)](#) France

Sorry for the delay in my end of game statements, but I had not enough time to write some decent comments before. Seeing the random draw, I knew that it should be a difficult but interesting game due to the level of the players, and that has been the case. I was satisfied by this considering that it offers more opportunities to play Germany in a game with competent players.

ENG: Fabian Straub

I know Fabian very well, we have met each other often in FtF tournaments in Europe, and he had just beaten me for the title of German Champion in Berlin (terrible misunderstanding with my ally in the last season round 2!!!). He can be a very good ally but won't hesitate to stab if he has a great opportunity to ensure his victory. He's tough in negotiation, tactically very competent, and will try to get revenge when stabbed.

FRA: Hohn Cho

I was probably the only one on this board to know this name. Not the player, but his history and awards. Because Hohn is not the type of person one could think he is (he's not a common Chinese player playing one of his first dip games), but the three times NADF DipCon winner (or two times and an half :-)). I now need to gather some information to know more about his style.

RUS: Victor Saburoff

I don't know Victor at all, but his victory in round one is a good point for him. I have also taken some information from Alex Lebedev, the Russian leader who is one of my friends, and Vincent Vega, the captain of Team France (expatriated) playing in his group round 1 and who became consultant for our Team for the final. So I learned he's a quite inexperienced player, cautious and may be a good ally.

ITA: Alessio Cei

Alessio was my ally in the qualifying game of this tournament, we also had a Team alliance France/Italy and we played a good game together, without any lie about sharing the victory at the end. I can trust him and the fact is that Germany and Italy are natural allies. Another good point is that he has seen my way to play round one, not stabbing him the last season when I could have easily done it not to share the victory, so this history can help to build more complicated plans if necessary.

AUT: Max Sanchez

Max just won the admiral Tournament (a gunboat tournament) winning with a solo in the final where my teammate Nicolas Sahuguet (recruit from Team France - Expatriated) was playing. It is enough to understand that Max is a very good tactician. And after having seen how brilliant he was in his first game, explained to me by my teammate Manu du Pontavice (recruit from Team France - Paris), I still remember his BEL-CLY to invade England, it only increased my opinion about his skills.

TUR: Doug Melville

I have no information about Doug. He's the only one not to be my neighbor, so let's see how the game is running first with him.

I won't speak about each season but I'll detail more about some of them, mainly the first one.

S01

Hohn immediately explained me that not to move to BUR was not an option, and at the same time Fabian proposed to me an alliance against France being ready to move into ENG. Knowing that Fabian can be a very good ally if I don't give him too much opportunities against me (that easily could happen due to the fact he's playing England and me Germany), I'll have to be careful, it was a good beginning for me. Fabian wanted, of course, for me to move to BUR, but I convinced him that it was not the best move, considering that Italy could negotiate a bounce in PIE and then not go, and in this case A BUR can't defend BRE, A PIE can't take SPA and thanks to ENG-BRE (or WAL-BRE) France would have no build. But Italy didn't do it, maybe France refused to bounce to PIE, maybe he just disliked the idea. Anyway it allowed me to have a good diplomatic attitude (towards France) and tactical position for the fall. As I planned to attack in the west, I of course agreed to let SWE go to Victor and let Alessio move to TYR to offer him more opportunities, we always need an Italian friend ;-) especially with such a competent Austria

F01

England in ENG, France in BUR, SIL/PRU are free and Russia is focusing on the south, and I have a quite friendly ITA army in TYR: looks good. Fabian wanted to secure two builds each, BEL/NWY and HOL/DEN, but I disagreed because it would give to France too good a

chance to build twice and to become very defensively strong. So he convoyed to BRE, being sure that France can't have more than 1 build and I had to promise him that I won't take any risk with MUN. I told him that I'll move to MUN unless I was sure not to lose it ;-) France was so angry against England that I was not worried much, and I had proposed MUN to ITA so I knew he was not interested, so I decided to go for 3 builds.

S02

The convoy to BRE unfortunately succeeded, where I was hoping to have a bounce and +F BRE, France having uselessly lied to me. So now I have to manage a 5sc England. Not so easy. The negotiation about builds was hard +F LON +F LPL, only one fleet for me but +F KIE +A BER +A MUN, but Russia didn't want a fleet BER (neither did I...). Russia is in SWE but hasn't taken RUM, so I'm quite happy in the North with +A MOS. I kept the contact with Hohn, my idea being more to play with England, but we never know. The fact is that he wants to kick England out of France and that I can have the opportunity to be in BUR and PIC(!) while continuing to have a decent relationship with France towards whom I have always been fair. So I move to BUR, PIC and around SWE considering that Russia won't have any other choice than to accept losing SWE and the north to save the south when it will be done and to disband his northern fleet, which could only be a good thing for me. At the same time I ask ITA (and AUS who was happy to help me to obtain this) to move into PIE.

F02

The English army BRE is destroyed but there is F ENG, F NAO, A PIE, A PIC, A BUR, so I take France by the "dare" being in PIC and BUR more or less with his "agreement", but he knew that. Fabian wanted of course to rebuild his unit, the fact that I will also build one (more) is something already discussed in the negotiation. I accept giving him SWE, but I feared having two fleets against one in Scandinavia (SWE,NWY). I was waiting for a best proposal like the one that will come. F NTH-NRG, having freed up NTH, I could accept supporting him to SWE, F Nrg will allow him to build +A EDI and to convoy EDI-NWY while F SWE-BOT.

The fact is that the opportunity is too attractive not to be taken, it's very early in the game but it could be the last opportunity I will have, and not taking it I could have no other choice than to play to be 3rd behind ENG and AUT, in the middle of the two strong alliances of ENG/GER ITA/AUT. I had given some information to Turkey to avoid what happened then in the fall, but he has been blind when I gave him the exact orders I guessed will happen.

So to continue this alliance with England, attacking RUS north would also create the end of Russia very soon, and AUT will easily take more Russian centers than me. So I decided to take SWE myself and move into NTH while England was moving out of it. I also asked ITA to

move into PIE, promising a support next time in order to have MAR free to build ... a fleet, what I had agreed to with France.

S03

I'm now on 8 supply centers, Austria and Italy have done a great stab against Turkey, who unfortunately deserved it for not having been cautious enough. We build +F BER +F KIE. Clear enough. It was what was asked for by France, but maybe he made a mistake by asking me to do that. Anyway I was satisfied by these builds. Hohn's idea was probably to be sure to have a long war between GER and FRA, but these 4 fleets now will become a threat then.

France then does +A MAR (stab on the builds). I like to be stabbed like that (or when someone lies to me for free having no consequence) because it gives me a better diplomatic situation, having the possibility to be more aggressive in my negotiation. This build is nevertheless quite clear, France wants to take back PAR and it is very important not to let him have the possibility of taking it for sure. So PAR-PIC! I still remember my teammates laughing at me for this "weak" move when I gave them my set of orders for information. But this move is perhaps one of the most important of the game, because it will allow me to defend PAR and force FRA to deal with me. BUR S PIE-MAR is the logical move I had to propose considering +A MAR, but Italy didn't take my support, but I was not so surprised. Also obvious was MUN-SIL in the east so as not to have to defend against a unit in SIL what would be a disaster with armies in PIC, PAR, DEN... and to be in the position of referee in this area my first goal being to help Russia as I consider Austria as the main danger for me. I also have a free convoy to YOR that could only be stopped by dislodging my F North, so I preferred let him do this and retreat to LON, which would create more problems for him.

F03

This was the key turn. I gave back PAR to France in order to take LON, so I stay on eight but with a very weak England on three now and F LON, F NTH. At the same time, Italy stabbed Austria very hard, that I did not suspect at all, even if I'm not unhappy about it. Now, this is the highway to the victory, or at least the Route 66... I have still 8sc, but one foot in England, who's pretty dead, I'll take NWY when I want, I have an army in SIL west, who is shining around the area.

I have a peaceful relationship with Russia, who's a natural ally in this game, Austria became an ally, and France is not a threat at all. He's not strong enough to hope for more than BEL or a little part of England.

1904

France stabbed me again, that was logical considering his fears towards my four fleets, but I came back with England, France being my main opponent, not for the victory, but for my expansion. In the east, I continue to

play pro-Russia and now Austria, always keeping distance with Italy, of course we're not on the same side, but we didn't attack each other really, this is more a race than a fight, but I have a tiger in my tank with all these "small" countries (ENG, RUS, AUT) working with me.

The end is a little bit less interesting because, considering the game was nearly won at the end of 1904 (this is never the case, but I knew I had a very good position), I also took into consideration what my Team wanted, this is the main reason for my second stab against Fabian (sorry my friend). Then we have to rebuild the 3 last years with Alessio and Team Italy into the alliance we had in round 1 in order to secure the victory of Team France and to allow to Team Italy to come back to a podium position, and that has been done successfully. I had also promised to Victor 3rd place in this game, Team Russia having nothing to expect anymore, so I never played to destroy one or the other or to try the solo, my only goal was to lead my team to the final victory, I tried to do it in the most safe and fair way that I could do it.

It was nice to have met you all in this game. I hope you enjoyed this game. Although the result for some of you could have happened differently, I think mainly to Fabian, Max and Hohn who hadn't been so successful, but who could have done much better with a little bit more time or luck.

ITALY

[Alessio CEI \(Il Principe\)](#) Italy

Well, this was an interesting game. I am an Italian expatriate, so when the USA teams filled up I took advantage of my second passport to snag a spot on the Italian team, which welcomed me gladly. Having little experience in Diplomacy (I have played perhaps ten or fifteen games in my life, some here and others in face-to-face), I felt nervous about "carrying my weight" for a team that had trusted me on little evidence. Being given the honor of playing Italy for the Italian team in the final round only redoubled that anxiety. I entered this round with a bit of a head-start on analyzing the opposition; I had tied with Gwen Maggi (Germany, and the eventual winner of this game) for first place in the first round, a strategy that paid off largely because I did what he said. There are fewer incentives to cooperate until the end-game in the final round, and I felt the need to prove myself independently, so I tried to maintain a distance from Gwen for much of the game. I sent a lot of early messages to try and understand my fellow players. England was amiable, but too distant for any practical cooperation; France was a touch erratic in his early communication. I figured Germany would dominate the West but, having heard that France was an excellent player, crossed my fingers that it would be harder than expected for him.

It might explain a great deal about the general flow of

this game if I explain now that I always had a vague strategy of striking northward through Tyrolia to assault Germany with a broad alliance; where I got the idea that I could pull this off I don't know, but it remained a fond ambition, perhaps because it's a strategy I've rarely seen and I generally like outlandish schemes.

In the east, both Austria and Turkey were friendly; Russia was too, but he was obviously hampered by the language barrier. I teach English to immigrants, so I fully appreciated how hard it was for him to engage us in this game, but sympathy has no place in Diplomacy! I have had the honor of playing frequently with the illustrious Edi Birsan, who invented the Lepanto strategy, so the idea of Italy and Austria NOT cooperating never occurred to me. Knowing that Russia and Turkey would have a hard time cooperating, I immediately began to befriend Austria. My initial impression of Austria was very positive - he talked a lot, and well, but made strategic suggestions that seemed ludicrous to me, such as not moving to Galicia in 1901 because if Russia did so, then everyone would see Russia as the aggressor and turn on him. Whether Austria's home games produced those outcomes or whether he was simply fooling me I will never know for sure, but I argued relentlessly for a more aggressive approach. Poor Turkey fell to blows with Russia over their approach to strategy, a discussion hampered, as expected, by Russia's limited grasp of English. Austria and I struck quickly and surely; as Turkey collapsed I began talking extensively about striking north against Germany, who at this point had attacked both England and France. Austria, to my chagrin, demurred, pointing out that he would rather attack Russia for reasons both strategic and personal (Russia and Austria had traded some blows by this point). I refused to see Russia as a threat, because of his inconsistent and sometimes bizarre moves, a view that would come back to hurt me severely once Russia began listening to Germany's advice.

Well, if Austria would not attack Germany, and I did not have the space to mount an assault myself, what targets were left for me? Austria suggested that I could move around or across his space to attack Russia, a proposal I considered dubious in the extreme because, if all went according to plan, I would gain less than 1 SC per year and be constantly vulnerable to an Austrian assault. So, instead, when Austria left both Vienna and Trieste open, I stabbed for three dots. Fearing that Austria's entreaties might bring Germany southward, I invited Russia to join in, hoping to make a new ally. Alas, by this point Russia and Germany were friends, and when Austria crumbled I faced a united front. Germany was magnanimous in victory, assuring me third place if I helped him bring the game to a rapid conclusion, which I did, turning on France, who by this point was my only friend on the board. I must confess I made a terrible, terrible mistake around 1907, when Russia stabbed me. Because I read the orders carelessly, I did not see that Russia's Rum-Ser had bounced off my Tri-Ser, and continued to talk

and plot obliviously as though he had never stabbed. I'm sure Russia must have considered me a real idiot at that point; so did I when, after he stabbed again and slightly more successfully the next turn, Austria pointed out what I had missed earlier. Had I not overlooked Russia's initial attack, I would have been able to counterattack strongly, perhaps finishing with more SCs or convincing Germany to help me carve up Russia, rather than being forced to assist in France's dismemberment.

Germany played a masterful game and deserved the victory thoroughly - congratulations to him!

AUSTRIA

[Ariel Max SANCHEZ ROMERO \(Max\)](#) Argentina

This game started very well for me but soon turned into a disaster. I think the main reason for that was that, after playing many gunboat games, I got used to focusing on the tactical situation first, taking diplomacy as an important but secondary matter. At the beginning, Italy wrote a lot, so an alliance seemed possible. On the other hand, Turkey sometimes didn't write at all, and I think this influenced me quite a bit, because I thought Turkey would be unreliable as an alliance partner. As Turkey and Russia were quite busy fighting each other, getting SCs in the Balkans was a piece of cake. But this also meant that I entered into a war with Turkey mainly because it was easy for me to grab SCs there. I didn't even have to stab him, because we never entered a peace agreement. But if you combine that with a hostile Russia it's easy to see Italy was the only ally I had in the East. I tried to understand Russia, but I'm afraid that task was way beyond my ability.

In the west, I was alarmed by the extremely fast German growth. I tried talking with France, but he wouldn't even talk to me. England was more sympathetic, but his alliance with Germany and the fact that he left NTH meant that Germany wouldn't be his ally for a long time. Such things can happen; the fact that utterly surprised me was that England and France, both invaded by Germany at this point, wouldn't find some common ground and start fighting back against the Germans. Here, I underestimated the resentment that their early war apparently created. Focusing on the tactical viewpoint, I just assumed they would make peace between them instead of trying to cooperate with a behemoth Germany when they only had about 3 or 4 SCs. I certainly didn't expect this. While Germany was expanding, other players (myself included, each one for different reasons) did nothing to stop him.

I did think about stopping Germany, and Italy insisted on it (probably just to create chaos), because obviously I wanted to reach the first place in the game. This also helped to downplay the idea of an alliance with Turkey. I thought that if I was to have any chance to get to first place, I needed to expand fast, and Turkey was the target - an unlucky choice for me, as Turkey would prove

himself a rather honest and clever player. But I did not want to attack Germany directly, because he was the bigger player in the board, in a great position, and I would probably lose more than him by trying to attack him directly. Not only was he a great tactician, but he also managed much of what happened in the diplomatic sphere. So I tried to outrun him and grab more SCs instead, aggressively throwing my armies eastwards in the hope that I could catch up with him, and that my new builds would protect my homeland. I did a good job of it, planning aggressively, while Italy was rather conservative about tactics. In the peak of Austrian expansion, I was about to get very close with Germany in terms of SCs. I think Germany might have foreseen that, as around 1903 he got conveniently suspicious and decided to tell me that he was sure that I was going to invade him through Bohemia. This claim was so bizarre (my armies were in the east fighting Turkey and Russia, and he had a very solid position) that I thought he was just trying to alienate me, or perhaps get some information out of me. But he kept discussing the matter very seriously and insisted that he was ordering to Bohemia himself to protect the border. I was able to make it clear that if he moved to Boh, he would have started a war. He could still do it, though, because he had more free units than I did. I still think this sort of apparent paranoia was a disguised attempt to slow me down a bit by threatening to attack. Luckily for me, a diplomatic arrangement was achieved. Unfortunately for me, on the next turn Italy stabbed me viciously.

The fact that Germany had been growing at such a fast pace had added perhaps the most important reason for me to keep my alliance with Italy. My reasoning was simple. Italy and I were already growing into the big eastern powers, and Germany was the biggest power in the west and in the board. If we started fighting each other, as it happened later, it would only mean Germany would easily get the first place, and since the first place was by far the bigger reward in terms of points, I assumed Italy would try to grow fast himself in order to fight for the first place, as I was already doing with his help. A war between the second and third powers would only slow things down, make life easier for the one in the first place, and if the points were needed, it could have meant a solo victory for him.

I've found it impossible to trust or cooperate with Russia on this game, despite my better attempts. After the stabs, I tried to gather support for an anti-Italian coalition. I figured out that Russia would clearly see that turning other powers against Italy would be good for him, and I thought that I might survive a bit more this way. Also, I tried to gather support from Germany, for whom Italy was the only real threat in the board, and he helped a bit, by not bothering other players and by encouraging us to talk. Also, I expected that Italy would try to grow a lot more after stabbing me...it was a disappointment that he didn't. Still, for some reason Russia still wanted to ally himself with Italy, the biggest power in the region. I'd

expected he'd also try a challenge and try to get to second place at least. It was strange for me seeing that R-I cooperation was so easy at this point, where they were the two big powers in the region, with no chance of catching up with Germany, and the only way they'd get the second place was if the other one did worse. Apparently, diplomatic considerations were much more important than anything else.

The most fun thing was that while Russia kept helping Italy, he insisted that he wanted to be my ally! Of course, after a while Italy and Russia fought each other a bit, but then there was not much time left in the game, and also the result of the game was quite clear. It was also clear that they didn't want any help in this fight.

TURKEY

[Doug MELVILLE \(BlackDog\)](#) Australia

Hmm, well, I thought I would play this one straight, in other words, try to establish friendly relations and be honest - as Turkey it is fairly easy as there is scope to negotiate in the Balkans with limited friction early, and some good leverage for Turkey. I essentially ran into one single problem in this game which made it impossible for me, which was that Russia was impossible to negotiate with. He just restated demands and was completely impervious to any logical or reasoned argument, even when we got to the end game stages (for Turkey) where he would snap up one of my centers for a short term gain at the expense of weakening his own position and ensuring I wouldn't then cooperate. I gave him a few chances, thinking that he would see the logic of not taking the short term gain in exchange for future cooperation, and every time it happened.

Unfortunately, I suspect that Austria soon realized that there was no way Turkey could trust Russia and therefore there was no way he would ever have to face a concerted R/T. Once this had been established, Austria was free to concentrate on picking off bits and pieces. But he could never rely on Russia against Italy, and given the situation in the North, it meant that Italy basically had a free hand in the game until the very latter stages. With R/A/T unable to cooperate (and the failure of A/T to cooperate, for which I accept responsibility), it meant that the East was Green. Meta-gaming, I think, also played a significant role in that I felt that my own communications were discounted through the overall competition picture. I enjoyed playing against Austria and Italy, who both played good hard games, and were amenable to discussion and possible collaboration, but I was very disappointed that Russia wasn't playing Diplomacy. I am not sure I enjoy the meta-gaming aspect, and not convinced I would choose to play team Diplomacy again. Congratulations to Italy, and Germany.

EDITOR'S NOTES (Jim-Bob Burgess)

I was watching these games closely, Draco, Ginny, Harry, Hermione, Luna, Neville and Ron all are represented here (yes, Jeremie named them after Harry Potter characters), but not all equally. Given Gwen Maggi's quite detailed review, we definitely got the clearest picture of the game Ron. And obviously we got no view at all of Neville. You can go to Jeremie's <http://www.stabbeurfou.com> web site and look up the details of any of the games you want to see all the moves. Since I was serving on the Diplomacy World Cup Council, I am more interested in what we learned about these games for the future of these sorts of tournaments. In the interests of space, let me focus on a couple of main points.

1st - Note that even in this final round, playing for the country championship, some of the teams still had some relatively inexperienced players. But be careful, Alessio Cei argues that he is inexperienced, but I think he did quite well, as well as anyone with much more experience might have done dealt that hand. He did need a few more armies, built earlier, but even that is a quibble that could be debated. I think the standards of play in these final seven games generally were pretty good. But were they up to what we wanted from a true Diplomacy World Cup? Any fair and reasoned analysis would have to conclude no. I am right now pondering some proposed changes for the second Diplomacy World Cup, which I think will come in 2010, stay tuned. I think we still want to have the perceived "open" nature of the tournament to remain. The great success here was the birth of a true Chinese Diplomacy hobby promulgated by their participation here. I would be interested to know how many Chinese were closely watching this tournament, I'm sure there were far more than we suspect. A Chinese team even got into this final round, more than any of the American teams could do.

2nd - From many team tournaments, I am getting used to watching how the meta-gaming is done and done well in these sorts of situations. We saw many examples of these strategies in the statements above. Mega-dipping, cross-gaming, team alliances, whatever you want to call them, they are an essential part of the process. You have to connect the games explicitly in negotiation to align the team incentives with the game incentives. Failure to do this, results in failure, at least to some degree. Second, note that teams had designated tacticians, ran their orders by their teams, worked to get advice to improve orders. When done well, this is an incredible amount of fun. And certainly the players that engaged in these tactical/strategic discussions at the team level

benefited by them. Third, notice how few people really played these games in a cutthroat manner.

This is important. They said things like "Team X is not going to win, so I can afford to give their Player X1 a slightly better result." This is an illustration of how complex the team interactions can be. One needs to be careful about making blanket statements about these issues, but I think a general statement could be made that the experience of the team process seemed to be mostly positive, at least among those who succeeded by making the finals.

3rd - Related to that, most people seemed to accept the "Diplomacy is just a game" argument that any long time player of the game needs to face. The people are the thing, and the game isn't any fun if you can't stab the hell out of someone and then laugh and have a beer about it afterward. Note how many people talked about getting together at a FTF tournament sometime soon. On the other hand, SOME people do seem to take these tournaments too seriously. I don't think you really can do anything about this.

4th - The team structure ALLOWS you to replace players and I think it is clear this keeps games going. But making changes also clearly disrupts games and teams in the final that switched horses in midstream were generally not successful with that. I think that is another general conclusion one can draw from this tournament. What the teams REALLY should be doing is supporting each other with strategy discussions. Note that most allusions to this were vague, which is too bad, but learn that lesson as well: more minds and discussion make better outcomes. I know my own experience in Jeremie's other recent team tournament was that even though I seldom actually TOOK my team's strategic advice, what it did was kept me aware and vivid about what COULD happen. One of my diplomatic weaknesses is that once I negotiate a relationship, I can trust a bit too much. Having someone tell me what could happen: "you DO know that he could steal three centers from you this turn" is good for me. You need to find out what works for you and your team. Surely doing nothing with your team is not a pathway to success in these sorts of tournaments.

So, stay tuned, we will be back with a new Diplomacy World Cup tournament before you know it. And in the meantime, please send me any comments you might have about ways we can make the Diplomacy World Cup concept better to jfburgess "of" gmail.com. I look forward to hearing from you and helping to figure out how to make this even more fun. Happy stabbing.

Diplomacy of the Three Kingdoms – China in the Third Century

By Edi Birsan

Within China, amongst the top 6 works in the Chinese language that everyone is familiar with is the multi-volume Romance of the Three Kingdoms. I discovered this period and work after dealing with the Chinese Team in the World Diplomacy Cup run in Stabbeurfou (www.Stabbeurfou.org) and thought it would be a great vehicle to introduce the concepts of Diplomacy into China with a more relevant time period and theme than 1901 Europe.

The most complicated part of the Diplomacy rules relates to Fleets and convoys, so I did away with them!

The game design deals with Armies (a power of 2), Militia (power of 1 except when defending in a home center) and a leader which is a power of 1 that can be added to any other piece in the same province.

The most difficult part of the social setting with Diplomacy is that it takes 7 players, so I did away with it!

The game design has 3 kingdoms and possibly 2 factions within each kingdom. The game can thus be played with 3-4-5-6 players, the use of different sizes of the three kingdoms allows for the better integration of the 4-5 player game since the bigger kingdoms can still be balanced.

The replay ability of the game is enhanced by using an Escalation system for initial placement rather than the idea of a fixed placement like Diplomacy. The concept of capitals, where armies only can be built adds to the uniqueness of different play starts. This also takes a lot of pressure off of the play testing by enhancing the number of combination in the game.

The length of time to play Diplomacy is also a major knock on the game system so the game design here allows for shorter fixed game length and deals with 4 types of Victory or game ending conditions. Stalemates are greatly reduced by having different powers of units with the ability of leaders to combine with a unit to make for a critical push in a province.

While the period was known for its back stabs and double crosses, though in China to talk about treason is a sensitive subject, a few simple rules of formalized statuses of Alliances-Neutrality-War allows for the flavor of some of the combinations of the era to be reflected in play as well as to appeal to a stylized view of history of the period and the game culture that it is planned to be released into.

Then to top things off, the marketing idea was to have Diplomacy as the 'back game'. That is to have on the

reverse side of the map the classic Diplomacy map with a reference to the Diplomacy rules on the web so as to provide an intro to the hobby. However, the current state of the Hasbro/Wizards marketing department precludes that idea and it may be introduced later, so for now we are looking at having the popular 1901 Diplomacy variant as the back game which with the wooden pieces and larger map may provide a market boost for the US-Europe hobby.

The pictures show the various stages of the map and testing and we should have a test run of 500 sets this summer with the idea to see if 400 in China and a 100 in the hobby will provide a feedback and marketing sample to see if greater production can be supported. At the World DipCon in Columbus there will be a draft prototype and you can get a taste of it there. Orders will be taken and announced as soon as the first run is made.



From the Rule book:

The Three Kingdoms period of China was a time when great characters rose to lead factions with the kingdoms of the day and eventually unite China under one dynasty through a series of military and diplomatic campaigns featuring temporary alliances, civil war and conquest. You are now one of those characters.

The Map:

The map shows the three Kingdoms of Wei, Shu and Wu. The Kingdoms are divided into provinces (spaces) 26 of which are support centers (10 Wei, 7 Shu, 8 Wu and one neutral).

戰棋：外交三國

War Chess: Diplomacy of the Three Kingdoms

by EZZ Games (G) 2008



10 酒泉 Jiuquan
11 西凉 Xiliang
12 九原 Jiuyuan
13 幽州 Youzhou
14 高丽 Gaoli
15 天水 Tianshui
16 长安 Chang'an
17 洛阳 Luoyang
18 冀州 Jizhou
19 徐州 Xuzhou

101 张掖 Zhangye
102 陇西 Longxi
103 武都 Wudu
104 街亭 Jieting
105 秦川 Qinchuan
106 渭南 Weinan
107 弘农 Hongnong
108 并州 Bingzhou
109 兖州 Yanzhou
110 青州 Qingzhou
111 云中 Yunzhong
112 昌黎 Changli
113 辽东 Liaodong

21 建宁 Jianning
22 永昌 Yongchang
23 江州 Jiangzhou
24 成都 Chengdu
25 梓潼 Zitong
26 永安 Yong'an
27 襄阳 Xiangyang
201 九十三甸 Jiusandian
202 朱提 Zhuti
203 武阳 Wuyang
204 临江 Linjiang
205 巴西 Baxi
206 汉中 Hanzhong

31 宛城 Wancheng
32 许昌 Xuchang
33 建业 Jianye
34 吴郡 Wujun
35 长沙 Changsha
36 豫章 Yuzhang
37 建安 Jian'an
38 南海 Nanhai
301 赤壁 Chibi
302 汝南 Runan
303 庐江 Lujiang
304 寿春 Shouchun
305 广陵 Guangling
306 庐陵 Luling
307 临川 Linchuan
308 桂阳 Guiyang
309 延平 Yanping

41 新野 Xinye
401 八番 Bafan
402 麦城 Maicheng
403 宁州 Ningzhou
404 桂林 Guilin

Fighting Crossgaming: A Ready-Made Solution From My D(N)WC Experience

By Jeremie Lefrancois

If you intend to run a Diplomacy team tournament and use algorithms, just skip the core of the article and get to the conclusion...it might turn out to be useful for you.

Cross gaming; such a rude word. More than once I have been faced with this word to justify a game loss in a team tournament context. "You are not allying with me? You are crossgaming!" What is the problem? Players feel they do not control their game anymore. In a face to face tournament, crossgaming comes into play when ranking considerations take over local game considerations. In play on the web tournaments, it is when team considerations take over. "We cannot make that deal because my team captain has told me your team is the current top target"

Now suppose you organize a Diplomacy team tournament. Who do you want to win? The guy who blackmails you because he has photographs of your sister without any clothes? The team with the best crossgaming organization (usually the team captain is the brain of that)? The team that shows the best sum of skills amongst the players?

Let's suppose, for now, that you prefer the latter.

The Diplomacy (National) World Cup, when it started in

September 2007, was designed so that all involved teams could get something like a "flavor" of all the others. That was a choice (my choice). The 25 teams that showed up were divided into three subgroups, and each subgroup got, more or less :

- two or three of the 7 American teams involved,
- one French team (there were 3 of these),
- one German speaking team (there were 2 German, 1 Austrian),
- one mother tongue English speaking team (South-Africa, UK, Canada),
- one Australian team (there were two of these so only two groups got one),
- the rest of the teams, not mother tongue English, were spread up : Romania, China, Russia, Brazil Argentina, Turkey and Italy. Some complained Brazil, in the same group as Argentina, was too friendly to it but that is another story....

This had social considerations in mind. There would be, in any game, on the average, two Americans, one French, one German speaking, one mother tongue English speaking, and one or two players with a different mother tongue language. Yet, the groups had 8 or 9 games, so the structure was something like this:

Game	E	F	G	I	A	R	T
AA	t1	t8	t7	t6	t5	t4	t3
BB	t2	t1	t8	t7	t6	t5	t4
CC	t3	t2	t1	t8	t7	t6	t5
DD	t4	t3	t2	t1	t8	t7	t6
EE	t5	t4	t3	t2	t1	t8	t7
FF	t6	t5	t4	t3	t2	t1	t8
GG	t7	t6	t5	t4	t3	t2	t1
HH	t8	t7	t6	t5	t4	t3	t2

T1, t2... being the reference of the different teams.

This is something you may not avoid in a structure with 8 teams. Any two given teams will meet more often, and that is 6 times usually. Therefore many crossgaming deals can (and sometimes will) be struck.

So here comes the aim of this article: how to build a tournament structure where interaction between teams is lowered as much as possible? In the given example, there should be a single tournament for the 25 teams,

therefore an average team interaction at worst will be 5 times, according to a sample made.

We define interaction between two teams as "how many times a player from both teams meet at a table". We only measure the worst interaction, and crossgaming only occurs when this figure is 2 or higher. We do not consider indirect crossgaming, i.e. three teams striking a deal: A helps B, B helps C and C helps A – that would

be too hard to avoid (but it could wind up being the subject of my next article, perhaps?)

Ok. I have my teams, and for every team a list for E,F,G,I,A R and T. How should I build my games?

Let's consider we try to put the players in this order : T1E, T1F, T1G, T1I, T1A, T1R, T1T, T2E, T2F, T2G, T2I, T2A, T2R, T2T and so on...

Here are the rules I suggest:

- If an empty team exists, put the player in the first found.
- If there are available positions, calculate, for every of them, the interference level it would cause. Put the player on the table that causes the lower interference. Note that, of course, a table where there is already sitting a team mate is taboo. Interference caused by sitting at a table is the sum of interferences it causes with all teams of players already sitting at the table.
- If there are no such available positions, find the first table with a teammate. We will now try to move the teammate to another table :
 - If there is a table with a seat available for this power and no teammate there, move the player to the other table.
 - Otherwise (there is no such table) find the first other table such as :
 - no teammate is in the other table,
 - no teammate of current power on other table at this table,and swap the two players.
And then put the player at this table (after the move or the swap).

Once you have actually applied all these rules, you get a tournament organization, here referenced as the initial organization.



Since you are the kind of person who is never happy with your results and always willing to improve things, you may now consider doing a bit of optimization to lower the "worst interference".

Here are the rules I suggest for that step:

1. Find the two teams who interact the most (the first found amongst those with equal same worse interaction).
2. Find a game involving two players from these two teams, let's call them player1 and player2.
3. Find another game where there are no team mates of these two players, and the player sharing same power with player1 is from no team already sitting at this table.
4. Swap player1 with the equivalent on the other table.

Congratulations, you have managed to destroy one of the interferences (between two teams who had the most), so you have perhaps managed to lower the worst interference of your tournament organization.

You should perform this as many times as you like, until you are happy with the result (say, for instance, you have eliminated the higher interferences from the initial random generation).



Seems a bit tedious? Well, do not expect me to do all this stuff manually. I have quickly designed a 650 C language code program to do the trick, building the results for tournaments from 10 to 35 teams. There is no point of studying below 10, since the structure exposed at the beginning of this article may not be avoided – just put the teams in line and do not try too much optimizing. If **you** have a team tournament to set up, feel free to contact me for a copy so you can use them ... or not (and if you want to run a tournament like this, contact me, as I am sure stabbeurfou.org would be happy to host it!). I also have a graph presenting the random result, the initial result and the optimized result, so that the interest (or lack of) may be judged. Optimization starts to be useful when the number of team reaches about 23. The big question is: what level of worst interferences are you ready to accept ?

And, remember, **DOWN WITH CROSSGAMING !!!**

Diplomacy World Demo Game

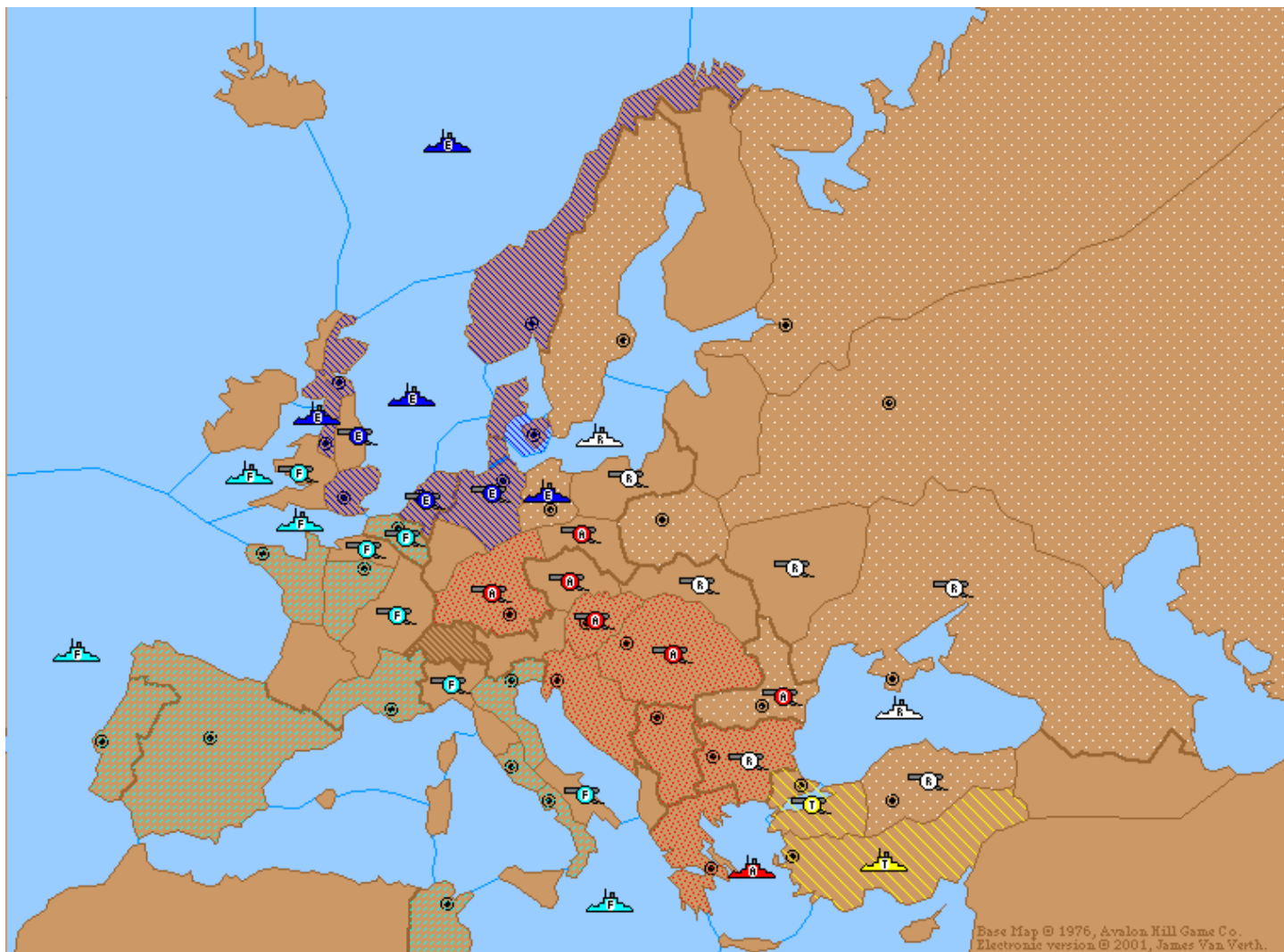
Regular Diplomacy – “After the Rapture”

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 1911 Results:

Austria: F Aegean Sea - Bulgaria(sc) (*Fails*), A Bohemia - Galicia (*Fails*), A Budapest Supports A Serbia – Rumania, A Munich Supports A Belgium - Ruhr (*Void*), A Serbia – Rumania, A Silesia - Warsaw (*Bounce*), A Tyrolia - Vienna

England: A Denmark – Yorkshire, A Holland Supports A Ruhr – Kiel, F Kiel – Berlin, F North Atlantic Ocean – Liverpool, F North Sea Convoys A Denmark – Yorkshire, F Norway - Norwegian Sea, A Ruhr - Kiel

France: A Belgium Supports A Burgundy, F Brest - English Channel, A Burgundy Supports A Munich, A Gascony – Wales, F Irish Sea Convoys A Gascony – Wales, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean Convoys A Gascony – Wales, A Picardy Supports A Belgium, A Piedmont Hold, A Rome – Apulia, F Tunis - Ionian Sea

Russia: A Ankara, no move received (Actually, was Ank S Lon, but the program wouldn't parse that), A Armenia – Sevastopol, A Berlin – Prussia, F Black Sea Supports A Rumania – Bulgaria, A Galicia - Warsaw (*Bounce*), A Rumania – Bulgaria, A Sevastopol – Ukraine, F Sweden - Baltic Sea.

Turkey: A Constantinople Supports A Rumania – Bulgaria, F Smyrna - Aegean Sea (*Fails*).

Spring 1911 Commentary:

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

GM Rick Desper: As always, know that I don't do error checking...in this case Mark wrote Ank S Lon which might have been intended to be Ank S Con but also might have simply been intended to be Ank S Lon. So I leave it as written, rulebook language about "only one legal interpretation" notwithstanding.

Ank S Lon seems like an unlikely disorder, given that "C" and "L" are on opposite sides of the keyboard. I would guess that Mark is telling Jake and Dan that he's on Dan's side, (at least this turn).

Austria: Adam's point at this juncture escapes me. There really wasn't much point in moving to Bul(SC).

Yes, Bud-Rum, Ser S Aeg-Bul/SC would have had a better chance of defending Bul, but even that would have failed against the RT moves.

I would have tried REALLY hard to make up with Andy at this point and move to Greece while Turkey moved Smy-Aeg (which he DID try to do!!).

Mark gave Andy a build last year. For Adam to win Andy over at this point would probably have required supporting Andy into Bul, which Mark may do this Fall, anyway.

Now Jake is in the Ionian and the Austrian position is at everyone's mercy. Jake isn't sticking the knife in really quickly, he is just letting Adam bleed while they "deal" up north. Note that Jake did not do the A Bel-Ruh order that Adam supported. But neither did he actually move A Pie-Ven..... yet. Next turn, he can convoy to Greece and move up if Adam doesn't defend it, or can convoy to Albania, which surely will work. In a classic "so what", he took a Rumania that he can't possibly hold. This is starting to look like Adam is the odd man out in a three way.

I suspect that Jake may continue to work with Adam for a while, yet. Keeping AR embroiled gives him the ability to defend seven dots with three Units. If Jake guesses right in the north this Fall, then Jake would have strong motivation to attack Adam, but that would be a Solo push, not whittling to a three-way.

England: OK, the convoy comes back to defend

Liverpool. And Scandinavia is demilitarizing, though the F Baltic seems primed to help Mark take Berlin back. There are good defenses for England now, possibly moving toward the quick three way.

Ber-Pru, Kie-Ber, Swe-Bal could be intentional. If Mark takes Berlin back, Dan's Fleet is popped, and if Dan guessed right on the Lon/Lvp defense, he rebuilds for defense at Home.

France: Unless I missed something, Jake has created a guessing game for London vs. Liverpool, Eric will tell me if I did, but still, as long as Mark plays it safe with Dan, Jake isn't about to break through. Let's see who guesses right..... Dan is a VERY good guesser.

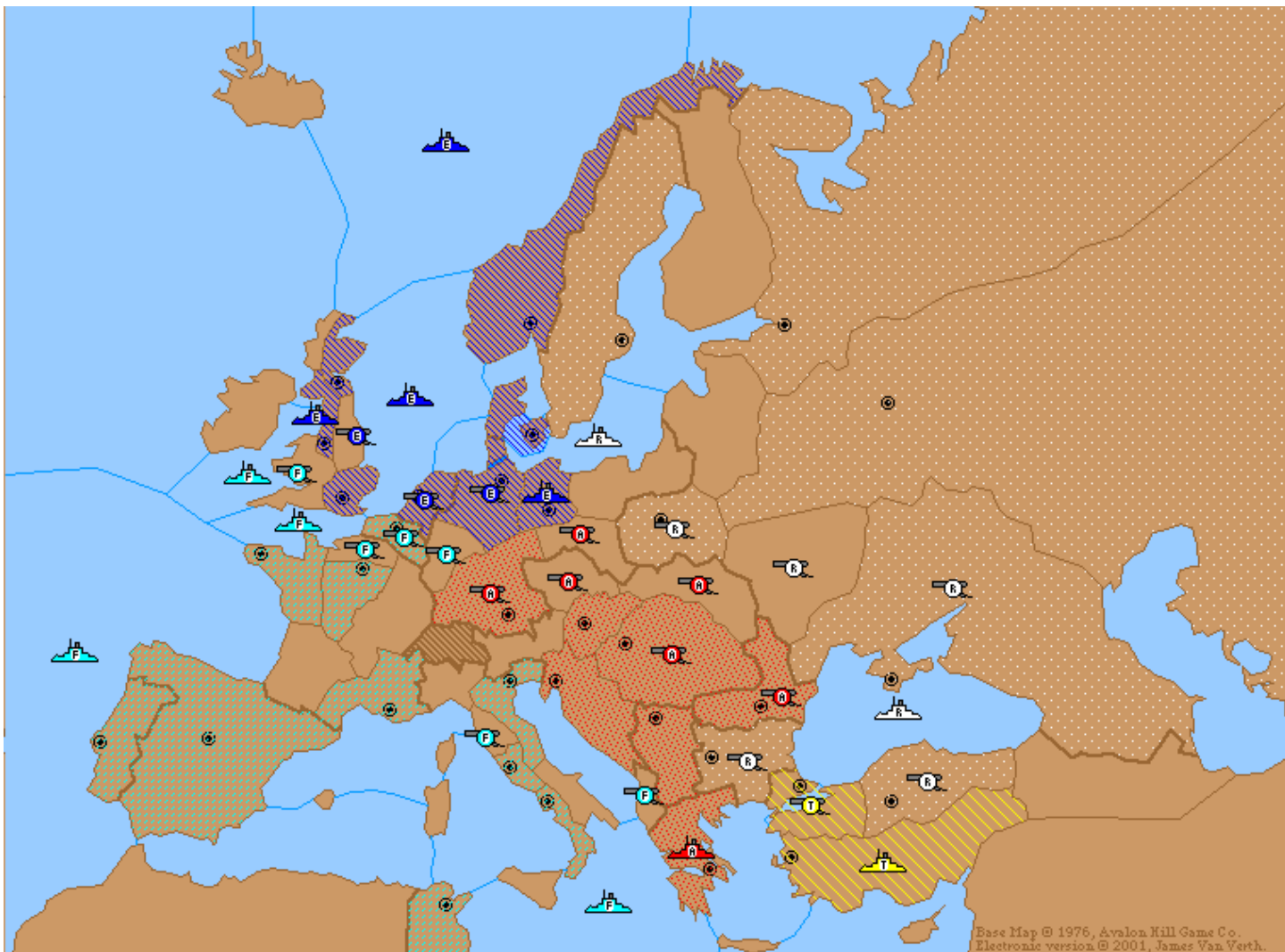
Dan's got a guessing game, but it is not an attractive one. He has to defend, Lvp, Lon, Nth and NAO with only four Units. Nrg-NAO, Yor S Lvp, Nth-Lon is probably his best bet, but if Jake sees that and orders Eng-Nth, Iri S MAO-NAO, Dan has a problem.

Russia: Russia does the "fake out" to set up Adam for a fall that won't help him. Galicia is vulnerable, sure, but Mark can defend Warsaw, keep Bulgaria and take Rumania back. That puts Adam down at least one and on a path that cannot be stopped. I think this is headed toward a three way now.

How fast will Mark have to call off his attack, if Adam starts throwing Centers to Jake? I agree that Adam's position is not good, but I don't see Jake's Solo chances as having evaporated, just yet. Indeed, if Mark makes good progress against Adam, I'd say he still has a shot.

Turkey: Andy is still in this, at least can negotiate for something, he probably should stick with Mark rather than hooking up with Adam, but Adam should be trying harder.

Andy should be asking for Bul-Gre/Ser, Con-Bul with support. It has the potential to hurt Adam more, and help Andy. In fact, if Andy can get Mark to agree to Bul-Gre, then Andy should get Jake to bounce that move, and get Adam to support Con-Bul from Aeg.



Fall 1911 Results:

Austria: F Aegean Sea – Greece, A Bohemia Supports A Vienna – Galicia,
A Budapest Supports A Rumania - Serbia (*Cut*), A Munich Hold, A Rumania - Serbia (*Bounce*),
 A Silesia Supports A Vienna – Galicia, A Vienna - Galicia

England: F Berlin Hold, A Holland - Belgium (*Bounce*), A Kiel - Holland (*Bounce*),
 F Liverpool Supports F Norwegian Sea - North Atlantic Ocean (*Cut*), F North Sea Supports A Holland – Belgium,
F Norwegian Sea - North Atlantic Ocean (*Bounce*), A Yorkshire Supports F Liverpool

France: A Apulia – Albania, A Belgium - Holland (*Bounce*), A Burgundy – Ruhr,
 F English Channel Supports A Picardy – Belgium, F Ionian Sea Convoys A Apulia – Albania,
 F Irish Sea Supports A Wales – Liverpool, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - North Atlantic Ocean (*Bounce*),
A Picardy - Belgium (*Bounce*), A Piedmont – Tuscany, A Wales - Liverpool (*Fails*)

Russia: A Ankara - Bulgaria (*Fails*), F Baltic Sea Supports F Berlin, F Black Sea Convoys A Ankara – Bulgaria,
A Bulgaria - Serbia (*Bounce*), A Galicia—Budapest (*Disbanded*), A Prussia – Warsaw,
A Sevastopol - Rumania (*Fails*), A Ukraine Supports A Sevastopol - Ukraine (*Fails*)

Turkey: A Constantinople Supports A Ankara – Bulgaria, F Smyrna Supports A Constantinople

Supply Center Ownership:

Austria: Budapest, Greece, Munich, Rumania, Serbia, Trieste, Vienna = 7, Even
England: Berlin, Denmark, Edinburgh, Holland, Kiel, Liverpool, London, Norway = 8, Build 1
France: Belgium, Brest, Marseilles, Naples, Paris, Portugal, Rome, Spain, Tunis, Venice = 10, Even
Russia: Ankara, Bulgaria, Moscow, Sevastopol, St Petersburg, Sweden, Warsaw = 7, Even
Turkey: Constantinople, Smyrna = 2, Even

Fall 1911 Commentary:

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

GM Rick Desper: Featuring perhaps the most important misorder I've ever seen in a demo game...but first, a bit of fun.

Yeah, this really hurts Mark's chance to take Adam down quickly.

Indeed, I cannot see how this one was an intentional misorder, and it puts Adam back in the game.

London - The rulers of France and England have sent their emissaries, the Sicilian and the Man in Black, to decide the fate of the English cities London and Liverpool.

The Sicilian: We see two possibilities here. The Army in Yorkshire can either support Liverpool or be involved in some kind of supported defense of London. It cannot do both.

Man in Black: Clearly.

The Sicilian: So it comes to me to decide: are you the kind of man who favors Liverpuddlian action, or do you favor the Old City of London?

Man in Black: Indeed.

The Sicilian: It is well-known that Liverpool is the weak point of England, so clearly I can expect you to attack there, so the army must support Liverpool!

Man in Black: That must certainly be the case.

The Sicilian: but that is exactly what you'd expect me to think, so clearly you will be attacking London instead!

Man in Black: Dizzying logic.

The Sicilian: But London is the capitol city, so clearly you would know I would defend it, so you would attack Liverpool instead!

Man in Black: Amazing!

The Sicilian: But the main train station in London for trains from Paris is called Waterloo, and that insult is too much to bear, so clearly you will be attacking London!

(etc.)

(ME) As a former resident of London, I am appalled that nobody even bothered to move there. Clearly this game needs Brian Ecton.

Yup, I would have expected Dan to order Pic S Bel, Eng-Lon, if he was supporting an attack on Lvp.

I almost suspect a planned "dance" here, though I don't see why it was in Jake's best interest to agree to it. When I see moves like these, I suspect a plan.

I see what you are saying about Jake and Dan "dancing". It does sort of look like that, but I can't imagine why Jake would launch the attack on Dan, and then in essence call it off without compensation.

(Kiev)

The Russian generals read the latest dispatch from the Tsar.

"He wants us to do WHAT?"

"He wants us to support the Crimean army as they move here."

"How do we do that?"

"I have no idea."

"But I have heard that the Crimean army is attacking Rumania! The Austrian army is doomed!"

"Doesn't matter. Orders are orders. Remember what happened to the last general who defied the Tsar?"

"Sometimes we have to do what the Tsar means, not what he says."

"Nice idea. That's what General Petrov thought. I hear he enjoys winters in Siberia."

"OK, OK...time to put out the welcoming banners..."

Austria: Adam holds on to Rum, stays even, and improves his position. A good turn for someone on his way out. ☺ Still something like Bla S Con-Bul, Sev S Bul-Rum is dangerous for Adam, and that French Army

in Alb has to be troubling, even if it is there by invitation.

One of the things about being a kibitzer in a Diplomacy game, like in a political race, is that you always get up the next day and keep commenting, and it shows why one never gives up, and how one should not have to apologize for continuing to fight. Oh heck, yes, I'm talking about the latest political race more than this game, but I mean it. Never give up, never surrender. You never know when your opponent might blunder. Jake is administering the iron fist in glove. He only moved the one army forward. I do expect A Alb is announced, but I doubt it was invited.

England: The attempt on Belgium doesn't make much sense to me. I don't see how Dan could expect it to work, and it should have cost him London. Still, he gets the build for Berlin, and that pretty nearly locks down his position.

As stated above, this looks like planned bounces to me, I see no other alternative, the moves do not make sense as best attacks by Jake and Dan, or even misdirected attacks when facing a guess -- sometimes one tries an unusual move looking to catch their opponent unawares -- but that doesn't seem to be happening here.

England probably builds in London to shore up his defense.

Correct, and then without a build for France, he can't break through.

France: Jake, why Bel-Hol? Even if Dan Convoyed Hol-Lon, he wouldn't have left Hol open. Is the move to Tus to send a second Army to the Balkans by Convoy? I probably would have gone with Wal-Lvp, Iri S MAO-NAO to flank the English position. Jake is now a Fleet short of what he needs to breakthrough.

Again, looks like a plan to me, though I don't understand why. Belgium-Holland seems designed to just keep those units in place by asking for Holland-Belgium in return. Of course he wasn't leaving Holland open, he even moved Kie-Hol anyway, and didn't need that to support Berlin since he was not being attacked in Berlin. Jake should be pressing for the win (even though, as I argued before, if he did he might unit the board against him).

Russia: OOPS! Mark gains Bul, but loses Ber and Rum, and gets his Army in Gal popped. Not a good turn. The outcome of RT vs. A will depend on what Jake does with Lon and Alb, now.

Agreed, this is pretty disasterous, including a deal with Dan to hand over Berlin. The balance of units and locations of those units is not ideal if there is a deal, since instead of getting that army popped, he would have preferred to remove F Baltic perhaps.

Turkey: Smy-Aeg would have been better.

Yeah, after all this, Andy finally gets a second unit and plays dumb.

EDITOR'S NOTE –

It was at this point in the game that something very odd happened. A Draw Including All Survivors was proposed and passed. GM Rick Desper announced the game was over, and I began soliciting the end-game statements from players.

Except there was one problem: as was announced a day or two later, there had been some confusion. Everybody had sent in public votes, some of which were conflicting with each other. But Rick appropriately demanded private votes from each player, which would be the official votes. And, as often happens when you get a ton of emails all at once, Rick mixed at least one public vote in with the private ones. In reality, the draw had failed, and the game was suddenly resurrected. Winter 1911 came next, and the bloody wars that had been ravaging the European continent continued.

Winter 1911 Results:

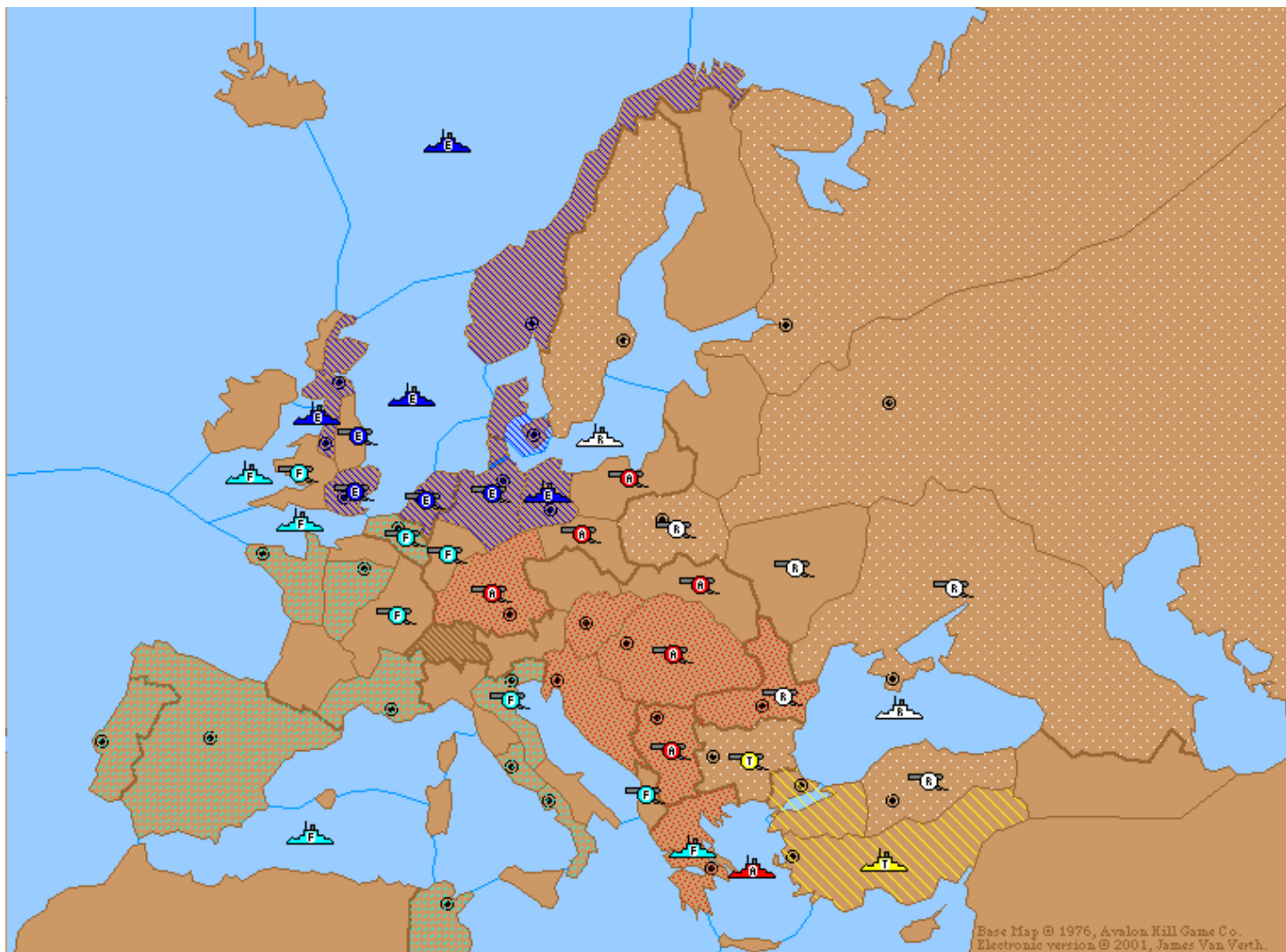
England: Build A London

Winter 1911 Commentary:

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

I really would have expected the fleet; the army raises interesting concerns about what England does next. Are Dan and Jake just dancing in place? If not, what are they doing? This game year could

be very sedentary; the key is not in the Channel but on the other side of the board where we see what Adam can whip up.



Spring 1912 Results:

Austria: A Bohemia – Silesia, A Budapest – Serbia, A Galicia - Ukraine (*Fails*),
~~F Greece Supports A Constantinople – Bulgaria~~ (*Dislodged*), A Munich Supports A Bohemia – Silesia,
 A Rumania Supports A Constantinople – Bulgaria (*Dislodged*), A Silesia - Prussia

England: F Berlin Supports A Kiel, A Holland Supports A Kiel, A Kiel Supports A Holland,
F Liverpool Supports F Norwegian Sea - North Atlantic Ocean (*Cut*), A London Hold,
 F North Sea Supports A London, F Norwegian Sea - North Atlantic Ocean (*Bounce*),
 A Yorkshire Supports F Liverpool

France: A Albania Supports F Ionian Sea – Greece, A Belgium Supports A Ruhr,
 F English Channel Supports A Belgium, F Ionian Sea – Greece,
F Irish Sea - North Atlantic Ocean (*Bounce*), F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - Western Mediterranean,
 A Picardy – Burgundy, A Ruhr Supports A Belgium, A Tuscany – Venice, A Wales - Liverpool (*Fails*)

Russia: A Ankara - Constantinople (*Bounce*), F Baltic Sea Supports A Kiel,
 F Black Sea Supports A Bulgaria – Rumania, A Bulgaria – Rumania,
 A Sevastopol Supports A Bulgaria – Rumania, A Ukraine - Galicia (*Fails*), A Warsaw - Silesia (*Fails*).

Turkey: A Constantinople – Bulgaria, F Smyrna - Constantinople (*Bounce*)

Summer 1912 Results:

Austria: F Greece - Aegean Sea, A Rumania - Budapest

Spring and Summer 1912 Commentary:

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

Austria: Although Mark's misorder slowed him down a bit, it does seem like the deal between England and France (Dan builds A Lon, Jake moves F Mid-Wes) may cement Adam's eventual fate.

Probably, though it still seems like Jake nearly has a forced win without Adam's help, so I don't understand why Jake took the deal from Dan.

I agree this issue Eric raises is important. Jake must think either one of two things, that if he did "act like he was going for the forced win" it would be denied him by unified action on the part of everyone else, OR he is carefully calculating around to find the forced win and is making deals trying to get him there. If he is, he is being trickier about it than I am able to deduce, which could be a GREAT thing if he is. Tricky is good in this.

It could be as simple as that. My instinctive sense of "the shape of a Dip board" is good enough that it is clear to me that Jake had a likely Solo by attacking Dan, and building Fleets in Marseilles, but I can't say that it would have been a forced-win against a united RATE, so Jake may well have chosen to lull Mark and Dan, figuring that he could make a stronger push later as Mark threatened Adam's survival. That said, Jake's position was so strong, and the likelihood of a united RATE seems so small, that I would have gone for it.

When one is in this position, what does one do? Ultimately, Adam does have some leverage, but how does he deploy it? Note that combinations of these strategies are possible, in descending order of likelihood of success.

I'm not sure I'm following the organization of these strategies, so I'm separating them as I think Jim intended.

Throw the win to Jake: Attempting to start throwing the win to Jake (with Mark slowed in tempo one turn) is a viable strategy. If France can take and hold Munich, then he is pretty sure of at least getting close to 18, especially with the dearth of fleets in the Med.

Yes, with Adam's help, Jake can take Mun and Kiel, with Adam taking Berlin to knock Dan down two. Then it would just be a matter of taking a couple from Dan and a couple from Adam for Jake to Solo.

Dovetailing with what I said above, and remembering the Edi Birsan dictum that one should always be "given" solos, Jake may be maneuvering for this. Even a failed thrown solo can be turned into one if one is not careful.

Yup.

Engage Dan's help in England: Here he really needed to get Dan to build the F London, not the army. But Dan does not have a lot to do at the moment (note he basically is just holding and surely was one of the ones lobbying to bring this game toward a close) and so he represents an opportunity.

With the Army build, I think Dan represents a lost opportunity. Given Dan's position and force distribution, it would be extremely difficult for Dan to do anything but defend, and he's in real danger of having a passive defense overwhelmed, if Jake decides he wants the Solo after all.

Get Andy in Turkey to switch sides: Note that Adam tried to do that in supporting Andy to Bulgaria, but Mark had already anticipated this and was allowing Andy to take it. This needs more pursuit though, since Andy's long term best interest is balance of power, not having Austria collapse to be caught in the pincers between Russia and Italy. But it does not look good for Adam.

**nod* If Andy gets a build for Bul, and that is far from a sure thing, he should switch sides and take back Ank. I suspect Jake's Fleet in Greece may play a key role in Andy's future, though, and I can't say how that will play out without some insight into the negotiations.*

With his retreats, Adam is trying to create some options; he clearly knew (since he submitted these in advance) what was going to happen. See above, unless he can change the dynamic quickly, his influence over the game will continue to drop just as fast.

I fear Adam is in a "throw or die pointlessly" situation.

Agreed, unless somehow it ends up a five way.....

England: Well, Dan is not doing much exciting. This

is an arranged bounce deal, he could have annihilated the Army in Wales (with a bit of risk), but these are just the moves of someone waiting for the rest of the board to shake out. I would not have played this this way, I'm pretty sure (one is never completely sure unless one is in the game). But Dan built the army in London to set up this deal. He could repeat these orders for the next few turns.

Yes, and Jake could build two this year and overwhelm the passive defense next year. Dan is pretty much praying for a Draw vote to pass at this point, I think.

Repeating for emphasis, Dan's play at this point indicates that he is **ONLY** looking for a three way draw, he probably was the one pushing the proposal that we saw awhile earlier. And I agree that it is possible, but hardly guaranteed that this is the way it plays out. I don't like playing passively into draws, not my style, but it is the style of others, can be good in that you are not viewed as threatening. My more aggressive way can result in my being eliminated in similar circumstances (but I don't mind).

France: OK, now Jake has to see if Adam does try to throw him the game. Note that A Pic-Bur sets up Jake to walk into Munich with Adam's help if Adam were to attempt that stratagem. It almost always is in one's interest to encourage someone to try to throw the game to you (gently or otherwise) in hopes it lessens the margin for error (and Mark and Dan already have made errors or what look like errors). At the same time, take Greece now while you can and start looking for your 18. Does everyone see what Jake's most likely 18 centers are? It does involve Andy, so it is worth Jake's time to see if Andy can be kept from adding more fleets in the Med. It also involves Munich, so that also should be on the docket. Jake has a deal with Dan, but Dan is in no growth mode, so it is possible for Jake to make another push north once he gets more builds, possibly three this year.

I wonder if Mark's misorder tilted Jake toward attacking Adam? It looked a few turns ago like Jake would attack Dan as Mark attacked Adam, but now Dan has a new, if

perhaps temporary, lease on life.

Russia: Better moves this time, with progress, but the long term question is where does his line with Jake play out. Giving Andy Bulgaria was a good deal in that line, and trying to let Andy build another fleet would be the next good deal, though the need for an arranged (?) bounce over Constantinople was questionable. I suppose the idea was to build some trust. There is some risk this time that Adam will give an unwanted support to Ank-Con from the Aegean if they try that again. This presumes that no one tries to buy the adherence of the Aegean fleet, but I do not suspect anyone will do that.

I don't see that Mark has a line against Jake, if Mark is attacking Adam. Andy, Adam, Mark, and Dan can stop Jake by working together, but if Adam is getting whittled out then it seems impossible.

I do think that is the knife edge of the game at this point, since Dan, I think, would accept a five way draw, but others (unspecified, but possibly all but Andy) would not.

Yes, that could be one explanation for F Aeg, F Gre. Adam and Jake could be willing to accept bus FARE, but not want to include Turkey in the Draw.

Turkey: Some gains, see above, can he keep it, that's the key.

If Andy and Mark want to work together against Andy, then Ank Hold, Smy-Aeg would have been the better move. It would have popped Adam's Fleet, and given Andy a shot at two builds.

Agreed, but I still don't think Andy is putting a great deal of time into the game, he is just benefitting from no one being able to take him completely out. This pressure is increasing though, remember that being an essential small power member of a large draw can be both satisfying and difficult to accomplish. Andy will need to work to get there, but it is in his reach.

Fall 1912 Results:

Austria: F Aegean Sea Supports A Bulgaria, A Budapest - Rumania (*Bounce*), A Galicia - Ukraine (*Fails*), A Munich Hold, A Prussia - Warsaw (*Fails*), A Serbia Supports A Budapest - Rumania, A Silesia Supports A Prussia - Warsaw

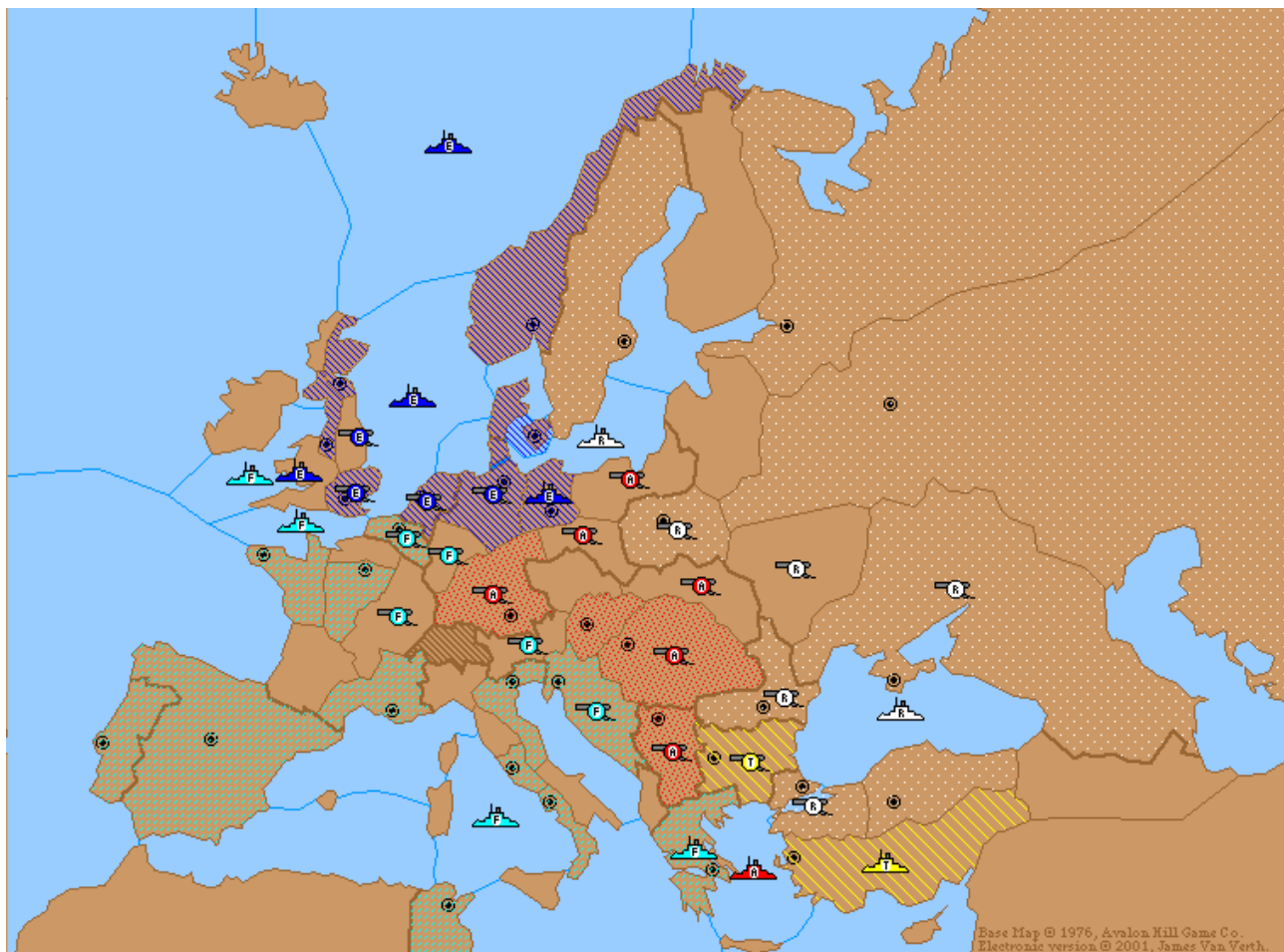
England: F Berlin Supports A Kiel, A Holland Hold, A Kiel Supports A Munich, F Liverpool - Wales, A London Supports F Liverpool - Wales, F North Sea - English Channel (*Fails*), F Norwegian Sea - North Atlantic Ocean (*Bounce*), A Yorkshire Supports F Liverpool - Wales

France: A Albania - Trieste, A Belgium Hold, A Burgundy Supports A Ruhr - Munich, F English Channel Supports A Belgium (*Cut*), F Greece - Bulgaria(sc) (*Bounce*),

F Irish Sea - North Atlantic Ocean (*Bounce*), A Ruhr - Munich (*Fails*), A Venice – Tyrolia,
A Wales—Liverpool (*Disbanded*), F Western Mediterranean - Tyrrhenian Sea

Russia: A Ankara – Constantinople, F Baltic Sea Supports A Warsaw – Prussia,
F Black Sea Supports A Ankara – Constantinople, A Rumania - Bulgaria (*Bounce*),
A Sevastopol Supports A Ukraine – Rumania, A Ukraine - Rumania (*Bounce*),
A Warsaw - Prussia (*Fails*)

Turkey: A Bulgaria Supports A Budapest - Rumania (*Cut*), F Smyrna Hold



Supply Center Chart

Austria:	Budapest, Munich, Serbia, Vienna=4, Remove 3
England:	Berlin, Denmark, Edinburgh, Holland, Kiel, Liverpool, London, Norway=8, Even
France:	Belgium, Brest, Greece, Marseilles, Naples, Paris, Portugal, Rome, Spain, Trieste, Tunis, Venice=12, Build 3
Russia:	Ankara, Constantinople, Moscow, Rumania, Sevastopol, St Petersburg, Sweden, Warsaw=8, Build 1
Turkey:	Bulgaria, Smyrna=2, Even

Fall 1912 Commentary:

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

GM Rick Desper: Bad move for Austria. Good move for Russia. And the Welsh are pleased to be rid of their French overlords, as they are more comfortable with their traditional overlords, the English. Noteworthy: the adjudicator initially ruled the order of the French fleet in Greece to be illegal, since Jake had not specified a

coast. My reading of the rules is that a fleet only needs to specify a coast when both coasts are possible moves (MAO - Spa and Con - Bul). Bizarrely, we have no retreats.

Austria: As suggested, Adam is clearly attempting

the "throw to Jake", so let's assess the moves in the light of that.

I think I would classify these as moves to oppose Mark, rather than to throw to Jake. If Jake wanted Mark to Solo, he should have helped Jake take Munich or Kiel.

If Jake were to take all four of Adam's remaining units, he would have 16, to RE's 16, with Andy's key two units currently seemingly also on the "throw to Jake" line. So taking Warsaw now, while not essential, could be a key to shifting that imbalance the other way.

Only if Jake is committed to not attacking Dan, which seems to be the case so far, but if Jake builds Fleets, that could change.

So, why did Adam try to take Warsaw from Prussia? The guessing game here (did you all see it?) was between F Baltic cutting Prussian support vs. having F Baltic support A Warsaw to Prussia (what Mark did). Since another aspect of the guess was what Ukraine would do, I probably would have tried A Galicia also supporting, rather than trying to cut Ukraine's support.

But then Adam's attack would have failed against Ukr-Gal, Bal S War-Pru. Tapping Ukr to cut its support for War or Rum was at least as effective, I think.

But Adam also was trying a supported attack on Rumania (Why?? That had very little chance of succeeding!)...

Actually, if Jake hadn't cut Bul S Bud-Run, the attack would have worked, and Adam clearly had a deal with Andy, so I'd say it was worth a shot.

...so he was trying to stop Ukraine from supporting either one.

and also avoid Ukr-Gal cutting support.

It was a complicated set-up, but now Austria's position collapses as he removes three units.

Yup, and Adam is likely to remove Units that are closest to Jake, and shift into full throw mode

Let me go out on a limb and suggest that Austria will remove A Munich, A Serbia, and F Aegean Sea. I doubt that will help him, but it will signal continuing "throw moves".

If Adam really wants to throw, keeping Mun to help Jake in Germany is worth considering, but these disbands seem likely.

England: Other than taking Wales back, England

remains in a drawing mode. But while a good line for the array of units currently facing him, Dan has longer term problems when France brings more units to bear.

I'm wondering if this was arranged as well? Especially since Dan took Wales from Liverpool. The Army in Wales really wasn't a threat to Dan, and destroying it risks a build of F Brest, so these moves may have been arranged to let Jake rebuild A Wal as F Mar.

France: Last season I spoke of how having the game thrown to you is more fun and more the spirit of Diplomacy than taking it. Jake is another few steps closer to being handed the game with this turn. He only is taking his 12th center now, but none of his centers are at risk and he has much room for more expansion. Jake does have the annihilation in Wales, but he played it like he knew that would happen. He can make another English assault later with more units. At that point, once he takes Munich, I believe that Holland is the weakest initial link. A French victory appears more likely as of this turn.

Agreed, especially since Adam is likely to devote his remaining Units to Jake's cause.

All three home centers are open, Jake sets up to gain more this year if Austria continues to throw, and even if he doesn't, he is at no direct risk at this time. I don't know if I've ever seen a power at quite this level of an unenviable position at this point in a game.

Unenviable or unassailable? Will Jake build two Fleets and overwhelm the English defense? Clearly we expect him to, but I wonder if Dan has gotten so far into Jake's head that Jake won't do it.

Greece and Trieste are the only centers even slightly at risk at this point and more centers are on the list. One would think that some sort of deal might be forthcoming next game year. Austria could turn around too.

I'd be surprised if a deal happens. These guys are good enough to have seen the French solo threat this year or last year, but Mark seems to be trying to whittle the draw that won't happen.

Russia: Good tactical defenses earn Mark a build. Some good guesses and taking Constantinople sets him up for possibly taking Turkey out of the game shortly, though much depends upon the Austrian removals.

Mark took a risk, since he could have lost War to any one of a number of attacks, but it paid off. Nothing ventured, nothing gained is often especially true in Diplomacy.

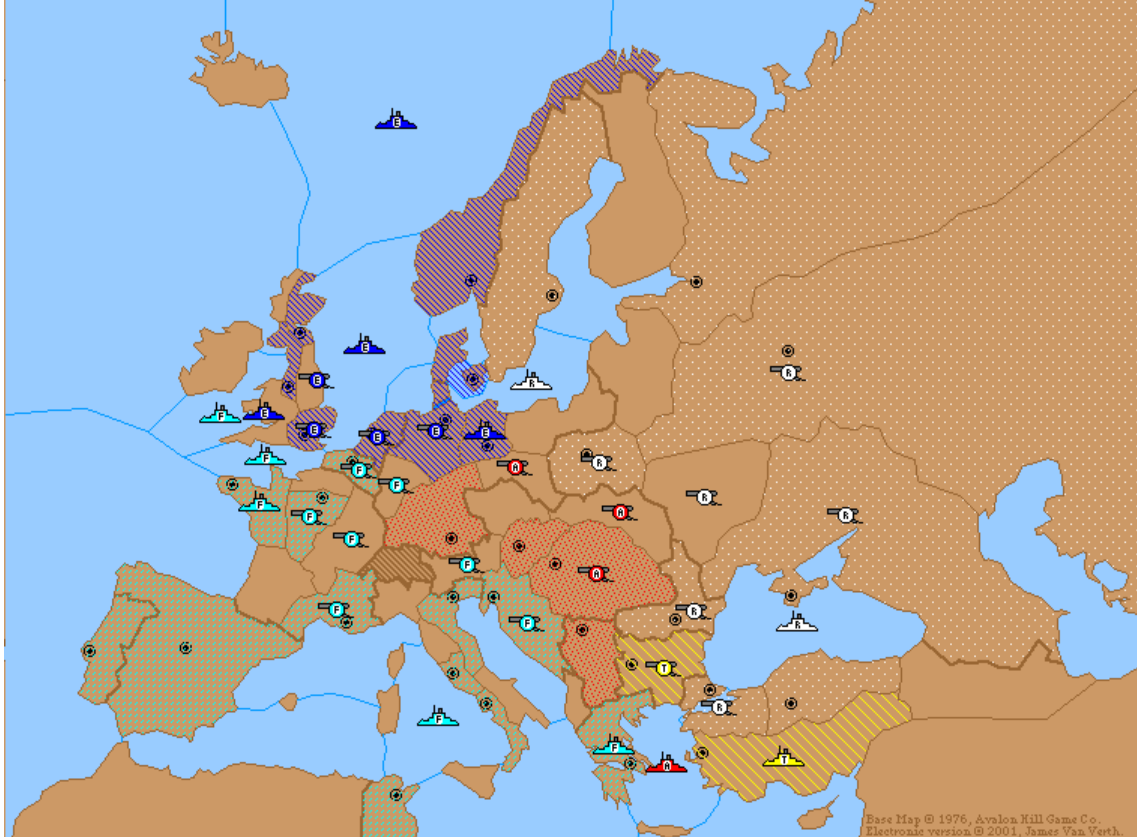
Not great choices for a build. A Mos?

F StP/NC is a possibility if ER want to attack in the North.

Turkey: Turkey joins the "throw to Jake crowd" by supporting the Austrian attack on Russia, perhaps? Then why does Jake cut the support? Perhaps Jake WANTED them to try to throw, but didn't want them to be TOO successful. Andy is still trying to sit on a delicate balance that keeps him in the game. It

would have been better if he had found a way to steal his way to three centers this turn. Now his units are split and at risk, though he has lots of options for trying to save Bulgaria and Smyrna is not directly threatened right now as long as Russia and Austria are still fighting. Andy's best chances are in continuing confusion.

Again I see this more as AT working together against Mark with REF cooperating to reduce the draw.



Winter 1912 Results:

Austria: Remove A Prussia, Remove A Munich, Remove A Serbia

France: Build F Brest, Build A Paris, Build A Marseilles

Russia: Build A Moscow

Winter 1912 Commentary:

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

Austria: Austria keeps the fleet and removes Serbia and Prussia (plus Munich which was pretty much a given). This continues to align Austria in a challenging position to the Eastern/Northern powers regarding the outcome of the game.

Agreed. To have a chance to stop France, Adam should have removed F Aeg, A Pru, and A Sil, to allow Mun-Tyl, Gal-Vie, Ser S Bud-Tri to succeed in S1913M.

France continues to have some holes in locations of units so that forced solos still seem at least a game year off, but if Austria supports France actively this year, holds off advances by RT, and allows France to take Vienna and Munich, then next game year we will be looking at that level of outcome.

Yes, 15 this year seems almost certain if Jake wants it,

and then the English and Austrian disbands would make a Solo nearly impossible to stop.

In the interest of continuing to discuss the options, what are the options for the other powers to "turn Austria" from this course?

It may already be too late, if Jake is determined to solo, but his behavior so far does not strongly suggest that this is the case.

It is highly usual at this point in the game, especially with good players, that they know what the options are, so why is Austria doing this? It is your task as an opposing player to engage Adam, the Austrian, and figure out why. These guys all know each other pretty well, so they probably know why Adam is pushing this, but let's dig deeper into those options again. Austria could be trying to get to a point of being an essential piece on the other side of the line! Sometimes, the only way to switch sides of the line is to attack the player who ultimately you're going to try to form a draw line with. And a small power (Austria could end up with only two or even just one center in that scenario) has to be completely essential to the line, with the "big power" on the other side at 17, so he has throw potential at that point. And, sometimes, though Adam perhaps is correct in expecting this of Mark, the Russian player on the other side will not agree to let you be in the draw and throw it to the big power anyway. So, one scenario here is still perhaps as large as a five way draw. One question at that point is where such a line would be. This looks EXTREMELY problematic at this point.

Yes, putting someone in position to solo is a time-honored way for a small Power to ensure their inclusion in the Draw, but it is crucial to know where where the line to stop the solo is, and when you have to stop aiding the solo run and start opposing it. Adam seems to have gone past that point, if that was his intention.

It does not look to me like England has the north locked up either.

No, for a northern Power to stalemate the English Home Centers it requires friendly Fleets in NAO, IRI, and ENG. Dan will need some luck to get to that position, now.

The only other alternative looks like an eventual French win.

There are 17-Center Eastern stalemate lines holding Scandinavia, Russia, Turkey, and parts of Austria, the Balkans, and/or Germany, but the Austrian Army disbands this year make locking one of those down

difficult, if not impossible.

I would say that the other thing that these "good players" seem to be doing is rushing their way toward the solution and end of the game. They seem to have been doing that for awhile, with the usual caveat that we are not seeing their negotiations, which could offer other stories.

France: All of these were obvious except for the slight surprise of A Marseilles. This signals at least three things. First, France is depending on the Austrian fleet, without that Austrian fleet supporting France, the Med is really quite open, and in fact that is the offer that RT should be pushing on Austria, if Adam is willing to listen. Second, even given that, France is NOT trying to actually break England in the north, in which case he needs the other fleet, to move it to Spain in the Spring and be ready to come in behind into the Mid-Atlantic as the Fleet Brest tries to vacate and push north. England has only three fleets, with North Sea stuck having to defend against Eng-Nth, but building only one fleet just brings France into equality. With four fleets, France could eventually push through, I think. Third, the choices around all that suggests that France is recognizing that even with Munich now open to pump armies through (again with A Silesia working French) that France does need one more army in Austria in two game years (how long it will take it to get there). In that sense, France can build the fourth fleet next year and it is not clear how England can change the equation before then. Maybe one of you can look and seek out the five way draw line for France 17, England/Russia 8/7, Austria 1, Turkey 1, but it still looks bleak. As stated above, the turn has to come now with everyone trying to stop France to see if the weak points in the French line (in the Med mostly) can be exploited.

While the English defense can eventually be cracked, it would be a slow process, even if Jake had built a fourth French Fleet this year. The French solo is more likely to happen in continental Europe as RATE fail to coordinate the necessary defense, I think, so A Mar was the right build to make.

Russia: Pretty much the only choice, especially because Austria COULD have kept A Prussia, but if Russian units are just defending against Austria, that accomplishes nothing toward the endgame.

*B F StP/NC to set up StP-Bar, Nrg-NAO (*Bounce*) followed by Nrg-Cly, Bar-Nrg, and then Nrg S Cly-NAO might allow RATE to lock down England, but given the apparent relationship between Mark and Adam, I agree that B A Mos was a given.*

Diplomacy World Demo Game – Known World Variant – (Also Known As “DC229”)

The Starting Players:

Arabia - Matt Kremer,
Byzantium - Gregory Alexopoulos.
China - Lynn Mercer.
Denmark - Former Trout (aka Sanford O'Donnell).
Egypt - Ian Moes.
France - Nigel Phillips or Nigs as he likes to be known.
Germany - Jack McHugh, our variant editor.
India - Andy Jameson or the White Wolf.
Khazaria - the game designer, David Cohen.
Russia - Darren Sharma.
Spain - Nathan Deily.
The Samanids - played by John Reside,

Srivijaya - played by Mike Morris.
Wagadu - Mikael Johansson,
Axum - Benjamin Hester.

The GM:

Nick Higgins (Verdanda Italics)

The Commentators:

Jim Burgess (normal text)
Rick Desper (italics)
Suzanne Castagne (bold)

SPRING 901

Nick Higgins: *The Spring 901 season has been adjudicated. It's great to finally get this game under way. From what I've heard, the diplomacy has been very active. I hope that our players and observers have a good time!*

The first season in this variant naturally tends to be a bit tentative given all the neutral units on the board. Nonetheless, the action appears to be heating up near Albion already, and the most interesting development is probably the complete lack of conflict near the usual flashpoint of Pechenegs (the Crimea).

Arabian A Ard - Mos
Arabian A Bag - Nef
Arabian A Isf - Ard
Arabian F Bsr - Ars

Byzantine A Con H
Byzantine F Att - Cis
Byzantine F Chs - Wes
Byzantine F Tar - Ios

Chinese A Cha H
Chinese A Nan - Ann
Chinese A Yan - Blh
Chinese F Kai - Eas

Danish A Vik - Sca
Danish F Jor (ec) S F Jln - Ngs
Danish F Jln - Ngs
Danish F Sca - Abs

Egyptian A Ale - Aqa
Egyptian A Aqa - Daj
Egyptian F Bar - Egs
Egyptian F Jer - Sty

French A Aqt - Aut
French A Gas - Aqt
French A Nar H
French F Par - Brc

German A Bav H

German A Sax - Sor
German A Swa H
German F Bre - Sgs

Indian A Ind - Sha
Indian A Knj - Chl
Indian A Var - Nep
Indian F Ujj - Ras

Khazar A Ati - Udm
Khazar A Bal - Kak
Khazar A Srk - Ati
Khazar A Tam - Abk

Russian A Kie - Vya
Russian A Ros - Che
Russian A Smo - Liv
Russian F Nov - Fis

Spanish A Cor - Val
Spanish A Sal - Zar
Spanish F Cad - Sta
Spanish F Val - Sjt

Samanid A Buk - Sam
Samanid A Her - Blk
Samanid A Sam - Qar
Samanid A Urg - Buk

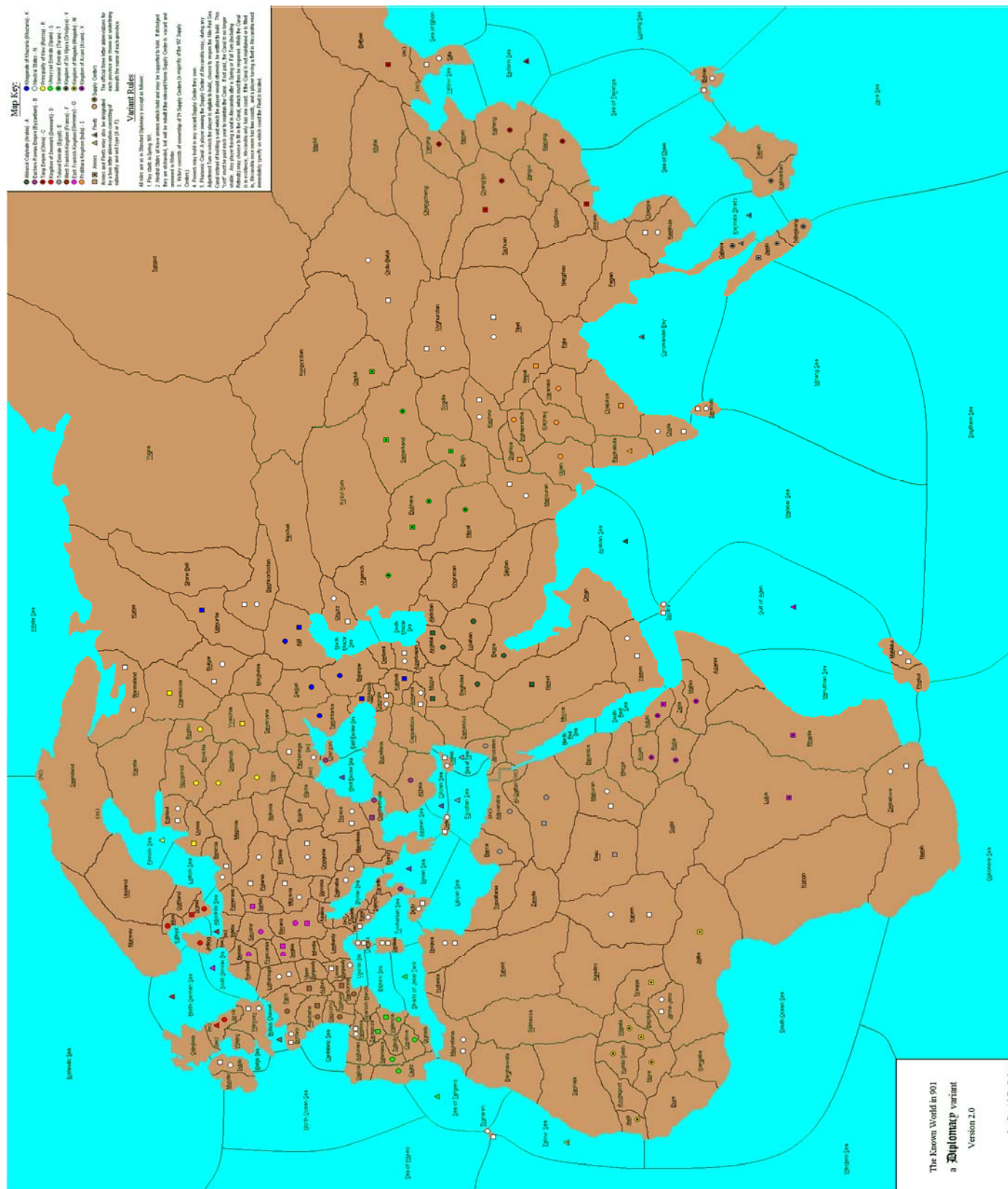
Srivijayan A Plm - Jam
Srivijayan F Cah H

Srivijayan F Jam - Cob
Srivijayan F Kal - Krs

Wagadu A Kus - Wal
Wagadu A Nio - Jel
Wagadu A Wal - Tir

Wagadu F Awl - Tas

Axum A Axu - Adu
Axum A Mal - Rha
Axum A Roh - Lub
Axum F Adu - Gad



Spring 901 Commentary

Jim Burgess (normal text)

Rick Desper (italics)

Suzanne Castagne (bold)

I don't think that I agree with the GM about heating up near Albion; it seems normal that Denmark takes Wessex and France Brittany.

It is interesting to see how the new version of the board really looks in action. It looks as though the absence of Italy is especially favorable to Byzantine; and also indirectly to Germany and perhaps also Kiev, who have a vast field of neutral centers in the region between them. Perhaps it loosens the pressure on France; I'm not sure.

Almost all the central powers have a clear option on two neutral centers -- and, in this variant, more than half of the powers are central powers! Only Denmark, Spain, Wagadu, Axum, Srivijaya and China are structurally incapable of taking two centers without help from another power.

The ones that seem especially advantaged in future growth possibilities so far are Germany, Byzantine, Kiev and Khazaria, for various reasons.

The moves by Samanadia struck me as odd. This power can easily take Ghuzz and have at least a good option on a second center (Mansurah or that center to the east, Uyghurstan). Instead, he left Ghuzz alone and headed east to position himself to take Ordu-Balyk. Khazaria is heading south and south-east, so Ghuzz may well be contested next year.

A few other choices are worth noting.

Spain had to choose between a North African route, starting with Mauritania, or moving east and starting in on one of the centers freed up by the absence of Italy. He chose North Africa. This doesn't rule out going east later, but it does begin to define his game.

Axum can only take one center the first year; but he has headed due south to take Zimbabwe. Meanwhile, Egypt is taking Makuran and Arabia has an excellent option on Yemen, which limits the future possibilities of expansion for Axum. Not sure that this was his best choice, unless there is a plan behind it (an alliance against India?) Although he can keep Arabia from taking Yemen if he wishes, by supporting the neutral with his fleet.

China went and calmly positioned himself against Cilla, but he also moved down towards Kambuja, which means that he can keep Srivijaya from taking

this center. Since he seems sea-oriented, that may be his intention.

What do you all think? Am I reading too much into a few initial moves?

Well, I guess we're flying blind in terms of reading press or anything?

This map is huge. Usually to do well for a long period of time on a huge map, you have to start with at least two allies - preferably more.

Having neutrals occupied by defensive forces makes the first year or two very slow, I would think. In particular, all of the island dots are going to be hard to pick up unless neighbors cooperate. It's easy to grab neutrals in the first year - it is far more important to have some plans for how the second and subsequent years will develop.

Starting with Europe:

Denmark is going for Wessex and I don't know what his other two forces are up to. Is he going to worry about Jelling?

France has two neutrals coming in Brittany and Marseilles. He could then build in Paris and take Alsace, if he wished.

Germany had two units hold. What's up with that? Waiting for a starting gun? He takes Moravia now and Poland in the next Spring.

Yada yada yada, guessing who will take which neutrals is boring...

Let's see...Spain gets only one build, and it's in Africa. If I were him, I'd take that with an army. Look at those garrisons in Sicily and Sardinia. What a pain! Spain would appear to need to tell France not to build any Med fleets.

West Africa looks to be light on SCs. East Africa is a little better. An African alliance appears like it would be a natural.

The Middle East has a lot of dots, which should make for some excitement. My experience with the Modern variant would suggest that it would be hard for Egypt and Byzantium to get along. Having Arabia in the mix should make things even livelier.

I don't like the Russian powers because I generally don't

like being in the middle, and the Russian powers, at least Kiev and Khazaria, don't appear to have a stack of SCs to fend off attacks from the sides. Perhaps they can triple up with Byzantium?

As for Asia, let's see...we have some guy wandering the steppes, we have an Indian power, a Chinese power, and somebody playing the Dutch position from Colonial. The map is not as tightly interleaved as Colonial, though. I'm going to call Indonesia "the Dutch" because Srivijaya doesn't roll off the tongue. The Dutch have a problem if the Chinese support the local militia in Kampuchea - where is the build coming from?? If I were China, I'd be looking hard for a reason to not do that. And not finding one. Aside from Korea, where is China going for builds? Is he going to try to blast inland to fight the Asian horde? I wouldn't want to do that. I see that Suzanne is thinking similarly about China.

Well, it's of course impossible to tell at this point who's doing what.

Everyone else focused on the board, so I'm going to focus on the players. First a few comments on the board positions after the first moves.

The new redesign by David Cohen adds some more space at the top of the map, this gives the Danish more of a backyard, but first off it appears to me as if the Danes and the Germans have reached a rapprochement whereby the Germans are using South German Sea to take Lotharingia while the Danes take Wessex and then they oppose France together. France has been the weak sister in most of these Cohen designed variants in this world, though removing Italy as a power ensures that the French will not be eliminated as quickly as they have been in two games I've played on the earlier maps.

The Spanish have essentially no initial enemies, but also will get off to a bit of a slow start, the key early decision will be on how the Spanish intervene in the Germany/Danish/France triangle. It could be left alone, as Spain can't take Sardinia or Corsica without bringing the second fleet to bear on it.

Moving south, Axum moved even further south, possibly this is a deal with Spain where Spain takes Mauretania with the Tangiers fleet. If Spain takes it with a convoyed army, then Axum could be in some intermediate range trouble. Byzantium would seem to be even more advantaged by the loss of Italy from the game. Byzantium is now a central power with a "back" of neutral centers. The question in the Med is who goes after these centers and when. The early key there is whether Byzantium and Egypt quietly split Cyprus and Crete.

In the center of the board, I found in the last game I played (and it will be true here too, I think) that the

center to watch will be Pechenegs. Right now everyone has agreed to "go the other way". Right now that means that the three neighbors are at least neutral and going in the other directions. When negotiations open over who takes it, well then there may be some action.

In the east, India and Srivijaya may be moving toward some early conflict, while China's move to Annam seemed neither threatening nor useful.

Now to the players.... we need to ask for player identifications or this exercise is not going to be much fun or useful for the observers. Here are my comments on the players, but I had to go to the earlier board assignments to get them. Everything I said above was based purely on the moves and the map, now the players....

Arabia is Matt Kremer, Matt is a player I do not know personally, but I expect to burst onto the scene through this game. Since I didn't say anything about his board position above, let me add that his move to the Arabian Sea seemed to be potentially unnecessarily worrying to India. Otherwise, this central power is not directly threatened but must avoid jousting too early with Khazaria.

Byzantium is Gregory Alexopoulos. Gregory knows the Mediterranean in the earlier version of this variant and early odds from me would be that he will dominate that area quickly as the game develops. I've not seen Gregory in other games in the last year, I suspect this will be a focus for him, and that means everyone around him needs to watch out. He is a brilliant tactician on new maps where you have to work out new combinations.

China is Lynn Mercer. Lynn will be in the endgame here, for sure. He is not going to anger his neighbors and will be a slow and steady tortoise (in a good way). As I said, I don't really know what he's bothering to do with Annam, but I don't think it will upset Srivijaya.

Denmark is Former Trout (aka Sanford O'Donnell). I'll likely call him Trout for short. Trout writes great press, has lots of energy, and when he's engaged in a game you know it. I'm sure he'll do that here and Denmark is likely STILL to be hard to eliminate, even though there is a back door now.

Egypt is Ian Moes. Ian will have to find a way to get the upper hand on Gregory. I am not optimistic, though at least for the moment I would bet on the Cyprus/Crete trade going through as planned.

France is Nigel Phillips or Nigs as he likes to be known. Nigs has a bit of a temper, can be imperious, is a flat out brilliant tactician, and will switch alliances at the drop of a hat. A man after my own heart. He will NOT go out quickly.

Germany is Jack McHugh, our variant editor. I hope Jack puts the energy into this game that it needs. If he doesn't, Nigel and Trout will trounce him. I've known Jack for a long time, if you sleep in the same room with him, as I did once at a Diplomacy con, you have to be able to block out window rattling snoring. Wake up, Jack!!!

India is Andy Jameson or the White Wolf. I don't really know Andy very well as a gamer, so I will withhold further comment until there's something to comment on.

Khazaria is the game designer, David Cohen. You might think this gives him a huge advantage, I don't think so. The key still is Pechenegs, does David go for it first? Going for it first isn't necessarily the right decision, in fact it is likely the wrong decision (depending on the context of everything else, of course). Key early question is whether Khazaria and Arabia come to early blows.

Russia is Darren Sharma. Darren plays a lot of games with high-powered players and he survives. He will work with people, but I've not seen him power through to do really well. Russia/Kiev is the power I played in the earlier version of this variant. I chose to attack Denmark and though I defeated him, I lost in the end. Probably a more measured approach (that I expect from Darren) will work better for Russia/Kiev.

Spain is Nathan Deily. I don't know Nathan at all, as I said, he faces the key decision, army or fleet to take the center? Much depends on it.

The Samanids are played by John Reside, I don't know him at all either. Since I've not mentioned the Samanids yet, let me say this about the Spring moves. I just don't get them. I guess we're going to refer to the Samanids as Turan now? Like Suzanne, the moves seem to rule out some Fall centers that could have been had. I don't like the starting moves, but John may show me otherwise as we go forward.

Srivijaya is played by Mike Morris. Mike grows on you as a player after you play with him for awhile. He is very, very crafty and very, very good at fooling you about how crafty he is being. The question of whether Arabia is going to challenge India, working cross-continent with Srivijaya? Nah, probably not, but if they are, wow, what a breakout if it works.

Wagadu is Mikael Johansson, who I also don't know. Wagadu waits to see if Spain keeps the presumed early agreement.

Finally, Axum is Benjamin Hester. Not knowing Mikael, I would say watch out for BH....if Axum can lock up an African empire, that immediately gets it to the endgame.

Fall 901

Nick Hester: *901 has passed without much incident, as everybody made nice with each other, and devoted their energy to gathering unchallenged neutrals. A few of you managed to gain a couple SCs this year, while most have one in the bag with a second likely on the way. Although, it should be noted that there was conflict in one area, as Russia was denied Bulgar by the Khazars. The game is sure to heat up in 902, as the low-hanging fruit is mostly picked.*

Before the adjudications, we have some press. It wasn't specified if it was anonymous or not, so I'm going to leave it anonymous. Thanks very much to the player that sent it in, and hopefully we'll see some more next season!

PRESS

Chang-an -- one slip of moon;
in ten thousand houses, the sound of fulling mallets.
Autumn winds keep on blowing,
all things make me think of Jade Pass!
When will they put down the barbarians
and my good man come home from his far campaign?
Li Bo

Arabian A Ard S A Mos - Aze
Arabian A Mos - Aze

Arabian A Nef - Yem
Arabian F Ars S A Nef - Yem

Byzantine A Con - Thr
Byzantine F Cis - Cre
Byzantine F Ios S F Cis - Cre
Byzantine F Wes S A Con - Thr

Chinese A Ann - Nnz
Chinese A Blh - Sil
Chinese A Cha - Tib *Bounce*
Chinese F Eas S A Blh - Sil

Danish F Jor (ec) - Wsx
Danish A Sca - Jln
Danish F Abs C A Sca - Jln
Danish F Ngs S F Jor (ec) - Wsx

Egyptian A Aqa - Mak
Egyptian A Daj S A Aqa - Mak
Egyptian F Egs S F Sty - Cyp
Egyptian F Sty - Cyp

French A Aqt - Bri
French A Aut S A Nar - Lbu
French A Nar - Lbu
French F Brc S A Aqt - Bri

German A Bav - Mor
 German A Sor S A Bav - Mor
 German A Swa - Lot
 German F Sgs S A Swa - Lot

Indian A Chl S F Ras - Cho
 Indian A Nep - Kas
 Indian A Sha S A Nep - Kas
 Indian F Ras - Cho

Khazar A Abk S A Kak - Geo
 Khazar A Ati - Mrd
 Khazar A Kak - Geo
 Khazar A Udm S A Bul

Russian A Che S A Vya - Bul
 Russian A Liv - Est
 Russian A Vya - Bul *Bounce*
 Russian F Fis S A Liv - Est

Spanish A Val - Mau
 Spanish A Zar - Spm

Spanish F Sjt C A Val - Mau
 Spanish F Sta S A Val - Mau

Samanid A Blk - Sog
 Samanid A Buk - Blk
 Samanid A Qar - Orb
 Samanid A Sam S A Qar - Orb

Srivijayan A Jam - Pag
 Srivijayan F Cah S F Krs - Kam
 Srivijayan F Cob C A Jam - Pag
 Srivijayan F Krs - Kam

Wagadu A Jel S A Tir - Jej
 Wagadu A Tir - Jej
 Wagadu A Wal - Aga
 Wagadu F Tas - Wts

Axum A Adu - Phe
 Axum A Lub S A Rha - Zim
 Axum A Rha - Zim
 Axum F Gad C A Adu - Phe

Position	Power	Abb	900	901	Change	SCs changing possession
						Geo, -JeJ, -Kam, -Kas, -LBu, -Lot, -Mak, -Mau, -Mor, -OrB, -Sil, -Thr, -
1	Neutral	N	47	26	-21	Wsx, -Yem, -Zim
2	Abbasid Caliphate (Arabia)	A	4	6	2	+Aze, +Yem
3	Byzantine Empire	B	4	6	2	+Cre, +Thr
4	Tulunid Emirate (Egypt)	E	4	6	2	+Cyp, +Mak
5	West Frankish Kingdom (France)	F	4	6	2	+Bri, +LBu
6	East Frankish Kingdom (German)	G	4	6	2	+Lot, +Mor
7	Pratihara Kingdom (India)	I	4	6	2	+Cho, +Kas
8	Tang Empire (China)	C	4	5	1	+Sil
9	Kingdom of Denmark	D	4	5	1	+Wsx
10	Khaganate of Khazaria	K	4	5	1	+Geo
11	Principality of Kiev (Russia)	R	4	5	1	+Est
12	Umayyad Emirate (Spain)	S	4	5	1	+Mau
13	Samanid Emirate (Turan)	T	4	5	1	+OrB
14	Kingdom of Sri Vijaya	V	4	5	1	+Kam
15	Kingdom of Wagadu	W	4	5	1	+JeJ
16	Kingdom of Axum	X	4	5	1	+Zim

Adjustments

Abbasid Caliphate (Arabia) builds 2 units, can build in Bad, Bsr, Isf

Byzantine Empire builds 2 units, can build in Att, Con, Tar

Tang Empire (China) builds 1 unit, can build in Kai, Nan

Kingdom of Denmark builds 1 unit, can build in Jor (ec), Jor, Jor (wc), Sca, Vik

Tulunid Emirate (Egypt) builds 2 units, can build in Ale, Ale (nc), Ale (sc), AQa, Bar, Jer

West Frankish Kingdom (France) builds 2 units, can build in Aqt, Gas, Nar, Par

East Frankish Kingdom (German) builds 2 units, can build in Bav, Bre, Sax, Swa

Pratihara Kingdom (India) builds 2 units, can build in Ind, Knj, Ujj, Var

Khaganate of Khazaria builds 1 unit, can build in Ati,

Bal, Srk, Tam

Principality of Kiev (Russia) builds 1 unit, can build in Kie, Nov, Ros, Smo

Umayyad Emirate (Spain) builds 1 unit, can build in Cad, Cor, Sal, Val

Samanid Emirate (Turan) builds 1 unit, can build in Buk, Her, Urg

Kingdom of Sri Vijaya builds 1 unit, can build in Jam, Kal, Plm

Kingdom of Wagadu builds 1 unit, can build in Awl, KuS, Nio, Wal

Kingdom of Axum builds 1 unit, can build in Adu, Axu, Mal, Roh

Neutral makes no adjustments

Fall 901 Commentary

Jim Burgess (normal text)

Rick Desper (italics)

Suzanne Castagne (bold)

Starting in the NW: England (Denmark) has taken Wessex (London) and will likely go for Dublin next year. After that the only SCs come from other people. I'm not sensing a lot of trust between England and Germany. It'll be interesting to see who the odd man out in the West is.

Germany ought to make a deal with Byzantium to split Onogoria and Dalmatia. They could even work together in Italy or against Russia. Getting an ally to help with neutrals would give an alliance a jump forward.

Spain and France seem too intertwined right now. France in particular is completely surrounded with no more neutrals to go after. France needs an ally - now. But any kind of ally should do. Spain is in better position because he has more room to maneuver in the Med. I think Tunis and Sardinia should go to Spain.

I'm interested to see what the West African fleet in the Western Sea does next. He could go after the Canary Islands or swing against East Africa. Africa doesn't have a lot of SCs, so I'm going to continue to endorse the notion that these two powers should work together. If they do, Egypt will be easy pickings.

I pretty much don't like any of the Middle East positions. It seems like they're in a good position to waste time squabbling and then be hit by corner powers. Arabia has a few SCs together but little ability to move inland.

The Khazar and Russia might be fighting soon. I really don't like that Khaz position - having a narrow strip of land between two seas, and few neutrals to grab, he'll be in trouble soon.

Asia has a nice number of SCs and I suspect that so alliance will be dominant over there soon. China did not support the neutral in the Southeast but is instead moving inland to face the Horde. If there is an alliance between China and Indonesia, that could work well. China might be short a couple SCs, though. Where Indonesia has a couple of islands to go after, China has nothing, as The Horde and India have both moved towards him aggressively.

Arabia is Matt Kremer, and he is off to a solid start. Arabia is eventually going to be surrounded and have to make firm choices in one direction or another, but to now, get two builds, really only having to worry about Axum, represents some great initial diplomacy. The model of "make no early enemies and be patient" is essential in any position where you could end up fighting on three fronts, as Arabia could do here. Though Axum

is in a sense physically "closest", there are many reasons to deal with Axum, rather than attack. Our signal will be how they handle the Arabian island of Socotra (which seems more than a realistic supply center, a game design strategic supply center). Arabia also clearly has a strong initial deal with the Samanid, a deal that could be broken early, or continue on in a deal to attack India (White Wolf). I again would bet on the latter. But Arabia has lots of choices, if Matt makes good ones, he will sail into the midgame.

Axum (East Africa) has Sri Lanka to go for, and I think should deal with Arabia to let him have the island of Socotra, which I will henceforth call Sohcahtoa. In Arabia's favor, I think he's made a deal with the Khaz. I don't think the Horde wants to bother with him, so that leaves India and Egypt. This position certainly demands good diplomacy.

Byzantium is Gregory Alexopoulos. In most of the maps David Cohen has designed in this general period, Byzantium has both a difficult initial position and a great deal of options. Dropping Italy off the map as a separate power could make Byzantium a bit too strong, and in the hands of Gregory, a brilliant tactician and coy decision maker, that is a deadly combination. Gregory has arguably one of the best of the first year outcomes. True enough, Egypt also built two, but that Italian wall behind Byzantium just looks so strong. Pechenegs is a key center, but it looks like the other neighbors have ceded it to Byzantium to take next year. If Kiev and Khazaria continue to spar, then this only benefits Gregory. It looks like Byzantium can pick up two more next year, and the year after that, and the year after that, all without actually attacking anyone. This is dangerous for the board, we'll see if they let him do it.

The growth for Byzantium can be especially good if he has a partner either in Central Europe or Italy. I like this position. We'll have to see if he can keep peace with Egypt will pursuing this growth path.

China is Lynn Mercer. Was Lynn expecting a support into Tibet that he didn't get, or was he just moving for the heck of it? It doesn't really matter too much, China is a strong corner power in this game and I doubt anyone will stop Lynn from making it to the midgame. Other than that, not much to say yet in the East.

I think China's only hope here is if India and The Horde are not working together. He only got one build here and his prospects for expansion do not look great, unless he's got an ally lined up somewhere. The failed move to Tibet is not auspicious. India has a better

position on Tibet and The Horde has a better position on Uglystan. He'd better hope he doesn't have Indonesian fleets coming his way.

Denmark is Former Trout (aka Sanford O'Donnell). I'm watching Trout and Denmark very closely. The France/Denmark balance looks to be much better on this map. While nothing horrendous happened to Trout this year, there are a LOT of adjacent powers with options to fall on him next year, should they want to work together. Lots of Diplomacy for Trout to do to choose the right allies. It seems that Kiev/Russia has to Esteland somewhere to make moves there to take Esteland worthwhile. And it does mean there can be more Russian fleets pretty darn quick. But where does it convoy? Trout doesn't want to have to build to protect Viken, or have to move back to take it back. That's the key spring move to watch for.

The question for Trout here is: who is my friend? I wouldn't be worried so much about Russia, but the F/G/E triangle is there. But at least he doesn't have the problems France has.

Egypt is Ian Moes. Poor Ian, I think he's pretty hemmed in without very many choices. He's already way too far near the end of easy picking neutral supply centers to take. Egypt pretty much is forced to choose an enemy now. And I would urge finding a way for that NOT to be Byzantium (unless Kiev and Khazarian help is forthcoming immediately) even though in the long run that means curtains for Egypt. Very, very hard choices here. I'm not sure which one I would take, but he needs to be decisive.

Egypt absolutely has to have an ally in Africa. I am very much not fond of this position.

France is Nigel Phillips or Nigs as he likes to be known. Nigs has many options, he's in great shape for one of the "surrounded" powers. France likely will choose an enemy this upcoming year, but in theory it could be any neighbor. And also, he should try to take over Italian holdings before Byzantium gets them. The obvious move there is to build a fleet and maneuver (with some Spanish acquiescence) to take Rome this year. That's the move I would look for, especially if Nigs decides to be patient and wait to choose an enemy.

The next year should be very interesting for Nigs. I don't think it'll suffice to simply try for Rome. I think he needs to be proactive and either try to slam into Germany or England or Spain. And Spain is the worst choice of target of the three. An E/G could work very well from here.

Germany is Jack McHugh, our variant editor. OK, I was wrong, Jack IS paying attention. Kudos for negotiating out the two centers and builds. We will know instantly by the German builds what challenges he is choosing to take on next. I would not bet on the attack on Denmark,

but it is possible, working with Kiev and France.

I could see Germany trying for the land route here, and trying to keep England happy by not building any fleets. If the French play is slow, Germany has a few more neutrals he can try to grab. But the board tells me he'll have problems with France.

India is Andy Jameson or the White Wolf. Our Indian player needs to avoid a two front war out of the gate. He did get the two builds which provide some defense, but it is going to take some negotiating to make what he wants to happen on the board happen. Which way India goes will define the passage into the midgame in Asia, easy to say, but really true. Fleets or armies? East or West (or North)? I'll be watching the White Wolf to see if he is planning to play with the Yeti in the mountains or not!

India has a naval problem in that it seems unlikely he'll be able to compete with Arabia or Indonesia. So he'll have to line up one of them as a friend. Also, he won't be able to blast North against the Horde. I'm going to guess he'll work with the Horde and find a way to get Tibet. Pakistan also looks like a possibility. Beyond that, it's going to come down to negotiation.

Khazaria is the game designer, David Cohen. I'm sure that David has a detailed plan as the game designer how he is going to build the Khazar into the dominant central power in the game. Let's imagine what his plan is. He supported Bulgar to block the Kievian Russians. This is sure to anger Darren. I know that in the last game David was in (that I was in with Darren as well), Darren got knocked down in that game and David appears to be setting up to do that again here. I don't think you can block someone taking a center without ramifications in a game like this. So what will those ramifications be? I believe that Darren will press to take Bulgar even more, rather than handing it to David, but it seems that allowing David to take it, and convincing Darren to go elsewhere must be the plan. We'll see if it happens.

I don't like the Khazar position - they look like a skinny, tall power. I think Russia should eventually have the advantage on their front, so if that's the thinking, blocking Bulgar for as long as possible seems wise. Khazar can scoop up Bashk, but after that I'm a bit puzzled about where he can go. Will he get a fleet on either the Black or Caspian Seas? If not now, then when? And he doesn't, isn't he doomed in the long run? I really, really don't like this position. Should be a challenge for our designer.

Russia is Darren Sharma. I think I've discussed Russia/Kiev fully elsewhere. This shows how the Russian choices and fortunes are intertwined with those of his neighbors. I don't know how the negotiation will go, but much depends on Darren being very active now.

Russia should be able to take Bjarmaland easily. I think

there's a natural DMZ with England, so it will then depend on how he fares with Germany and the Black Sea powers. I like this position.

Spain is Nathan Deily. If I were Spain, I would be working harder to take Corsica and Sardinia and moving toward Italy. It is possible that he will move that way, but it looks to me like he will build another fleet to take Tkanaren (which I would have left to pick up later) and move the convoyed army to take Ifriqiya. That is a guaranteed two builds for the next year, but France cannot be happy with that solo army in Spanish March adjacent to his centers.

As I said earlier, If I were Spain, I would ignore Tkanaren and make sure I dominated the Western Med but going for Tunisia and Sardinia. He also presumably wants to pick up Pamplona. The front with France is very tight - it'll be interesting to see if this works out.

The Samanids are played by John Reside, The Samanids seem to need the Arabians to be attacking India in concert to make any real headway with the all-east plan that they showed in the first year. It is as simple as that. Should that assumption be good, the Samanid will benefit, if not India and the Samanid will both stagnate.

These are the guys I'm calling The Horde. I think it'd be natural to ally with India here. If they do so, they'll have enough strength to push into China. I am very hopeful about this position.

Srivijaya is played by Mike Morris. I think that Srivijaya is likely joining the attack on India, if that is what is happening. Mike is in a great corner position, not threatened by anyone, and ready to move to the midgame.

This is the guy I'm calling Indonesia. I think he convoyed to Burma to make sure he would take Cambodia. China apparently backed off blocking the capture of Cambodia, so it probably makes sense to think they are working together.

Wagadu is Mikael Johansson, I'm not sure what the stray F Wts is up to, perhaps a deal with Spain, perhaps just defending against wandering. Wagadu has a dearth of enemies and a dearth of targets. He should easily take Kanem next year, but without help that will be it. We'll see if Mikael finds somewhere else to head.

Yes, Western Africa needs to get beyond the dead zones and get into the game. That's why I like the idea that he's working with...

Axum is Benjamin Hester. BH successfully gambled on sending everyone south, taking one center, setting up to take the other, with no one taking advantage of his aggressive move. Now, the logical questions are how to deal with the Wagadu, Arabia, and Egypt. Axum will

likely only oppose one of those, and since Mikael seems to have nothing else to do, Egypt seems likely to be the joint target, assuming Arabia is attacking India.

Hmm...I agree with Jim here.

One general remark, in reply to Jim's discussion of the players. He remarked quite accurately the tactical prowess of some of the players. However, in a big game like this, tactical prowess is of less relative importance than good diplomacy and a good sense of strategy.

Northern Europe - Germany took his two neutrals, as planned. (I don't think that he had to negotiate much for that, Jim-Bob; France couldn't block him without depriving himself of a build.) He still has neutrals to take to his east, also still has options against Denmark or France, allying with the other. Could also ally with Russia against Denmark, but as Russia is under attack from Khazaria, that's not likely.

Denmark took the only sure neutral he had. He's in position to take Dublin next year, but he's got to head after someone. Perhaps Russia, who is under attack from Khazaria? The convoy to Jelling is interesting; does it show distrust of Germany?

Whatever Russia intended to do, he now has to face Khazaria, who has blocked him from taking one of his neutrals, and seems headed clearly in his direction.

Khazaria is normally part of the Middle East, but since he is apparently taking a northern path, we can discuss him here. I was surprised at Thuran's turn to the southeast, and thought that Khazaria would be taking Ghuzz, the neutral that he didn't bother with. But now it seems part of an arrangement between the two powers. But taking on Russia alone is a difficult proposition. Who will be working with Khazaria? Denmark? Germany, who still has a number of neutrals available?

Southern Europe - France took his two neutrals, but there doesn't seem to be a lot of obvious options for him for next year. Part of the reasoning in eliminating Italy was to allow room for France to grow, I believe. But France will have a hard time taking the centers that Italy would have had; as is, he can only build one fleet on the Med. That's not enough, unless he and Spain cooperate -- possible, after all.

Spain seems to be concentrating on North Africa, before any of the the Africans can move in. Odd that he doesn't pay more attention to all of the Italian goodies; I agree with Jim-bob that this would have been more logical. Maybe a Franco-Spanish cooperation is in the works.

Africa - The African nations are very spread out, and their initial moves seem to have accented this.

Wagadoo is now in position to take another next year. The fleet in Wes is odd, maybe he intends to build another fleet and take the little island there (Tka). Or maybe he expects help from Spain, in return for allowing Spain a free hand in North Africa.

Axuum has headed south to take Zim and position himself for the little island. Afterwards, he could join either of the the other African nations against a third, or he could head against Arabia, perhaps with Egypt (or against Egypt with Arabia).

Egypt is in a strong position, if he maintains good relations with most of his neighbors. But Alexandria, with the Canal is a key center; a trump card as long as he holds it, but a center that could attract attention from envious neighbors.

Mid-East - As mentioned about Khazaria and Thuran (formerly Samadia) seem to have agreed to head in opposite directions. So who is Thuran aiming for? Could be India, perhaps with Arabia, as Jim-Bob suggested.

Arabia (Persia) also has a large number of possibilities open to him. He could join one of the African nations in cutting up Egypt, or join Thuran in taking on India. Either could be fruitful.

Far East - China took his neutral, and let Srivijaya take his. That's not enough to indicate that they are working together, but it's a possibility. The mix-up with India is interesting. Frankly, I don't really see why India would help him take a neutral, rather than taking two himself (which is exactly what he did). But perhaps India will cooperate with China next year. The far eastern trio is still open, although if India is under attack, the other two orientals can't simply stand by; they have to either support India, or take their part.

Winter 901

Adjustment Adjudications

Abbasid Caliphate (Arabia) Builds A Bsr
Abbasid Caliphate (Arabia) Builds A Isf
Byzantine Empire Builds A Con
Byzantine Empire Builds A Tar
Tang Empire (China) Builds A Yan
Kingdom of Denmark Builds A Vik
Tulunid Emirate (Egypt) Builds F Bar
Tulunid Emirate (Egypt) Builds F Jer
West Frankish Kingdom (France) Builds A Nar
West Frankish Kingdom (France) Builds A Par

East Frankish Kingdom (German) Builds A Bav
East Frankish Kingdom (German) Builds A Sax
Pratihara Kingdom (India) Builds F Ujj
Pratihara Kingdom (India) Builds A Var
Khaganate of Khazaria Builds A Ati
Principality of Kiev (Russia) Builds A Kie
Umayyad Emirate (Spain) Builds F Val
Samanid Emirate (Turan) Builds A Her
Kingdom of Sri Vijaya Builds F Plm
Kingdom of Wagadu Builds F Awl
Kingdom of Axum Builds F Adu

Winter 901 Commentary

Jim Burgess (normal text)

Rick Desper (italics)

Suzanne Castagne (bold)

Well, I'm surprised England didn't build a fleet. He'll be hard-pressed to take Dublin. I suspect that the army in Yiken is headed for the continent. France also did not build a fleet. This does not bode well for Germany. He's only got one army in the West, where France has four.

I agree with Rick on this. Germany built everything on his eastern side. That's where a bunch of neutral SCs are, of course; but he has left himself entirely open to France. Perhaps Denmark is planning to work with France against Germany; he can always take Dublin afterwards. Note that France is apparently not planning to touch the Italian centers, at least not yet.

This is clearly an agreement of "everyone pounce on

Germany". This is a good example of how to negotiate around these first builds. In the "regular" FTF game, of course, one cannot negotiate between fall and winter, but for all E-Mail games you can. We can see how they convinced Germany to build east and probably told him they were building fleets, but then did not. These initial turning points in a game with a large number of players are almost unrecoverable. We'll see what happens here. Denmark and France will pincer Germany and Germany will have to decide whether to attempt to defend, or try to keep moving east. I also agree that France is going to leave the "safe" Italian backside until later. As I've noted before, in previous versions of this variant, France always went down VERY quickly, when Italy was a separate country.

Spain built a fleet in Valencia, which is what we expected. He'll go for Sardinia, and perhaps Tunis, too.

Agreed -- and this is probably his best bet.

West Africa can snag the Canary Islands while this is going on.

Right, Spain will be able to expand and then ultimately try to get some of the Italian centers, while West Africa seems to have agreed to a center split on the border.

Oh, is that what Tkanaran is? The Canaries? Yes, but what can he do with two fleets after the Canaries? Unless he wants to take Mauritania from Spain, eventually.

Well, that's where the Canaries are. If you drop the T you get kanaran, which could sound like 'Canary'.

East Africa has built a fleet on the Red Sea...does he want to be a naval power? Aren't the Egyptian armies a concern? Is he going after Arabia?

I agree with Rick; it is an odd build. Maybe he wants to take Socotra, but he can't take both that and Madagascar (Mahilaka) this year. At any rate, he doesn't seem to want a war with Egypt.

Egypt has built two more fleets on the Med. This seems weird to me. Surely this means war with Byzantium, but I'm not a fan of having so many fleets here. Like I said earlier, I don't think squabbling benefits the Middle Eastern powers in the long run.



I had also pointed this out, Egypt in particular needs to oppose Byzantium, and has convinced East Africa that leaving him alone to make that attack is the prudent course. If there also is an agreement with West Africa

on this point, keeping armies out of the center of Africa, this could be the start of a pan-African agreement. But West Africa needs to go somewhere, so that will bear close watching in the Spring.

It certainly does seem to be very aggressive towards Byzantium. But Byzantium has a whole bunch of free centers, thanks to the disappearance of Italy; maybe Egypt wants his share there. He has a choice between heading towards one of the African nations, perhaps Axxum, which would leave him open to a Byzantium or Arabian attack, or aiming at Arabia or Byzantium. Byzantium seems as good a choice as any.

I think it is more than that. Egypt needs to make some pressure from the north or east on Byzantium as well, and that is why we will watch that very carefully in the spring. And there are a LOT of centers in the Med. The middle of the board will turn on the outcome of the Byzantium/Egypt tussle.

Why do you think that the middle eastern powers shouldn't be fighting? One or two of them will end up dominating the region, in one way or another.

And I agree with this, but for Egypt if they make a deal with Byzantium the midgame will not turn out well for Egypt as I see it. This way, I think Egypt has their best chance if he can get allies against Byzantium.

I think two or three of them should ally and move outwards. Suppose, say, Byzantium wipes out Egypt and Arabia. Then he's a 20-SC power completely surrounded by the rest of the world, begging to be squished by a mid-game alliance. From playing Modern a lot, I think it's important to not only have early-game allies, but also have an idea who the mid-game allies are going to be. It just seems like everybody else is going to be headed towards the middle east eventually.

FWIW, I also think that AIG should never fight each other in the early game, for the same reason. (They cannot count on being bailed out, after all!)

I agree with you largely for standard, but I think a variant this big is different. At least half of the powers are more or less central powers here, unlike standard where the real center powers (A and G) are the exception. From memory, quickly, I'd say Germany, Byzantium, Egypt, Arabia, Thuran – Samadia - the Horde, Khazaria and India are clearly central powers. Those that ally intelligently and grow well have a great position in mid-game, and are strong contenders for the end-game. Actually, I think that it is easier to do well as a central power here -- and also that the central powers have the best chance of soloing, since the edge powers have so far to go to get a significant base. Perhaps I'm influenced by my preference for central powers, but I

think that this variant encourages this.

Part of the fun of a variant like this is determining where the lines of contention are going to fall. Each game will play out differently after those choices are made in the first few seasons. I would add Kiev as a clearly central power and agree on the others. And while it can be difficult to eliminate the edge powers, in a variant like this they can be bottled up, the central powers have the interesting choices. Within another game year or two some of these central powers will be pushed out and we will see which of them are most likely to get into the endgame. Intermediate length strong alliances are definitely more valuable here but it also is important to oppose the players who are growing "too fast".

I just realized that I never mentioned Byzantium for the fall results. Maybe because he's going on his own merry way, without any special interaction with his neighbors. But I am surprised by two army builds. Either one fleet and one army, or even two fleets, would give him more options. At any rate, that falls well with Egypt (who perhaps negotiated the Byzantine builds?).

Khazar has build an army, which was tipped by his initial frosty stance towards Russia, but I still don't like the strategy of being a fleet-free power between two seas.

A Khazarian attack on Russia made sense if he had a European partner. Denmark is still a possibility; hard to say if he is going after Germany or Russia. But if Khazaria is alone in his attack, that is going to be a long drawn-out war.

OTOH, I am less troubled by the Arabian armies, since they seem like they have somewhere to go.

If Arabia and Thuran are going after India, which seems likely, another new fleet might have been more useful. After all, Thuran can't build fleets, so all of the naval power has to come from Arabia.

The Horde can take Uglystan, and seems to be growing to be the dominant land power in Asia. The value of the Indian builds will depend on whether he has friends. If Jim is right, and everybody is gunning for him, then it doesn't matter much.

Agreed.

Indonesia is going to be the dominant fleet power in the East. I'm guessing he told China that a fleet build would mean war with him, and China has gone for the army build instead. I don't know where the Indonesian fleets are going, but generally speaking I like the position.

Yes, it seems that Srivijaya and China have come to an understanding of some sort. Perhaps Srivijaya is to take the little island between them (Butuan?)

From a strategic standpoint, I don't think The Horde should go after India, as he would probably get at most one or two dots, and would then be blocked in by a stronger China. I think he should go after China, which remains weak. Also, in the long term, the Horde needs access to the seas, and I think going East is the way to get that. Going South surely is not.

The trouble with Thuran/Samanidia is that it is very difficult for the power to have any significant naval presence anywhere. However, it can go very far as a strictly land power. That's what happened to my Samanidia; I always wanted fleets but the best I could manage was to ally with naval powers. There is a lot of room for a strong land power. I agree with Rick that the dominant land power in Asia will be either Thuran or China; but perhaps going through India is a good path to take.

China is looking very strong at the start and India needs to find an ally quickly. I agree that the Thuran fleets are unlikely to be forthcoming, in the long run, I would be headed more for putting fleets on the Baltic, but not for many game years yet. Kiev is a barrier there, but the early options for them are not great.

Why do you call them the Horde?

In my mind, they are playing the role of the Mongolian horde. I picture them sweeping across Europe at some point. I hope you guys don't mind if I don't use all the ancient names for places and powers. I think it'll be more readable for the 'zine if I use the more colorful or modern names.

You are probably right to do so, as long as they are really similar. Better to say Indonesia than Srivijaya; I'll do the same. But Denmark/the Vikings is not the same as England, really. And Thuren is not the Mongols at all, but rather something closer to Iran. (I had hoped that Mongolia would be a power in this variant, but it isn't.)

Right, Denmark is the "Vikings" and not the English. That's the one I would not support, the others are OK.

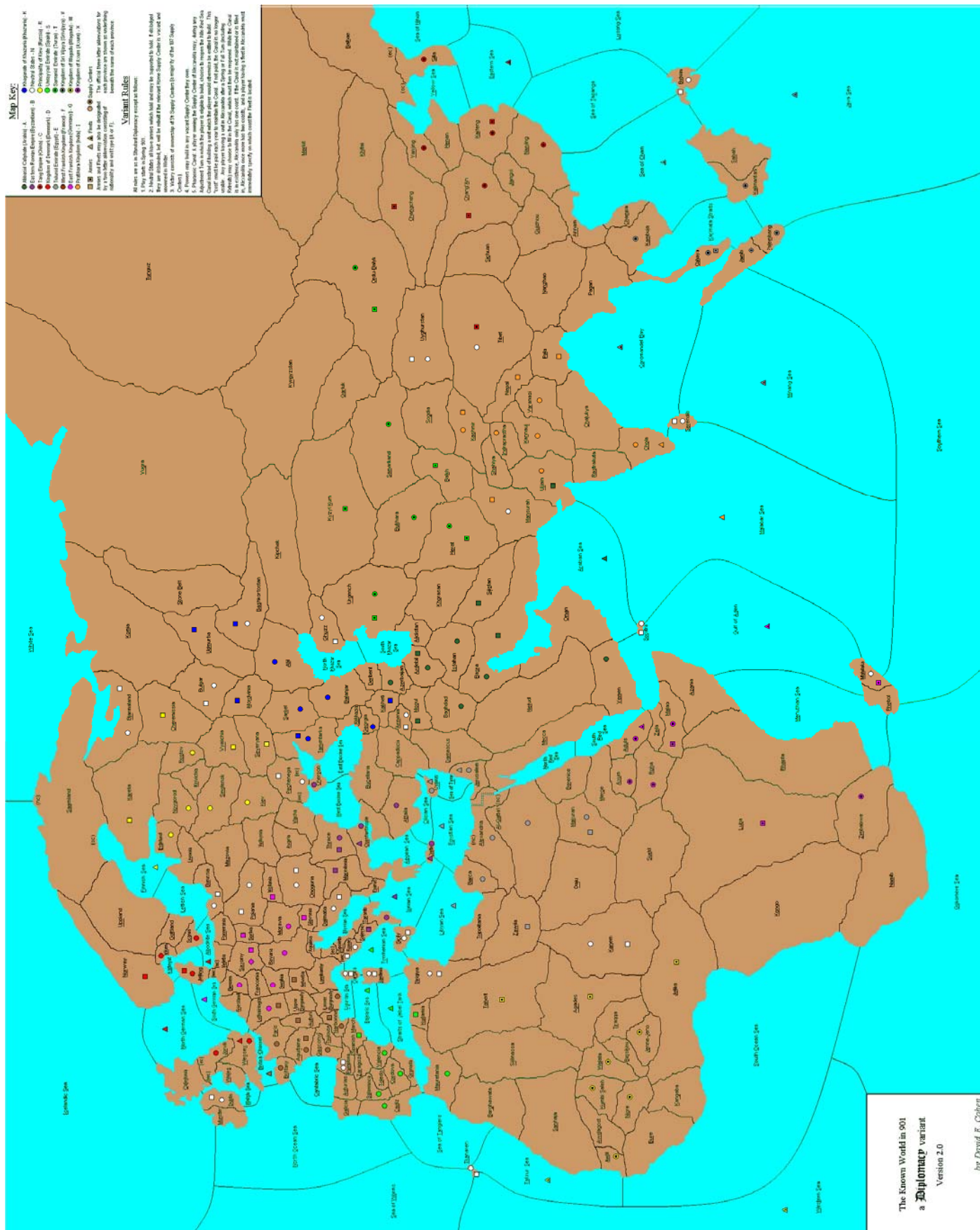
Wagadoo is essentially Ghana, and Axum Ethiopia, I think.

Thuran (Iran, if you like) could sweep over Europe, but that's probably not the easiest route to victory. Better with much of Asia and a big chunk of the Middle East. Lots of other possibilities.

For places, you are probably right most of the time. I'll try to follow suit, when I can.

I don't think it is too much of a problem.

SPRING 902



The Known World in 901
a **Diplomacy** variant
Version 2.0

by David E. Cohen

Axum A Zim - Lub
Axum F Adu - Mro *Bounce*
Axum F Gad S A Phe - Mah

Neutral A Arm H
Neutral A Bas H *Dislodged* *Disbanded*
Neutral A Bja H
Neutral A Bor H
Neutral A Bul H
Neutral A But H
Neutral A Crs H
Neutral A Dal H
Neutral A Dub H
Neutral A Ghu H
Neutral A Ifr H
Neutral A Kan H

Retreat Possibilities

Neutral A Bas is destroyed (neutral)
German A Lot can retreat to Fra, Fri or disband

Neutral A Mah H *Dislodged* *Disbanded*
Neutral A Man H *Dislodged* *Disbanded*
Neutral A Ono H
Neutral A Pam H
Neutral A Pec H
Neutral A Pol H
Neutral A Rom H
Neutral A Sar H
Neutral A Sci H
Neutral A Ser H
Neutral A Soc H
Neutral A Tib H *Dislodged* *Disbanded*
Neutral A Tka H
Neutral A Uyg H

Neutral A Mah is destroyed (neutral)
Neutral A Man is destroyed (neutral)
Neutral A Tib is destroyed (neutral)

Spring 902 Commentary

Jim Burgess (normal text)

Rick Desper (italics)

Suzanne Castagne (bold)

OK, so the Arabians have slipped into Ujjain. The Indian Ocean is getting very, very crowded. What do they do next. I would try the risky slipping forward, move F Ars-Ujj and A Ujj inland even farther to eviscerate the center of the Indian subcontinent. Because, while our White Wolf did succeed in taking Mansurah temporarily, the Arabians can also bust him out of that. What Matt Kremer did to accomplish this was to ally firmly with Egypt and send Egypt into the Mediterranean. On the other side Ard holding means that Matt was not so sure of the Samanids and the Khazarians. The outlook for Arabia appears quite bright at the moment.

I like these moves, esp. the convoy. Arabia is committed to the attack on India, and is well-positioned to do well. I'm going to assume he has an alliance with The Horde.

Yep. But which of them gets Mansuria?

Arabia also is very safely into the midgame.

Gregory (Byzantine) has his act together here and outsmarted Egypt. In the longer run, even though the F Wes-Con brings a third fleet into the act, Byzantium is outnumbered in fleets in the Eastern Med, 4-3. But Germany is severely pressed and will not be able to continue an eastern attack into Byzantine territory and Khazaria/Kiev are focused away from him as well. I think Egypt made a key tactical error (more below) that may have irreparably harmed the attack on Byzantium. Gregory is one of the very best tacticians in the game, he almost never makes a tactical error.

Very strong tactics in the Med. If Gregory is a good player, he is convincing Ian to give up the attack already. They have no time for this nonsense. Even if Byz isn't backing off, he's in good position to pick up Hungary and still has growth possibilities.

Again, though, doing the arrangement with Egypt doesn't really help Egypt, it just ensures that Byzantium is slowed down less for the inevitable big battle with some combination of Axum/Wagadu/Spain (hopefully not all three in concert).

See below. If Egypt is really headed against Byzantium, all by his lonesome, it's a bad idea. But he might have another target in mind.

The Chinese appear to have an expanding enviable corner position. I am a little worried or at least wondering about the Ordu-Balyk attempted move to Uyghurstan that only makes sense if the Samanid were expecting to be supported by China. Is this perceived as a stab by Lynn Mercer of John Reside's Samanids? If so, the Samanids are looking at too many uncertain gains. But Srivijayan is clearly allied with the Chinese, Mike Morris and Lynn Mercer have played what must be innumerable games together by now, and I think they are planning to attempt to sweep the board. They must be opposed now, but everyone else has decided to attack India and John Reside has only one unit opposing China. This is one to watch in the fall.

I agree with Jim that Lynn is likely allying with Mike here. I disagree about how that leads to an inevitable

steamroller. The capture of Tibet is interesting - he could leave it in favor of Uyg in the Fall, esp. if he and Indonesia line up a deal with India. China seems to realize that war with The Horde is inevitable.

It is good for China to make that deal with India, but Rick and I will continue to disagree here. Let's revisit that after the fall moves. But look at the Sriv? Mike must keep attacking India, or attack China, otherwise there aren't enough centers for his greedy maw.

I agree that they seem allied, and are moving west together, by land and by sea. For the moment they are not attacking India, just grabbing some neutrals that India might have wanted for himself if things had turned out differently.

May I remark here that it's very odd that, in this play-test, there is very little cooperation among powers to work together to take the neutrals. This is the first play-test where I haven't seen this done at all. India could have helped China into Tibet (even if he originally wanted it himself), in return for China turning against Samadia (Iran).

I think the Danish still have an enviable defensive position, but essentially made no progress this season. Viken made it to Norway, that was his only successful move. Luckily (or through good negotiation) for Former Trout, the Kievians convoyed to take Bjarmaland as part of the Khazar/Kiev skirmishing. So, no one is attacking our Trout, but neither is he making much progress. He played it somewhat defensively, so I don't believe Trout was as sure of the French attack on Germany as it looked to me. Nigs and Trout need to team up cleanly against Germany to move forward, while the Danish keep the weather eye on Kiev.

Yeah, just how are the Danes getting any builds this year? Generally speaking, I think the placement of fleets is an understudied problem, in the sense that too many people don't know how to move around their naval forces. In this game, the Danes have three fleets, and two are stuck defending NGS/Wes, while the third did nothing useful in ABS.

The problem with the strategy of going after Germany is that the SCs are all inland, except Bremen can easily be supported from the interior.

I don't quite understand what's going on here. If the Danes were going after Germany, why not force the SGS? He's really got an awkward position here. I'm guessing that he thought the convoy would succeed and that he could take Borussia in the Fall. But I still think a plan that included Dublin would have been better.

Based on the moves, I don't see that Denmark was going after Germany. If he was, he would have knocked the South German Sea fleet out of there. He

moved to Norway, apparently to convoy to the British Isles. That could be for Dublin next year, but it looks like there is not much trust between Denmark and France -- although maybe Germany has changed that with the bounce in Pol.

What does he do now? If he's going after Germany with the French, I would expect some kind of concentration of force in the area of Bremen. He could bring the second army down while making a supported attack into the Kiel area. (Part of the reason I use modern names is because the font is so small it is difficult to read unfamiliar province names.)

This is where Denmark really needs another fleet. F ABS is not helping, nor is A Nwy.

I think Rick is accurate here, but Denmark has little choice. France will gain more than he will, but Former Trout must stick with the attack (aborted as it was) against Germany. This suggests that there was some negotiations at deeper levels amongst Denmark/France/Germany and Denmark made the more patient, let's see how this shakes out, play. That is NOT the play to make in these large variants. You must strike aggressively and with solid tactics early. These sorts of tactical/strategic blunders can stop your growth and relegate you to "the next target", which I think Kiev/Russia and France will show Trout shortly.

For Egypt, clear and simple, F Cyp S F Jer-Egs was a mistake, it needed to make sure Egs got to Cis first. When you have a fleet advantage in numbers in the sea, or an army advantage in numbers on the land, it is essential that your spring positional season (spring for position, fall for centers being the standard strategy in all games) move you forward and create fall opportunities. Getting into the Cilician Sea was guaranteed with that support, then Jer-Egs could have bounced. But this would create some kind of guessing game regarding Attalia (not a pure one to be sure, but creating headaches for Gregory nonetheless. Egypt still has an advantage, but won't get a Byzantine center in the fall, and Byzantium gets his third fleet to Aegean Sea unopposed. Then this position starts to lock up and at best lead to VERY slow going. Reminds me of my battle with Gregory on an earlier map of this variant on the other side of the Mediterranean.

Jim has already criticized the tactics here, but it's worth saying that the Byz tactics were very good. The bounce in Meroe may have been arranged, but that may not be a great thing in the long run. Unless West Africa or Spain supports him into a build, he's getting nothing this year, and then he'll be reamed from the South. He needs to make peace with Byzantium immediately. He doesn't have the time to muck around, and it doesn't seem like he has any useful allies.

(Watch me be completely wrong.)

Allying with Byzantium means moving on Wagadu/Spain immediately though and that doesn't get him anywhere either. Egypt is almost certainly road kill now, the only question for Ian is who he slows down while going out.

Actually, he may not be heading to Byzantium after all, in spite of what we said after the builds. He might have an agreement with Mikael to take on Spain, which would explain the fleets. The bounces with Byzantium may have been agreed ones.

For France, clear commitment, oppose the Germans, make a deal with the Spaniards for Narbonne and Spanish March to mutually bounce. Jack made a big mistake trusting Nigs not to attack him in spring after those builds in winter I commented on (Denmark and France seemed aimed straight at Germany!). Now Nigs gets one German centers guaranteed and I would bet on him to outwit Jack to get a second one as well. While Germany can take at best ONE neutral in the east. And more likely Jack needs to turn around now to defend against the Viking/French attacks. France looks in VERY good shape to me.

I love the French position. For some reason, Germany is walking away from him, and he's beating Germany with a big stick. I don't quite get the army in Aquitaine. The army in Aquitaine needs to be in UB instead. I also don't quite get F Brc H. But Germany made up for this weirdness with F SGS H. Do these guys not know that Loth has a coast and that either of these fleets could have supported an action there? If Germany had simply written F SGS s A Lot, the French attack would have failed. And such a failure should not have been possible, since F BRC S A Par - Lot is called for here.

Nothing much to add to this. Whether it was by clever French diplomacy or German obtuseness, France has hit it rich.

Also, agreed on the fleets. I didn't catch that, but Rick is right.

I think that Jack was fooled by some concoction that Nigs worked up, perhaps that he was going after the Italian centers, and Nigs just got him. These sorts of speculations always get the commentators in trouble, because we don't see the negotiations, but clearly Germany did NOT expect to be stabbed by France, even though the builds seemed to set it up perfectly. Another lesson to the audience, if you can get your attack going with some misdirection then it sets you up very well into the midgame. France is already almost there with more gains to come and a safe "Italian" backside.

Our Variant Editor, Jack McHugh is in serious trouble in Germany as I've already noted. Franconia is the obvious correct retreat. And from there, in the face of a well-organized French attack, has to guess well this turn.

German A Lot can retreat to Fra, Fri or disband? Why not Swabia?

Yes, I wondered about that, too. Especially as that seems the best retreat.

What is up with ASor - Pol? We cannot even say that he expected support from somebody, can we? Germany can make sure that the losses for this year are confined to Loth, and he can also pick up Pol, unless he has a brain freeze again. He can (and should) move A Slavonia back to Bavaria.

Agreed. I can't understand why Germany headed steadily east, while the French forces were massed on his western border. And I completely agree that bouncing Denmark in Pol is silly at best. I see no evidence that Denmark was planning an attack on Germany. But bouncing him is a good way to make an enemy out of a possible ally.

Yes, my initial reactions were a bit too far. But Germany doesn't need to just defend, he needs an ally and it is not clear where it can come from. The logical place is Spain. Nathan is making good progress and will have to decide whether to focus on the Med or move north. Germany desperately wants the move north.

Come on, White Wolf, make some deals as India, get people worried about the China/Sriv. juggernaut and let them help you move East. These moves seem like they did not understand how much pressure India was coming under, which was the obvious logical conclusion from the builds.

A complete disaster. I'm going to go with the theory that he's selling his soul to China/Indonesia. But we'll see.

Doesn't matter, The White Wolf needs to go find a Yeti army from the Himalayas or some equivalent miracle to avoid being the last of the first road kill powers. In a game like this, there is little percentage in trying to come back as a small power, take big risks and die trying but look for that 5% chance of success. That likely is the reverse of what Rick suggests, making a deal with the Samanid/Arabia to oppose the Eastern Juggernaut in return for halting the attack. Remember, I know it looks unlikely, but it seems the best 5% shot.

I agree with Jim-Bob's first sentence. It looks like he was the odd man out in the negotiations. At this point, not much that he can do.

The question for the Khazarians is whether to join an attack on Byzantium and whether he can convince Kiev to hand him Bulgar. This SHOULD have been accomplished already, but does not seem to have been to date. I don't get why David Cohen and Darren Sharma should be butting heads so uselessly. They should work it out this turn, we will see in whether David

gets Bulgar this time.

David's getting a build, which puts him ahead of some players, but in the middle term, who are his allies? He is apparently not going after Byzantium, but I don't see that a war with Russia will be all that useful. I agree with Jim that some kind of deal with Russia would be beneficial to both, but that was also true from the start. I'll believe it when I see it.

Agreed. I thought that Khazaria had an ally lined up against Russia. If he doesn't, this is a waste of time, momentum, everything.

Agreed, we'll believe it when we see it. The successes elsewhere should push pressure on David to agree more this season.

Good moves by Darren (Russia). Kiev now has some choices. I think the best move is to take Bjarmaland and trade a center for Khazaria for an alliance. But what do I know? They've not done it yet, so clearly they have a very troubled history so far.

I prefer this position over the Khazarian position since the Danish and German positions are so poor. Russia is collecting that last northern dot, using the convoy I hoped for, and then he'll have a wall of armies to face Khaz. At that point, he could either sue for peace or try to cut a deal with The Horde to take down Khaz.

Right, or both in sequence. The Russian position looks good into the midgame.

Agree with both of you.

The Spanish are in good shape, a deal with France and no worrisome enemies. Ifriqiya is quite surrounded and someone should take it this season, but better by a deal than a war. I would take Corsica before Sardinia.

Spain should be able to get two builds in the Med (Corsica and Tunisia) and will still be well-positioned to grab Sardinia. I also think Spain is doing well diplomatically, since he appears to have good relations with both France and West Africa.

He is certainly doing well tactically. Diplomatically, it's hard to say whether the West African moves (and maybe even the Egyptian move) are with Spain -- or against him. Wagadoo/West Africa can keep Spain from taking Tunisia, simply by supporting it. Or he could walk into Mauritania.

Right, and I think the plan is to keep sailing east and enjoin a large battle against Byzantium. There are other choices, but I think that's the one we'll see. Spain also is safely into the midgame (remember, early on in these variants, it is all about survival to the midgame and then position for the larger battles that will take place there,

you MUST think about them now).

We've already discussed the Samanid some regarding their other neighbors. The Samanid are not doing badly, but they need an ally sooner rather than later.

After moving East in year 1, The Horde switches direction? This is not a Good Idea. He had the early advantage on China, and now it's forfeited. The move to Uyg is a bit ridiculous. Still, he'll pick up Ghuzz and be in reasonable shape with one or possibly two builds. He should be able to keep China out of Uyg and China will still be an army short in any land war.

I agree, the Samanid have to get more decisive here. He can intervene in Russia/Khazaria or in India, or help hold off the Juggernaut from the East. The latter is best for the rest of the board, but not necessarily for the Samanid. Tough choices here and could go any of three or four ways. The Fall will bring much news.

Agree with both of you.

For Srivijaya, no bounces, no need for any supports, full speed ahead west, that's all you need to know. No one is even thinking about opposing Mike and that makes him really dangerous.

Oh, I really like this position. He should snag two more islands (Ceylon and Butuan). However, this map has big sea spaces that are easily defended, so I don't know just how far he'll get if he tries to work with India _and_ China. In any case, I like this position.

My point exactly, so Juggernaut here we come. And we know that Lynn and Mike have played a lot together and will be able to spring into the midgame together well. Then it depends on whether Axum stays away or opposed Mike in India as to where Mike's next best move will lie.

Yep, I remember that there was a lot of concern about a potential China / Indonesian juggernaut before the first play-test. It didn't happen that way at all; but here, perhaps things will be different.

Spain has ceded the Canary Islands (which is Tkanaren) to the Wagadu. Again, no enemies yet for Mikael. But he needs to support Spain for Ifraqiya or attack him. That will tell the story of the midgame plan there.

West Africa is picking up the Canaries and then, if he's working with Spain or East Africa, he should be in good shape. Nobody is going _his_ way, so I think he's in good shape. I suspect he'll get two builds with Kanem in addition to the Canaries.

Eventually he has to choose between Axum and Spain, since he is squeezed between them. I would bet on him choosing Spain and attacking Axum, but the choice is

still there, as long as Wagadu is not attacked, he should try to keep the options open for a bit longer.

Odd, when I saw Mikael moving northward, I thought that maybe Spain was in trouble. I'm not sure, but that's still a possibility. In fact, West Africa and Egypt could be headed towards Spain (and the islands south of Italy), as easily as towards Byzantium.

In any case, either would be a use for the West African fleets.

And it is not clear where Axum heads now that the neutrals in BH's sector are neutralized. This fall should offer at least a hint. I'm not sure if the bounce over Meroe was arranged or not, it looks to me like it is.

East Africa picks up Madagascar and is in good position to move North or Northeast. Personally, I think he should go North into the lightly defended Egyptian position. That makes more sense than going into Arabia. I suspect he has good relations with Arabia.

The defense of Egypt is weak, so that should be the goal. I think the "other front" question right now is whether to try to participate in the gangup on India. I think that Axum will pursue this, but I'm not sure whether it is that good an idea. It could get him attacked by Wagadu.

Agreed that Egypt seems his best bet.

Neutral is doing poorly. ☺

Summer and Fall 902

GM Nick Higgins - Summer: *It was pointed out to me that my earlier adjudication did not list all possible retreat options for Germany (again, a problem with the adjudication engine, where the end of the alphabet got left off... this has now been fixed). Between this, having a new German player, and the fact that Germany was the only one who had a retreat order in Spring 902, I told Russ that he could order a new retreat for German A Lothairingia if he chose. Here is the new retreat:*

Germany: A Lothairingia – Swabia

DC229: The Fall 902 season has been adjudicated. Thanks again to Russ for taking over the German position, and allowing the game to continue.

The story of this season is our Arabian player Matt, who has reached an amazing 9 SCs after only 2 years. Well done! A number of players are close behind with 7 SCs, including our 2 African powers, who are making good use of their newly acquired naval power in this iteration of the variant.

Things aren't going as well for the Pratihara Kingdom on the Indian subcontinent, but maybe this is good timing for a game break for The White Wolf. The Navy has transferred Andy on very short notice, and he will be moving next week with no internet access. As such, it is necessary to delay our next deadline for a week, until Thu Feb 19th. Good luck with the move!

Our current player lineup is now as follows:
Abbasid Caliphate (Arabia, A): Matt Kremer

Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium, B): Gregory Alexopoulos

Tang Empire (China, C): Lynn Mercer

Kingdom of Denmark (Denmark, D): Sanford O'Donnell

(Former Trout)

Tulunid Emirate (Egypt, E): Ian Moes

West Frankish Kingdom (France, F): Nigel Phillips

East Frankish Kingdom (Germany, G): Russ Manning

Pratihara Kingdom (India, I): Andy Jameson (The White Wolf)

Khaganate of Khazaria (Khazaria, K): David Cohen

Principality of Kiev (Russia, R): Darren Sharma

Umayyad Emirate (Spain, S): Nathan Deily

Samanid Emirate (Turan, T): John Reside

Kingdom of Sri Vijaya (Srivijaya, V): Mike Morris

Kingdom of Wagadu (Wagadu, W): Mikael Johansson

Kingdom of Axum (Axum, X): Benjamin Hester

Before the adjudication, we have some lovely anonymous press:

*My wonder yet is grand at Charlemagne,
the mighty Frank, conqueror, never conquered.
A hundred years or so has passed since
He went forth and seized many a land.
Such blows he borne from many a trenchant lance,
Vanquished and slain of kings so rich a band,
When will come the time that Francia draws back?
Never, so long as their sovereign reigns,
From West to East no king has such vassals.
Around him stand paladins, none their equal.
These are his guard, with twenty thousand Franks.
He is secure, he fears no living man.*

Fall Adjudications

Arabian A Ard - Aze
Arabian A Bsr - Man
Arabian A Mos - Arm
Arabian A Sjs S A Bsr - Man
Arabian A Ujj S A Bsr - Man
Arabian F Ars S F Gad - Soc

Byzantine A Mac S A Thr - Ono
Byzantine A Slr - Rom *Bounce*
Byzantine A Thr - Ono *Bounce*
Byzantine F Con - Aes
Byzantine F Cre H
Byzantine F Ios S F Cre *Cut* *Dislodged*

Chinese A Cha - Uyg
Chinese A Chn S A Cha - Uyg
Chinese A Kai - Nan
Chinese A Tib S A Cha - Uyg
Chinese F Eas H

Danish A Jln - Pom
Danish A Nor - Jln
Danish F Abs C A Jln - Pom
Danish F Ngs C A Nor - Jln
Danish F Wsx S F Ngs

Egyptian A Mak - Aqa
Egyptian A Zaw S A Kut - Ifr
Egyptian F Cyp - Egs
Egyptian F Egs - Ios
Egyptian F Jer - Sty
Egyptian F Lis S F Egs - Ios

French A Aqt - Tou
French A Aut - Ubu
French A Hel - Swa *Bounce*
French A Lot S A Hel - Swa *Cut*
French A Nar - Spm *Bounce*
French F Brc - Sgs *Bounce*

German A Sax - Bav
German A Sla S A Ono
German A Sor - Pol
German A Swa S A Sax - Bav *Cut*
German A Vis S A Sor - Pol
German F Sgs - Lot *Bounce*

Indian A Kas - Ind
Indian A Man H *Dislodged*
Indian A Nep - Knj
Indian A Pal - Chl
Indian F Cho H
Indian F Mas S F Gad - Soc

Khazar A Bas H
Khazar A Kak S A Mos - Arm
Khazar A Mrd - Bul *Bounce*
Khazar A Tam - Sev *Bounce*

Khazar A Udm S A Mrd - Bul

Russian A Che S A Kar - Bja
Russian A Kar - Bja
Russian A Sev S A Mrd - Srk *Void*
Russian A Vya S A Bul
Russian F Fis - Liv

Spanish A Kut - Ifr
Spanish A Spm - Nar *Bounce*
Spanish F Bls - Sar
Spanish F Sjt S F Bls - Sar
Spanish F Tys S A Kut - Ifr

Samanid A Blk - Kas
Samanid A Her H
Samanid A Kyk S A Urg - Ghu
Samanid A Orb - Uyg *Bounce*
Samanid A Urg - Ghu

Srivijayan A Cah - Ser
Srivijayan F Cob C A Cah - Ser
Srivijayan F Jas S F Sch - But
Srivijayan F Mis S A Cah - Ser
Srivijayan F Sch - But

Wagadu A Aga S A Jel - Kan
Wagadu A Jel - Kan
Wagadu A Tah - Mau
Wagadu F Tas - Sta
Wagadu F Wts - Swo

Axum A Lub - Roh
Axum A Mah H
Axum A Mal - Zei
Axum F Adu - Gad
Axum F Gad - Soc

Neutral A Arm H *Dislodged* *Disbanded*
Neutral A Bja H *Dislodged* *Disbanded*
Neutral A Bor H
Neutral A Bul H
Neutral A But H *Dislodged* *Disbanded*
Neutral A Crs H
Neutral A Dal H
Neutral A Dub H
Neutral A Ghu H *Dislodged* *Disbanded*
Neutral A Ifr H *Dislodged* *Disbanded*
Neutral A Kan H *Dislodged* *Disbanded*
Neutral A Ono H
Neutral A Pam H
Neutral A Pec H
Neutral A Pol H *Dislodged* *Disbanded*
Neutral A Rom H
Neutral A Sar H *Dislodged* *Disbanded*
Neutral A Sci H
Neutral A Ser H *Dislodged* *Disbanded*
Neutral A Soc H *Dislodged* *Disbanded*
Neutral A Tka H
Neutral A Uyg H *Dislodged* *Disbanded*

Retreat Possibilities

Byzantine F IoS can retreat to IIS, Tar or disband
Indian A Man can retreat to Blk, Sha or disband
Neutral A Arm is destroyed (neutral)
Neutral A Bja is destroyed (neutral)
Neutral A But is destroyed (neutral)
Neutral A Ghu is destroyed (neutral)

Neutral A Ifr is destroyed (neutral)
Neutral A Kan is destroyed (neutral)
Neutral A Pol is destroyed (neutral)
Neutral A Sar is destroyed (neutral)
Neutral A Ser is destroyed (neutral)
Neutral A Soc is destroyed (neutral)
Neutral A Uyg is destroyed (neutral)

Position	Power	Abb	901	902	Change	SCs changing possession
1	Abbasid Caliphate (Arabia)	A	6	9	+3	+Arm, +Man, +Ujj
2	Tang Empire (China)	C	5	7	+2	+Tib, +Uyg
2	West Frankish Kingdom (France)	F	6	7	+1	+Lot
2	Samanid Emirate (Turan)	T	5	7	+2	+Ghu, +Kas
2	Kingdom of Sri Vijaya	V	5	7	+2	+But, +Ser
2	Kingdom of Wagadu	W	5	7	+2	+Kan, +Mau
2	Kingdom of Axum	X	5	7	+2	+Mah, +Soc
8	Byzantine Empire	B	6	6	0	
8	Tulunid Emirate (Egypt)	E	6	6	0	
8	East Frankish Kingdom (German)	G	6	6	0	-Lot, +Pol
8	Khaganate of Khazaria	K	5	6	+1	+Bas
8	Principality of Kiev (Russia)	R	5	6	+1	+Bja
8	Umayyad Emirate (Spain)	S	5	6	+1	+Ifr, -Mau, +Sar
14	Kingdom of Denmark	D	5	5	0	
15	Pratihara Kingdom (India)	I	6	4	-2	-Kas, -Ujj
N	Neutral	N	26	11	-15	-Arm, -Bas, -Bja, -But, -Ghu, -Ifr, -Kan, -Mah, -Man, -Pol, -Sar, -Ser, -Soc, -Tib, -Uyg

Fall 902 Commentary

Jim Burgess (normal text)

Rick Desper (italics)

Suzanne Castagne (bold)

Denmark is committed to going after Germany, it seems. He'll be in trouble if Russia stabs next year.

Probable, not certain. At least he is clearly not going after France. Probably wants Borussia next year. Now, Germany or Russia?

I think Denmark had to worry about a back door attack from Russia. These moves most importantly attempt to cut off the possible gains, using the fact that Germany is not positioned to attack Trout to push Darren away. This is an important point. He may also participate in taking down Germany, but right now he is using the German wall as a screen for his own expansion east. This is a good long term strategy and probably sets Trout up to proceed as a major player in the midgame. The question is, what will Darren do about it??

Germany returns to cover the Western front, and the Danes start coming at him from the North. On the plus side, he's randomly supporting the neutral in Hungary to stop Byzantine growth.

I think it is too early to decide whether the French/German war is completely essential. Germany

needed to defend completely and cleanly. He has done that, now the most important thing is to start negotiating. Trout can attack Darren instead. And Nigs has other options as well. But this was the first step for the recovery of Germany.

Ah, this is when Germany was replaced. Several of us (Jim-Bob, Eric and myself) had already heard that elsewhere, and even had a chance to see the map, if we wished. I'm glad that we now "officially" know it.

BTW, Germany was not in the best of positions, but still had possibilities. Dropping out when things go badly leaves a bad taste. ☹

[[Editor's Note – Actually, Jack wanted to continue with the game, but we discussed it thoroughly and decided it was best that he step aside now rather than doom the German position. A loss of a job had completely changed his available time to negotiate properly, and was likely to only increase his tendency to submit orders just in time – or late. In addition, he wanted to be able to use the smaller amount of gaming time he has now working as his position as Variant Editor instead of as a player. As

a matter of fact Jack, like me, enjoys stepping in a standby player for doomed positions. It just happens that real life had to take priority in this case. As he told me, if it had been a normal game he would have struggled through it to keep from delaying the game any, and been wiped out quickly. But because this was for publication, he felt Germany deserved better.]]

At any rate, the new German player can now see, beyond a doubt, what France intended; and has several diplomatic options now open to him, including trying to cut a deal with Denmark (or Russia). We'll see what happened this fall.

I am really not a fan of A Sla S A Ono. Germany only has 6 forces, and he's using one of the six to block a power who is across the board from him, while two closer neighbors beat on him? Why does he want to be in Slavonia next Spring? Wouldn't A Bav, A Sax have been a better arrangement of his forces?

Supporting Ono only makes sense if he is also negotiation with Byz, perhaps that he take Ono next spring, and that he support Byz into Dalmia in the fall. And also negotiation with Denmark, if he wants to survive.

I think there is a clear chance for rapprochement with Denmark and so I'm going to disagree with both of my fellow commentators and say it was the best move to set up his negotiation options. BUT it only makes sense if he can close the deal and keep Denmark from attacking him.

Not sure what you mean. I agree that Denmark can go either against Russia or against Germany, at this point, and that the new German player is certainly negotiating hard to make Russia the target of choice. But I really don't see France letting him off at this point and changing directions.

France shows solid tactics against Germany. I'm puzzled by the move to Toulouse. Or rather, I'm not puzzled by it, but I don't like it.

If France is going to join West Africa and attack Spain, I think he's making a mistake. I am very much opposed to any power opening up two-front wars, and that's exactly what France would be doing here. A better choice would be to prop up Spain against the WAfricans while routing Germany. He can always deal with Spain later.

The move to Toulouse might simply be borne of paranoia, or a need to have a solid front.

Or getting into position to take Pamplona next year? He does have a build, can build in Gascony. Spain has enough easy growth that this might be negotiable.

I think Nigs is keeping options open too. With the change in personality, it would NOT surprise me to see Nigs move on Spain and stop the attack in Germany now. And the Toulouse move keeps that option open. See more about what I say about West Africa below.

France isn't really in position to go after Spain; he has no southern fleets, and little chance of changing that rapidly.

Well, I don't want to repeat myself too much, but I'll believe in a direction change when I see it. I am quite convinced that Denmark will join in on the attack against Germany next year, and that means that France won't turn around quickly.

Spanish learns the hard way that leaving a SC undefended may lead to it being occupied by somebody else. The good news for Spain is that Egypt, at least, is friendly. But no matter how I slice it, I have to concede that Spain's diplomacy is not going as well as I thought it was after seeing the Spring moves. West Africa is hostile and France is hardly friendly.

The good news is that, if France is friendly, this is hardly disastrous. It would be easy to set up a line at Granada/Cadiz while picking up Corsica.

Yep, as I thought, the West African move northwards wasn't friendly. And West Africa has two fleets going north. However, I agree, as long as France stays friendly, West Africa alone won't hurt Spain. Which means that allowing France to take Pamplona is probably a good idea.

At these early points of these large variant games, decisive and successful (both, not just one) action is essential. West Africa had the decision to make and I actually think he made a good one, especially since Spain seemed to not expect it. The African alliance is set. Now the challenge for Nathan is whether he can keep France from joining the attack. If you ask me to predict, knowing that the prediction is mostly for fun, since the negotiations decide it, I would say this is the beginning of the long term end for Spain. So while Rick and Suzanne are correct, if Spain just does that and doesn't secure Nigs' cooperation, I think that will be the stab that breaks his back.

Well that is certainly interesting! West Africa walks into Morocco and sails his two fleets North towards Spain. I like this move. The question is whether he's got a plan going with France here. If yes, then Spain is not long for the world. If no, then Spain may have trouble making ground against Spain. But if he wants, seeing how the Danes are neglecting Dublin, West Africa could go get Ireland for himself. The reason I like the fleet movement is because, if Wagadu wants to be a world power, he's go to either try to dominate Africa or go after Spain.

Mikael made great moves here, remember great moves are defined not just by the moves themselves, but the induced moves in others that make your moves great. While Mikael can go for Ireland, I would not do that yet, I would move on Spain with Nigs, as I said above.

Agreed.

Jim-Bob, since you were interested in the players you know, I have met Mikael in a game. A fine player, diplomatically and tactically, and definitely not a lamb. I would have been surprised to see him standing still, or simply giving Spain a hand.

Yes, and this move called for a clean attack on Spain or Axum, and I think this was the right choice between the two. I see the evidence of both solid tactics and solid diplomacy in this turn. Now, the next question for Mikael is his stance toward Byzantium. Does he stimulate attacks with other neighbors of Gregory's, so Byzantium doesn't take the control of the Mediterranean while Mikael pursues his attack? I think the answer must be YES!

Suzanne was complaining that there was no coordination regarding neutrals. This turn shows some of that cooperation, as East Africa gets support from Arabia to take the island of Sochahto. I'm going to guess that there is no alliance against Egypt, but rather there is an African triple, as all three African powers expand away from Africa. The builds from Axum and Wagadu should be very interesting - do they both just build fleets, or will there be an army-led invasion of Egypt? I'm guessing we'll see fleets.

Yes, it is obvious that East Africa/Axum has a good relationship with Arabia (which, given Arabia's success, is wise.) But now he's taken everything easy, and he has to hit somebody. Doubt that it would be Arabia, so -- Egypt or join the Indian pile-up (or even West Africa, but that is geographically difficult). My guess is Egypt, now that he has a couple of builds. We'll see.

I agree with Rick that the danger that all of Africa sees is a dominant Byzantium and Arabia sweeping them away. It was especially important for Ian to secure this arrangement with Axum. Arabia may not be the immediate attack target though, so yes Axum made a deal in the Indian Ocean. But the problem is how B. sees the need to oppose Byzantium and what does B. do in the meantime. I think Axum actually DOES attack Arabia even though he did work with Matt this turn. Gregory is one of the best tacticians around and B. knows it, they need to stop him and the Pan-African alliance is the only way to do it. This seems incredibly obvious to me, so Rick and Suzanne are making me wonder. I will admit I'm wrong if this is not clear in one more game year.

I think the decision that B. makes in Axum is the key for the rest of the board. Dominoes fall across the board after that. He has four choices in my view, with the first one the one I am predicting.

1) Form the Pan-African alliance including Wagadu and Egypt and they attack Arabia.

2) Form the Pan-African alliance but try to keep Arabia at bay while Axum attacks across the Indian Ocean to India and on to oppose the Eastern Juggernaut headed at them.

3) Attack Egypt with Arabia and Byzantium and others, keeping an East/West Africa alliance.

4) (least likely, but theoretically possible) Attack Wagadu with Spain and Egypt.

Lots of good options for Axum, so he should be able to work one out that brings him the most long term benefit. And NO ONE has a good clean attack on him.

Not yet. But if he starts a fight with Arabia, _who just supported him into a neutral SC_, then that steamroller you've been warning us about will be on him in no time.

I've seen a lot more evidence of the notion that Egypt is not allied with either Wagadu or Axum than I've seen that he is.

I think it's much more likely that he goes after Egypt with Arabian help than vice versa.

I still don't think that tactical skill counts all that much here. Obviously, Byzantium has a lot of easy centers since Italy has disappeared from this map; but if Byzantium doesn't have any allies, he's not a big danger to anyone.

Hmm, Egypt friendly with Spain, is he hoping for Spanish support into Sicily?

And after all, he is still going after Byzantium, even if it's all by his lonesome. And making headway... If Italy joins him, they've got a good thing going.

Herhehe, Italy is not in this game, remember? No, Ian has convinced others that opposing Gregory is essential. I think Ian will be helping Mikael against Spain and attacking Byzantium. He needs support from David. I don't see David's plan, more on that below.

Whoops. I meant Spain, not Italy.

Who has Ian convinced about Gregory? Germany? I don't see why Germany should be doing favors for Egypt.

I think Egypt is pursuing a fairly simple strategy. I don't see it working anytime soon. I think the Med should be an interesting area in the near term.

Gregory (Byzantine) is trying to grab up his neutrals, but fell upon a problem with Ono. Perhaps he can make an arrangement with France?

In any case, he needs an ally. If Spain and Egypt ally against him, he's got to scramble to find a friend. Has to be going full speed ahead diplomatically, with Spain, Khazaria, East Africa (to get Egypt off his back)...

I think Spain is the logical friend if my geopolitical view is correct. The other adjacent powers are worried that Byzantium must be stopped now, but Spain needs an ally desperately. I do NOT think France helps, I think France joins in the attack.

I have no idea what France will do. I know some good players would be happy to make gains in Germany and keep a subservient Spain holding back the African powers. I know some good players would simply go for the dots.

France has a nice tactical situation on land, but he's only got one fleet. With only one build, he would not be able to generate any presence in the Med quickly. If he went after Spain, he should worry about the Spanish putting fleets on his Southern flank and helping Germany rally his position.

So, no, I don't think he should go after Spain. But that doesn't mean he won't.

Looks like Russia is trying to cut a deal with Khazaria, but Khaza isn't buying. Hard to see why not. Next year Darren can move to Komia and force Bulgaria. The situation is less bad for Russia than for Khazaria, but it's a lose-lose game for both of them.

Darren and David have played a lot lately and I think they are carrying a bit of negative feeling into this game. If we are surprised by a Russia/Khazar deal in this game, it will be for the first time. Darren is almost in some big trouble. What if the new German changes the western dynamic and everyone comes at him? I see that as the most likely responsibility. Darren has to be sowing mistrust in the west and get help against David.

If David refuses any deals, Russia can always try to convince Samadia/Iran to hit Khazaria. That seems an obvious choice, since Samadia needs somewhere to go.

I like the Russian position based on a few factors. One is that Russia should be able to force Bulgar (not Bulgaria, Suzanne, unless it drifted to the Northeast

quite a bit). Two is that Khazaria has no growth anytime soon. And three is that I don't think Denmark is headed his way anytime soon.

See above. Why shouldn't he cut a deal with Russia? This is no good for Khazaria.

He helped Arabia get into Armenia. In exchange for what?

Right, I have never gotten David's point here. The Khazar have no obvious avenue for expansion. He should be under pressure to join the attack on Byzantium. But David is the designer, he must have a plan. So I'm willing to admit maybe I'm just too ignorant to figure it out.

I'm kind of thinking David is in big trouble. He doesn't appear to have any allies or avenues of growth.

A superb turn for Arabia. He took the critical center of Mansurah, solidified his relation with Axum, got Khaza to help him into Armenia. Great diplomatically as well as tactically, which is even more important for a variant this size.

Agreed, Matt is in great shape, but I think Egypt and Axum are preparing to attack him. And I don't see how Arabia tactically wins that fight. So the clear challenge for Matt is to split Ian and B. He can do it, and that will be another of the great choices leading to the midgame.

Egypt is going to attack Arabia in addition to his Byzantine campaign? I think it's more likely that Arabia and Samarind take out Khazaria. As for Axum, he may want to join in the Indian campaign. Or he may just go after Egypt himself.

Andy (India) also supported B into Soa. Overkill, anyone?

He's concentrating on his central home centers, but as long as he's the object of a pig pile, that's not going to help him much.

The White Wolf hasn't found his secret Yeti army yet. He cannot survive long without help. Obviously, he roots for the Axum/Egypt war on Arabia which might pull some pressure off him. He does want to work with Axum as he can.

I love how the Axum/Egypt war on Arabia is taking life here. Reminds me of the Iranian nuclear threat Zogby asked me about the other day.

India is pretty much toast. Even if Arabia is distracted, India will be flattened by China and Indonesia.

Srivijayan took Ser and But. Chola is probably the next step, depending on what India disbands. But he

is going to have to look for...

Mike is already in midgame form. Keep expanding, see when someone forms up to stop you.

OK, Samanid's got Ghuzz (finally!) and Kashmir. He can take Ind, if Arabia gives him a hand. But then what? He has to find a new direction -- and should have been looking already.

The move into Uyg makes no sense. Better if he supported it. Did Lynn perhaps tell him that he (Lynn) would be helping him in? If so, it was good play, it guaranteed Lynn the center, although he pretty much had it sewed up anyway.

This is not good, the Samanid probably need to join the new pig pile on Arabia. If he does, that tips the balance against Matt.

Are you so sure that there is or will be a pig pile on Arabia? I've seen no signs of it. He can also join forces with Russia to take out Khazaria; I'd guess that this would be his best bet.

Wow. Jim has really gotten the pig pile on Arabia in full gear!

I think that's unlikely. The Horde will either turn to face the Chinese threat (what he should do) or join Arabia and Russia in a squish of Khazaria.

Well done. China's taken Tibet and Uyg, is now in good position to go after Samanidia (Iran). Samanidia has two builds, but so does China, and his position looks stronger. Ordu-Balyk, which Iran took the first year, looks like it will be the first step. Maybe he can get Khazaria to join him?

Maybe that is the Khazarian plan? Surely Lynn and Mike will keep juggernauting forward. I would be really shocked if they attacked each other now. Lynn really benefits from the insane headbumping between David and Darren. There is no chance they can stop him until he is at their gates and then he can choose which one to support.

I'm pretty convinced this isn't a Khazarian plan. But he may do it.

I think China is in a good position to start rolling across Asia. If he drops two armies on the board, I think he can force Ordu-Balyk next year. I think it's clear that this is his plan.

But Jim may think he's just attacking Arabia?

Autumn and Winter 902

Autumn 902 Retreats:

Byzantine F Ionian Sea retreats to Constantinople
Indian A Mansurah retreats to Balkh

Winter 902:

First we have some press from our Axum player:

Press for history buffs: Roha is the historical name for the area now known as Lalibela. The Ethiopian Orthodox Christians attempted to "recreate" some of the wonders of Yerushalayim after its fall to the Muslims, the most notable of which are the rock-hewn churches. While not nearly as dramatic or massive as Petra in Jordan, the sites at Lalibela make up for this in quantity, as there are several such sites as Bete Giyorgis (pictured).

Wikipedia has a wealth of info and pics for those wishing to dig a little deeper - those wishing to see these beautiful sites in person will also find Ethiopia a warm, friendly land, filled with excellent local-grown coffee and shops where your dollar (or Euro, or Pound, whatever) will go a long way. - B. of Aksum

And now the adjudication:

Adjustment Adjudications

Abbasid Caliphate (Arabia) Builds A Bag

Abbasid Caliphate (Arabia) Builds A Yem
Abbasid Caliphate (Arabia) Builds F Bsr

Tang Empire (China) Builds A Cha
Tang Empire (China) Builds A Yan

West Frankish Kingdom (France) Builds A Par

Pratihara Kingdom (India) Disbands F Chl
Pratihara Kingdom (India) Disbands F Cho

Khaganate of Khazaria Builds A Srk

Principality of Kiev (Russia) Builds A Kie

Umayyad Emirate (Spain) Builds F Cad

Samanid Emirate (Turan) Builds A Buk
Samanid Emirate (Turan) Builds A Sam

Kingdom of Sri Vijaya Builds F Jam
Kingdom of Sri Vijaya Builds F Plm

Kingdom of Wagadu Builds F Awl
Kingdom of Wagadu Waives 1 Build

Kingdom of Axum Builds A Mal
Kingdom of Axum Builds F Zim

Autumn and Winter 902 Commentary

Jim Burgess (normal text)

Rick Desper (italics)

Suzanne Castagne (bold)

This is not my official full analysis, but I think this is a clear vote for (2) among my options for Axum..... it appears the Eastern Juggernaut is raising serious concern.

I agree with Jim-Bob's comment.

Russia made a more or less defensive build against Khazaria, with possibilities regarding Pechenga (to either take it or keep Khazaria from getting it.) Not much else he could have done.

I agree that Kiev and Khazaria are still locked into each other to each other's detriment. This is something to remember in these larger variants. If you choose an enemy and the two of you battle things out without anyone intervening on either side, then if the variant is reasonably balanced, you'll mostly be stagnated. And when you are, you are roadkill for the first set of adjacent powers who comes down on you later. Kiev is there.

Russia could also try for Kechenega. The clever thing to do here would be for Russia to take Kechenega and let Khazaria have Bulgar. But another possibility comes to mind...

Khazaria is obviously continuing against Russia, for better or worse. I think he's going to be on the list of early losers.

And so is Khazaria. So I don't get why they can't break it off. Or why they can't find someone to ally to gain an advantage. But this is more of the same so far. Designing the game is worth not much so far.

And we know that Calhamer is also not exactly the best Diplomacy player. Who is Khazaria's ally here? What is the plan for growth?

I fear that Khazaria may be hit on the other side by Arabia and The Horde, who have shown some coordination and both of whom could snag a couple SCs quickly. Arabia in particular is looking at a southern flank defended by one annoying army that he can push back with three of his own.

Some kind of alliance action is going to happen in this area. And I haven't seen anything that would indicate to me that Khazaria will come out on top here.

Looks like the French war against Germany is continuing. Note that France is apparently not trying for Pamplona, unless he plans to force Narbonne into Spanish March.

OK, I saw the possibility that France could have attacked Spain, and they could have. They in fact still can, as Suzanne notes. But the main target seems to be Germany, so the key is which side Denmark takes.

I'm still expecting to see F and D roll over Germany. All of the moves and the player change indicate to me that Denmark is gunning for Germany. This should be over relatively quickly.

Spain build defensively against the Wagadu armada.

That's right and hopes he can avoid a multiple front war with anyone else. The Wagadu are SO focused on Spain that at best they hold them off.

Spain is not all that threatened by Wagadu unless somebody else joins in. He can convoy an army back to Granada and still pick up Corsica. Still wondering what exactly is going on with Egypt here.

If Wagadu waived a build, that shows that he wants to build fleets, and doesn't have a sea space free. He may try to take the Canaries this year, to give himself another naval base.

I think that's 100% right by Suzanne. The Pan-African alliance is quite solid. And the Wagadu need more fleets to overwhelm Spain.

There are only so many sea spaces off Iberia. Is Wagadu going to try to invade the Med?

I'm a fan of the idea that Wagadu goes after Dublin this year. Denmark has been ignoring it so long that Wagadu is well-positioned to bypass Iberia and grab that neutral. I do agree that he's probably banking another fleet build for next year.

One general comment: I'm not sure how fruitful it is to talk about a Pan-African alliance. I don't see any signs of a real alliance. It simply seems that the three African powers have agreed to each go their own way, and not to fight with one another.

I'm not sure, but I imagine that, if Axum did decide to hit Egypt, Wagadu would have continued on his own path.

After all, that is perhaps an excellent choice for the Africans. I remember that, in the first play test, Wagadu and Axum joined together to hit Egypt. It was a long, drawn-out fight, and wasn't very good

for either of them (or for Egypt).

Axum looks like he's heading east -- first to grab what he can from India, but then to counter the eastern Juggernaut.

So, from the conundrum I posed last time, B. decides that the eastern Juggernaut is the true enemy. And looking closer at the map and counting spaces, the Sri Vijaya can be on top of Axum much faster than I originally thought. So, add Arabia to the Pan-African alliance and they are ready to sweep through India and bounce up against the east. The next thing to do is to tactically assess who has the upper hand in that. I'm going to wait on that to see the Spring moves. But that is the key to the midgame now.

I agree that this is what Axum thinks. Axum might in fact need yet another fleet. He's got an army being useless in Madagascar where a fleet would be more useful. So if he wants another army back home, the thing to do is build a fleet and convoy the army. The longer an army is part of the line, the worse that is tactically.

It looks like Arabia and Axum plan to continue against India, and perhaps points further East. They may be planning to work together to force the Indian fleet out of Malabar, for starters, with the new Basra fleet to follow into the Arabian Sea.

The balance here is important. Does Arabia think taking out the rest of the Indian centers first is more important? I think that is the way the units are oriented, but it could go either way. Watch for how this plays out tactically. And what do the dying Indians do???

There are too few sea spaces around India for that to be the real battlefield. Arabia has a path to getting his armies inland faster than Indonesia and China do. Will the latter two prop up India? They should. If that's the case, there could be a logjam at the Malabar Sea. But personally, I think Indonesia is going to do some maneuvers to let Arabia into Malabar Sea.

The Baghdad build may indicate a future campaign against Khazaria, but there is no clear indication of intent here.

I think it might, but everyone up there is glad that Khazaria and Kiev continue to just butt heads and don't get organized to attack anyone else.

It may well, and if it does, it's David's fault for putting the army in Kakheti rather than simply accepting a DMZ. Is Khazaria safer or worse off because of that move? I think he's worse off.

The army in Samarkand is necessary to defend against the Chinese army in Uyg. The other build is a continuation of the Indian campaign; no sign of any

intention against Khazaria, at least not yet.

The Samanid probably need to join the Pan-African alliance and get a bit of help against the Chinese. They also benefit from no serious pressure from Khazaria.

The Horde will probably lose Ordu-Balyk to China in the Spring. The army in Kashmir is similarly beyond his supply lines. He will reap what he sowed last Spring by not moving East with full strength. He would be well-advised to try to pop Army Balkh and hope he gets good retreat options. Which he should. He definitely needs to bring up an army to Krgystan.

India is opening the door to the Sryvijaya (Indonesian) fleets, and holding on to anything that blocks the Arabian and Samanid forces. Notice that Wolf didn't disband the army in Balkh, which has little more than nuisance value. At least he has decided who he is favoring before the inevitable collapse.

Whoops, but Wolf sees Arabia as the architect of his demise. Not good for them. As I said, the question is how the tactics work. Arabia probably needs to arrange to take India out of the equation ASAP. They will be out very soon. It probably isn't worth the Sri Vijayan time and effort to prop him up.

Army Balkh is far more than a nuisance. It will help turn back the Samarind Horde. He sends it to Samarkand to cut support and China takes Ordu-Balyk.

China continues his division of labor with Indonesia : Chinese armies and Indonesian fleets. He may be taking on Kashmir as well as Ordu-Balyk.

Pure juggernaut play here continues a relentless push west. China could try to move north and outflank up there. It is most in China's interest to get Kiev/Khazaria allied and pincering the Samanid. Not likely, but possible.

China takes Ordu-Balyk and, in return, puts India back into Kashmir. The army in Nanjing moves North and he starts trying to encircle the Horde. If the Horde has two disbands this year, he's in big trouble.

Indonesia is continuing the fleet movement west. He hit it lucky; India has offered him Chola on the way.

Luck serves the effort of the diplomat. I think this was planned and balanced. It is always good to try to talk to your enemies as multi-power alliances surround someone. It almost always is trivially easy to sound like the "good guy". I didn't want to attack you, but Arabia and Axum just won't stop.

Indonesia will move into the Southern Sea and, if allowed, even further West. If his two fleets support the

Indians in Malabar Sea, that'd be a tough line for Arabia and Axum to crack.

Personally, I think he's got one fleet too many here. Unless he really thinks he can outfox Axum, the fleet battle is going to massively stagnate. And without armies, he'll be shut out of the Indian dots. He's only got one army. Being a fleet-only power will not suffice on

this map.

Also, with only fleets, he'll have very little diplomatic flexibility. I have found that powers that build tons of fleet usually only succeed in getting other people to build fleets to stop them. (Unless I'm on the board, in which case they also succeed in getting me to taunt them about how they are going to try to find 18 coastal SCs.)

Knives and Daggers

The Diplomacy World Letter Column



David Maletsky – Enough! I've been trying for months to let the spectre of the events in and surrounding Maine to pass into unfortunate history by remaining silent.

I've read the articles in Diplomacy World, written by interested parties, without incident... after all, given the speed with which the process developed and concluded, several parties were unable to be sufficiently heard, on one topic or another. So, if the parties involved wanted to air out their grievances in a public forum, fair enough, I reasoned.

Then, today I read the article entitled "Thoughts of Disinterest, or Why I Have Not, and Will Likely Never, Attend a Diplomacy Tournament"... by an anonymous author, who was not present at the event. An author who apparently has the courage of their convictions to bash and naysay both the process and those involved in it, but not to affix their name to the article, nor to provide any positive alternatives. So the article, *in toto*, amounts to someone who wishes to remain anonymous criticizing a process they were not involved in which followed on the heels of an event they were not present at, informing us that they won't be attending any tournaments.

I am forced to question not only the motivation of the author, but, forgive me, the editor, in putting this article into Diplomacy World. Mind you, Doug Kent has superhuman tolerance for hounding me and others to write, so perhaps the shortcoming is mine as well... maybe my lack of contribution to this periodical is partly responsible for something so negative and valueless as this piece getting published. Nonetheless, I question what the purpose of the writing, or the publishing, was, of such an unfortunate piece.

I am not going to be drawn into providing my perspective on Maine for public consumption. It's in the past, and those of you who are interested probably already know what I think. If you have specific questions for me, feel free to write me at dmaletsky@comcast.net, but otherwise, enough.

The Diplomacy event in Maine, the events leading up to it, the aftermath, one and all were unfortunate for the hobby, with mistakes made at various points by various parties to varying extents. To my knowledge, no one is completely satisfied with the final result. Can we please refocus our attention on growing the face-to-face hobby through the efforts of local clubs and larger organizations? I would vastly prefer to read about recruiting techniques pioneered by the Chicago hobby, than rehash an unfortunate chapter in our history where we will one, find no agreement, and two, learn no positive lessons.

[[“Offsuit” provides a letter later in this column where he tries to explain his reasoning behind asking to remain anonymous. But I think it is a mistake to ignore the article as it was written, and I disagree that it is without value. I believe such a piece can provide perspective into what SOME outsiders, who are peripheral to the hobby or how it is organized, may think regarding the events they hear of and read about. Part of moving forward is learning lessons from the past, and we cannot hope to fully learn those without knowing what those outside looking in may be thinking, if for no other reason than to help us plan and execute positive experiences that prove their assumptions incorrect. I don't even think the specific event in question is important to the article; Maine happened, it's over, and I don't really hear anyone talking about it anymore. Mind you, I don't hear much about the NADF or DipCon Charters either. I know there are many people, like yourself, working hard on those projects, but if *I* don't see anyone discussing the positive work being done, and if nobody writes about it in DW, how are those like “Offsuit” going to ever know about them? That's not a way of saying “Yes, David, you need to write these articles” but simply that SOMEBODY has to, if they want the positive developments publicized. The Diplomacy hobby is like any other social group...arguments and disagreements always get more initial attention. People are drawn to conflict and debate. So the only way to interest them in positive activities is to make them interesting, by publicizing them and writing

articles explaining why the subject is (or should be) of interest to the reader. As to the point that you made about the author providing no positive alternatives, that is true; but I don't see the article in the same way you do. I see it as a description of how he sees things, having only the knowledge of the limited material he saw. It isn't "this is how it is," but rather "this is how it sounds to me and maybe others like me." The only way to clear up misunderstandings is to know they exist.]]



Doug Brown – Thanks to Joshua for his discussion of English openings. I do agree that heavy forces in Scandinavia do detract from ultimate English objectives. But the analysis of the Southern opening rests on the assumption that England succeeds in moving to the English Channel. My limited experience is that 100% of the time France will say he is not moving to the Channel, although the mathematical articles suggest that 50% or more of the time he does in fact do just that. Would Josh care to elaborate on his theory as it addresses the possibility that England does not achieve this surprise?



Jim O'Kelley – I've only given the issue a once-over, but the first time through, I thought it was pretty good. I especially liked Andrew Goff's article.

Also, I just read Offsuit's piece, and I gotta tell you that I'm a little uncomfortable with publishing anonymous criticism. There are a lot of things in his/her article that bug me, but the fact that he/she wouldn't stand behind what he/she wrote bugs me the most. I hope we won't see more of that in the future.

[[Please see his "reasoning" letter later in this column.]]



Chris Brand – The Ghost Rating System article ends with "By the way, this system is Copyright (c) 2009 Thomas Anthony." I don't think so. You can't copyright an idea or an algorithm, only the expression thereof. Sure, the article is copyrighted, but not the system.

To quote from the US Copyright Act: "In no case does copyright protection for an original work of authorship extend to any idea, procedure, process, system, method of operation, concept, principle, or discovery, regardless of the form in which it is described, explained, illustrated, or embodied in such work."

[[That tag was added at Thomas' request, more so just because I don't think he wanted people using it in an unfinished state, not really as an attempt to control it outright. For those interested in this topic, please see the article Chris submitted elsewhere in this issue.]]



Peter McNamara – As a mathematics PhD student, I could not but help but notice the typesetting in Tom Anthony's article "The Ghost Rating System" and recoiling in horror. If the situation arises again where you desire to publish equations, I would prefer to see LaTeX used to produce a quality output, and would be happy to help out in this regard.

[[And you can rest assured I will be calling on you if such an event occurs!]]

Also you should get Goffy to write you more articles, finding people that write well about the game is hard, and it looks like you have found one now (or he is just setting us all up for a big stab at WDC).

[[Probably both, don't you think?]]



Rodrigo Pablo Yanez – I wanted to let you know that I've immensely enjoyed your website and reading old issues of Diplomacy World. Recently I returned to playing board games (mostly strategy/tactics) after a long hiatus, and Diplomacy in particular is still able to cause excitement and infinite enjoyment. Some of the information found in DW has been of great assistance in clarifying rules (the so-called '82 edition by AH and the article on how that came about), solo and other variant rules, inspiring/fun articles, etc.

I hope to join some PBEM games soon and have been familiarizing myself with the methods/rules and different pbem options out there. I shall continue to read old/new DW on your site since my diplomatic blade/pen is quite rusty.



Hugh Polley – This is too bad [[the way the Boardman Numbers and Miller Numbers have fallen into disuse, and the fact that the old data is not readily available on the internet in a database]]. If a web site were created with the Data at hand, and it could be used to get a number for a game, more sites and GM's would use it. If it would also return game information by player that would make it even more relevant. If the information contained season by season data then a player rating could be created using my system or someone else's. Feel free to add my scheme to the many proposed over the years.

From experimentation I find these formulas work:

A - INDEX OF GAMES PROGRESS = (Player SC squared + Neutral SC) / (# years + players left)
B - PLAYER POINTS = SUM (PLAYER SC + 1) for each year DIVIDED BY # years

Take the last 10 games played apply B to each one, then divide by 10. This works for less than 10 games as well just divide by number of games played.

A further twist of taking (PLAYER POINTS * PLAYER POINTS) - PLAYER POINTS for not completing a game could be added to this concept.

What I like about it is it's not a life time achievement type rating but rather how well you're doing now. A lifetime one should eliminate unfinished games, and a certain percentage of bad placements. Perhaps some other parameters could also be thought of.

I went to your web site and used the search to discover a number of interesting things on topics of interest. In the article 'Scoring in Diplomacy Tournaments' by Fred Townsend he felt extra points need to be given to players who start the game out from spots like Italy. So I thought, how could I do that with my simple system? Here I use the word 'my' loosely, as someone else may have already suggested this system. The extra points for a weak position would come from the divider.

Instead of the total number of game years, the divider would be based upon when the player was forced out.

A - PLAYER POINTS FOR RESPECTED POWERS = SUM (PLAYER SC + 1) for each year DIVIDED BY # years game lasts; B - PLAYER POINTS FOR DISPOSABLE POWERS = SUM (PLAYER SC + 1) for each year DIVIDED BY [(# years in game) - (# Years Player Lasted)]

Take the last 10 games played apply rating system to each one, then divide by 10. This works for less than 10 games as well just divide by number of games played. A further twist of taking (PLAYER POINTS * PLAYER POINTS) - PLAYER POINTS for not completing a game could be added to this concept.

I use [(# years in game) - (# Years Player Lasted)] to reflect the players influence on the game. The longer he lasted the larger his point score.

Running this system is not as hard as you might think; as long as the Game Data is stored in a coma field it can easy be used for this result by a Basic routine.

[[I should point out that I wrote an article in *Diplomacy World* #102 on the very topic of why I think the hobby needs Boardman and Miller numbers.]]



Conrad Woodring – I have recently read Andrew Goff's Article on taking your game to the next level. I really liked it. Well done. It has made me re-think the way I approach the game. A lot of us get complacent at some point (usually when we think we are good) and it takes some wise words like Goff's to remind us that we need to constantly adapt to stay on top of the game (both on the board and in real life)



"Offsuit" – While I have not been privy to the

specific reactions left to my previous article in *Diplomacy World*, I have been graciously informed of their general tone. My understanding is that they are largely negative, and rightfully so: the article I wrote was largely negative, so negative reactions are to be expected. What surprised me, however, was that it was not the content of my words which was upsetting, but the fact that I refused to allow them to be attributed to my name. I will address several points, which may or may not have been raised, but which I think are relevant.

The first truism is one that my previous article assumed, without stating overtly: if you are reading this, then I am not anyone you know. I am a casual observer, buffered by the distance my casual nature affords me. Through circumstance, or sheer terror, I have managed to avoid playing Diplomacy outside of the circle I had played with on a local basis. This state of affairs is going to continue indefinitely.

While such a sentiment has not been forwarded to me, I nevertheless harbor the worrying thought that some may dismiss my comments as being those of a hobby insider hiding behind an anonymous title. As it should be painfully clear from my article, the last thing I wish to occur is more divisiveness; I believe that, without the assurance that I am just as anonymous as my pseudonym suggests, divisiveness is precisely what would result. So I say again: I have no partisan or personal interest in the hobby at large; I have no agenda, other than the success of the game, and my comments are, no matter what the reaction to them, designed to help achieve that success.

Because of my anonymity in reality, I believe that writing the previous article would have achieved nothing whatsoever, had my name been attached to it. If, to pick a name at random, the byline read "Joe Blanton" then the first reaction (after "Hey, a Phillies pitcher is writing about Diplomacy!") would be: "Well, what do we care what Joe thinks? He wasn't there, he's never been to a tournament, and we have no reason to pay heed to his opinion." I ask of you two exercises: first, be honest with yourself, and if you are that, then attempt to deny that you, as an interested party, would have had those same positions. I submit that you cannot complete both.

If I may state this a different way: there is no compelling reason to show my name, because I, the author, would have been just as anonymous had I done so. However, by withholding my name, the reality becomes that my opinion COULD be the opinion of any single person walking through the door of your next convention, or sending an email to sign up for the next postal game, etc. If I attach "Joe Blanton", then all you have to do is treat "Joe Blanton" well, and the criticism withers and dies. If I attach no name whatsoever to the critical article, then you must treat every person, every local group, every Diplomacy enthusiast, as if he could very well be "Offsuit." It will likely never win me over, but my

guess is that such an attitude would improve your hobby, and if you take that message from my article, then it has achieved its purpose. If you do not, then there is nothing that can be done for you, and my hope is that the leadership of the hobby eventually falls to people who have not so completely ossified.



Jerry Jones – *[[Editor's Note: When we were putting together Diplomacy World #100, the only living former DW publisher we were unable to locate was Jerry Jones; a common name like that makes it a lot harder to find someone, especially when someone by the same name is owner and General Manager of the Dallas Cowboys. Jim Burgess has also been listing Jerry among his "The Search For.." ongoing contests in his zine The Abyssinian Prince. I was very pleased, and a bit surprised, when I finally located Jerry in late June. He was kind enough to send this letter for publication in both DW and TAP to let everybody know where he's been, why he left us, and what he's up to. It's a bit of a sad tale, but I hope with the knowledge Jerry has that Diplomacy World has survived many ups and downs long after he departed, and is currently thriving, he can bury a few of these demons. Oh and Jerry, one thing hasn't changed – feedback is hard to come by, except for criticism and corrections!]]* Nice to hear from you.

Been a long time since I spoke Dippy with anyone and if confession is good for the soul, I'm going to feel pretty good after this. And I'm sorry if this is long and verbose but I've never been one for short stories. Probably on reason I never won many games, would take me 10 pages to say I need you to convoy me to Liverpool.

I am so very happy to see that Diplomacy World survived. To this day I still regret what I thought was the end of Diplomacy World, and at my hands. When I passed everything off to Rod Walker, I was in such a state of depression over the failure and, I suppose, what was going to be a number of people pointing fingers at me, I disappeared from the hobby. Thankfully to you, I apparently didn't disappear deep enough.

First a little background. Back in the 70's there was no such thing as depression or mental illness, there was only ... "you're freakin' nutz". But for me it was all too real. I was suffering from acute agoraphobia and anxiety attacks. To a point where I couldn't walk outside my house without breaking into severe sweats and panic.

This made going to work nearly impossible, especially as I was a field engineer and at the drop of a hat could be called upon to drive 300 miles to a work site. It was on one of these drives that I suffered a near fatal nervous breakdown. How does this work its way into Diplomacy World you may ask? Well this was the state of mind I was in when I got into Diplomacy. Looking for a way to meet people and not have to leave my living room. Postal Diplomacy came along and was my conduit to the outside world.

I was playing 10 or 12 games at a time. Out of work and phone bills going through the roof. Try explaining to your wife that the reason there is no money for food is because you needed support into Brest. From this the birth of "Lies, Deceit and Nefarious Schemes" (LDNS) became a reality. If I couldn't afford to communicate in the game, maybe running a zine would be a great alternative. (Reading this back it seems as though I was doing this just for social reasons, but that's not true. I loved the game and I think I got pretty good at it. My biggest hurdle was my need to have everyone like me which is not a great requirement when you are about to stab your year-long ally. No I loved the game, for what it is and for what it was giving me, but I digress.) Being out of work proved to be the first nail in the DW coffin.

LDNS was my baby. I was going to single handedly set the bar for all other zines. I had made some commitments, with the most important being that the zine would be on a 3-week deadline with all moves due on a Saturday noon and that the games would be adjudicated and in the mail by 6pm that same day. Not an easy feat. Esp. when you add in the articles and the biggest time sink in the history of dip-zines, colored maps. Every player got a map of the board with the units colored in based on the outcome of the move. If you can imagine sitting at a table, frantically coloring in each piece. (And if I made a mistake on the last unit, I'd toss it out and start all over. I'm also a perfectionist, no white-out for me.) But I put together what I really consider to be a good zine, a player's zine. One that you could count on getting within a few days of the deadline. For me it was the players that counted, not the politics, the cliques, the backroom meetings, it was the players. This attitude was the second nail in my demise as the DW editor.

Looking back I wish that I would have just stuck with LDNS. But when Walter called and said he wanted me to assume the role of DW editor... well, probably the biggest day in my life. Words cannot describe the euphoric high I was on. I had no idea what I was getting into. No clue how this was going to impact my life, some for the good but a lot for the bad. But my ego outweighed my common sense. I was going to make DW the best player's magazine ever. I was going to inject humor (the getting Liz Danforth to do the covers), quality strategy articles, variant section, and just some really good reading. My expectations were beyond my means and this was the third nail.

The last and final nail was the political era that postal Diplomacy was in. I really couldn't have cared less about the various political organizations that were fighting for control. I probably have the names wrong now but there was the TDA and the IDA-NA. With a new editor it seemed as though many people in these groups thought that they could now sway DW and myself into supporting their cause. Instead of taking a stance and/or

giving my indifference to them, I just nodded and agreed with everyone. The more I agreed, the more they believed that I would support them in DW, which caused them to step up the letters and phone calls. But trying to paint both sides of the canvas at the same time proved impossible and people that I admired and respected were now feeling as though I was letting them down and they, rightfully so, quickly turned on me. The first issues of DW for me were not the glorious jubilation that I was hoping for. I never got any comments on how much they liked DW. The only comment I ever got was a letter from Lew P. pointing out some typos. (Sad thing is he was right but the timing was horrible.) The hours, days, and weeks of typing, pasting, collating, stapling (I still have the original saddle stapler, I wonder if the Smithsonian is interested.) all seemed for nothing. LDNS died as I didn't have the time, although I did complete the games I had, albeit no articles and no colored maps. Long time friends didn't want anything to do with me, at least not unless it was to complete their agenda. And my bankbook was empty. Avalon Hill cut support from DW the day I became editor. They still wanted the ad in the book but weren't going to supply any financial support as they had done in the past. DW had become a burden in 4 short months. At the time, I gladly blamed everyone around me for the problems. As I aged, I realized it was my attitude and really, being so ill-prepared for the task that was the problem, not the people I cared about.

And there were some great people then. First is Rod Walker. Rod drove up to Pasadena to take the DW goodies when I could no longer cope with the failure. Never asked any questions and showed what a great soul he is. I can never repay Rod for what he did, I can only say that I've thought of him many times in the last 30 years. Walt Buchanan, the person that I've carried this guilt around for the last few decades. I really let Walt down and that cost me many months of despair, even today. Mark Berch. Great guy, and so the opposite of me. Organized, goal setting, and well spoken. I spoke a lot with Mark but no matter how much I liked him, I always left the conversation feeling as though he was talking down to me. I wonder now how much of that was just my frame of mind. Bruce Lindsey and Kathy Byrne. Here was a pair to draw too. I liked em both...A LOT... but there were times it was hard being friends with both of them at the same time. Oddly enough, Bruce was the one I wanted to see take DW. To this day I don't know why I didn't ask him. (30 years ago I could never stop spelling Bruce Linsey's name Lindsey. He refused to change it and I am too stubborn to call him anything else. So the misspelling is intentional). I heard Kathy had passed away. I hope that I heard wrong. Others..Andy Cook, Dennis Agosta, Bob Beardsley (GREAT GUY), Bob Hartwig (pub my first game in The Podunk News), Rob't Sacks (Rob't gave me my first 3 ulcers. I loved conversing with him but my gawd, the Mylanta I went through). Jim Bumpas (had the greatest outlook on life), John Caruso, Steve McLendon, the list goes on and on. Did I miss DW? No but I sure

missed those people.

Back to the tale of woe. Things were at their lowest. No money. AH cut the support and subscription renewals ran at about 3 a month. No new subscribers and I have always thought this was in part due to the political turmoil of the hobby and since I wasn't really making a stand I had caused DW to be almost alienated from all the political camps. I was borrowing from friends to get the pages out of the printer. No motivation. No articles being submitted. And for me the worst was no feeling that anyone appreciated the work and effort. Finally I broke down. My last issue sat in boxes in the living room. A constant reminder of the failure. I don't think I called Rod, I think he called me and extended his hand. One I took without hesitation.

So Rod took the boxes and I was left with a deep sense of failure. Soon we had another visitor to the house. This time it was the bank taking it back. Based on the current events and foreclosures, I guess I was just ahead of my time. Not all is doom and gloom though. I started to rebound and got back in the work force, even though every day was a struggle and a constant state of panic. Gladly I have found a doctor who analyzed my problem and has me on a medication that has me feeling like a human again and I'm able to lead a relatively normal life. About 17 years ago the company I was working for was looking for a proposal / tech writer. I applied, showed them DW and some other books I had worked on and I got the job. I think it was more out of desperation than my work but it's my fantasy and I'm sticking with it. Been doing it for the last 17 years, own a home again and life is looking pretty boring, but stable.

I did see a Usenet group on Diplomacy a few years back and I sent out a message just to see if anyone remembered me. I got no response and I just took it as my name was blackballed from the hobby. Today I think it is more about no one there was around when I was.

Doh, Doug Beyerlein; can't forget him. Great guy and was always helpful. Seems that his wife or gf was involved too but that could be just my mind playing catch me if you can. Fred Davis, the man who couldn't leave well enough alone. It was really a great time to be a part of the hobby, and if you were too sensitive, it could have been the worst time.

Thank you for taking the time to contact me and for reading this. If you ever talk to any of these people, please tell Rod just how much I appreciate what he did and that there is rarely a time that goes by that I don't think fondly of him and wish him well. To Walt, I've carried the guilt of what I did and how I let you down for 30 years. I don't expect forgiveness or compassion; I just want you to know that I just feel a deep sense of regret. Mark Berch, Bruce Lindsey and the rest...I hope that the path you took in your life led you to a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction.

Pontevedria #89

compiled by
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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 as a stand-alone 'zine in the late 1990's as the hobby moved more and more into the electronic realm. This resurrects the purpose of *Pont* as a column within *DW* and provides 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).

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GM's Wanted

If there is a game you would like to play and it needs a GM, send in the request. All current requests will be listed in each issue and, if possible, matched with a GM. If you are a GM that might be willing to respond to a particular request, sign up for an early notification or look for requests. All requests will be verified each quarter to ensure that the requester(s) is still interested in playing that game.

No Current Game Requests

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Disclaimer: Information listed is the most current available at time of publication and 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.

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.

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.

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Zine Listings

The Abyssinian Prince

Publisher/Country - Jim Burgess/USA

Contact Information - 664 Smith Street; Providence RI 02908; burgess of world.std.com or jfburgess of gmail.com; www.diplom.org/DipPouch/Postal/Zines/TAP/index.html

Frequency of Publication - every three weeks, when timely

Date of First Publication/Date of Last Publication - Feb 83/May 09 (nearly ready)

Subscription Costs - Free via email; \$1.50 per issue by mail

Game Openings - Diplomacy, Spy Diplomacy, Devil Take the Hindmost, Modern Diplomacy

Other Games Currently Underway - Breaking Away

SubZines Which Appear - By the WAY, Eternal Sunshine, Tinamou

Notes/Comments - Note that the subzines have most of the game openings

Boris the Spider

Publisher/Country - Paul R. Bolduc/USA

Contact Information - 203 Devon Ct, Ft Walton Beach FL 32457-3110, prbolduc "at" aol.com;
http://members.cox.net/boris_spider/BorisHome.html

Frequency of Publication - monthly

Date of First Publication/Date of Last Publication – Mar 85 / Jun 09

Subscription Costs - \$13/yr (12 issues) for hardcopy; \$1/yr for e-version (waived if overseas player;
seldom collected if Stateside)

Game Openings - Blackbeard, Wizard's Quest, Colonial Diplomacy

Other Games Currently Underway - Diplomacy, Balkan Wars VI, Machiavelli, Kingmaker, Circus
Maximus, 1830 Coalfields/Reading, Blackbeard, Russian Civil War, Rail Baron

Potential Future Offerings - 18xx, Age of Renaissance, Magic Realm, Kremlin, Dune, Puerto Rico,
History of the World

By the WAY

Publisher/Country - W Andrew York/USA

Contact Information - POB 201117; Austin TX 78720-1117 or wandrew88 "at" gmail.com

Frequency of Publication - included in each **The Abyssinian Prince**

Date of Last Publication - June 2009 (Issue #22)

Subscription Costs - Free

Game Openings - Metropolis, Tombouctou, Hangman: By Definition

Zine in Which Subzine Appears - **The Abyssinian Prince**

Cheesecake

Publisher/Country - Andy Lischett/USA

Contact Information - 2402 Ridgeland Ave; Berwyn IL 60402

Frequency of Publication - Every Six Weeks

Date of Last Publication - June 13, 2009 (Issue #288)

Subscription Costs - Free

Game Openings - Diplomacy

Note/Comments - Andy's email address is available upon request by regular mail. Be sure to include your
email address when requesting his.

Damn the Consequences

Publisher/Country - Brendan Whyte/Thailand

Contact Information - obiwonfive "at" hotmail.com

Frequency of Publication - c. 6-weekly

Date of First Publication/Date of Last Publication - Began 1987/Latest issue #149, May 2009

Subscription Costs - 35Baht to Asia, 45 to Europe/Australasia, 50 to the Americas/Africa
(US\$1=35baht)

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 "at" yahoo.com, <http://www.whiningkentpigs.com/DW/>

Frequency of Publication - Monthly

Date of First Publication/Date of Last Publication - Feb 2007/Jun 2009

Subscription Costs/Special Requirements to Receive - Free, available in pdf and html or appearing
in **The Abyssinian Prince**

Game Openings – Diplomacy, Gunboat, Intimate Diplomacy Round Robin, Colonial Diplomacy,
Fog of War, By Popular Demand, Diplomacy Bourse

Other Games Currently Underway – Diplomacy, Gunboat 7x7 Tourney, By Popular Demand, Diplomacy
Bourse, Deviant Diplomacy II

Potential Future Offerings - Youngstown, Diplomacy, Gunboat 7x7 Tourney, Cannibalism
Zine in Which Subzine Appears - **The Abyssinian Prince**

Notes/Comments - Also includes columns or subzines from Heather, Jack McHugh and Andy York. Andy York loves cats, especially mine, and he hopes to visit them again very soon. He has asked me to sell them to him many times, but I refuse. But I am glad Andy loves them so much. Meow. Purr. Meow. (sic)

Minstrel

Publisher/Country - Rob Thomasson/UK
Contact Information - rob.thomasson "at" 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 "at" yahoo.com
Frequency of Publication - I try for every two months but in practice it's quarterly at best.
Date of First Publication/Date of Last Publication - Originally December 1987;
I took over in September of 1994 and I am assembling the newest issue just now.
Subscription Costs - \$1.00 per issue
Game Openings - none at this time, though will open a game if requested
Potential Future Offerings - I always hope to be able to run a variant other than gunboat

Obsidian

Publisher/Country - Alex Richardson/UK
Contact Information - 43 Letchworth Road, Baldock, Herts, SG7 6AA United Kingdom;
alex.bokmal "at" gmail.com
Frequency of Publication - 5-weekly
Date of First Publication/Date of Last Publication - January 1986/June 2009 (#159)
Subscription Costs: Free
Game Openings: Diplomacy, Intimate Diplomacy, Breaking Away, Civilization, Middleman, Scrabble
Other Games Currently Underway: Hundred Diplomacy, Railway Rivals, Tutankhamun
Potential Future Offerings: Might be willing to run another Railway Rivals game at some point, but would prefer to get another Regular Dip game started.
Notes/Comments: Although **Obsidian** is posted to its readers in the time-honoured manner, international players also receive e-mail reports for their games each month, allowing them to participate equally without the need for extended deadlines, etc.

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 "at" 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, Woolworth Diplomacy II-A, Fog of War
Diplomacy, Breaking Away!, By Popular Demand, Downfall

Out of the WAY

Publisher/Country - W Andrew York/USA
Contact Information - POB 201117; Austin TX 78720-1117 or wandrew88 "at" gmail.com
Frequency of Publication - included in each **Eternal Sunshine**
Date of Last Publication - May 2009 (Issue #08)
Subscription Costs - Free
Game Openings - Hangman by Definition, Railway Rivals, Empire Builder, Liftoff!, Pandemic
Zines in Which Subzine Appears - **Eternal Sunshine**

S.O.B.

Publisher/Country - Chris Hassler/USA
 Contact Information - 2000 S. Armour Ct.; La Habra, CA 90631;
www.sob-zine.org; [chassler "at" roadrunner.com](mailto:chassler@roadrunner.com)
 Frequency of Publication - Every 6 weeks
 Date of First Publication/Date of Last Publication - April 1993/Juen 2009
 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 regular column about science.

Tory Bleeder, The

Publisher/Country - UK
 Contact Information - [thebagge "at" yahoo.co.uk](mailto:thebagge@yahoo.co.uk)
 Frequency of Publication - annually
 Date of First Publication/Date of Last Publication - 2001 / 2008
 Subscription Costs - free, via email only
 Game Openings - None (My zine just reports diplomacy games within the British Telecom and Post office board games club as well as the Australian club western front although it is an unofficial sub-zine within both clubs lacking official approval on account of the Tory Bleeder's utter devotion to Mrs Thatcher and to all other right wing politicians).
 Other Games Currently Underway - BT & PO BGC ... Diplomacy Games R and game Stalin (the Tory Bleeder doesn't run them I just report them and provide maps as the official zine the Bleeder looks like a piece of toilet paper and doesn't have any maps), in Western Front Colonial Diplomacy game Kitchener and Diplomacy Game Otto. (Again Western Front runs these games I just report them and provide maps as Western Front refuses to publish maps of games)
 Potential Future Offerings - My zine specializes in the abuse of all lefties, I don't run any games at all.
 Notes/Comments - The Tory Bleeder is a sub-zine to the Bleeder which is the official zine of the BT & PO BGC (Europe's oldest zine and club circa 1970 and up to issue 292. The Tory Bleeder isn't an official sub-zine but it is up to issue 9).

Variable Pig

Publisher/Country - Jim Reader/USA and Richard Smith/UK
 Contact Information - [jim_reader "at" hotmail.com](mailto:jim_reader@hotmail.com)
 Frequency of Publication: Target is 6 issues per year but actual frequency varies
 Date of First Publication/Date of Last Publication: 1987/April 2009
 Subscription Costs/Special Requirements to Receive: No costs although donations of stamps or money to cover postage costs encouraged. Only requirement to receive the zine is to be playing in a game (or sending mail and maintaining contact)
 Game Openings: Snowball Fighting, Teadance, Breaking Away, Bus Boss, RoboRally Railway Rivals, Fair Means or Foul, Der Fuhrer, Rail Baron (Australian map), Awful Green Things (including optional and Outside Znutar rules) and Where on the Paris Metro is Kendo Nagasaki. Lyric Quiz and By Popular Demand game can be joined at any time.
 Other Games Currently Underway: Awful Green Things From Outer Space, Lyric Quiz, By Popular Demand, Railway Rivals (7 games), Bus Boss, Der Fuhrer, Breaking Away, Cafe International, Hare and Tortoise, Fair means or Foul, Teadance, Where on the Tokyo Metro is Kendo Nagasaki, Work Rest and Play, Fearsome Floors, Golden Strider, Sternenhimmel, RoboRally, Maneater, Pitagoras, Shanghai Trader and Puerto Rico
 Potential Future Offerings: Always more Bus Boss and Railway Rivals, Rail Baron
 Subzines: VP comprises "Polar Pig" and "The Universe is a Pink Blancmange Called Simon"