

Diplomacy World

Issue #112 - Winter 2010

www.diplomacyworld.net



**Russia: Surviving War
on Multiple Fronts**

SNIP

Notes from the Editor

Welcome to the Winter 2010 issue of **Diplomacy World**. As I write this column, New Year's Day is coming to a close, and 2011 is upon us. This has been a very long, complicated, and difficult year for many of us. I hope that 2011 – while certainly containing its share of challenges – will turn out to be a bit easier and lighthearted.

In the meantime, there is always the welcome distraction of Diplomacy, including all its excitement, intrigue, and duplicity. Thank goodness for small favors!

I think we've got a decent mix of articles for you this time around. Among them are two – count them – TWO convention reports from Fabian Straub. First he covers his adventures at the 2010 World DipCon, and then recounts his battles the following week at the 2010 Euro DipCon. The glory of victory, the agony of defeat...it's all in there. Whether you're an active participant in the local, nation, or global face-to-face Diplomacy scene - or whether that's simply one part of the hobby you haven't found time to delve into yet – check out his contributions!

Speaking of face-to-face Diplomacy, I am going to repeat my cry from the last issue of two:

Diplomacy World NEEDS a new Club and Tournament Editor!!!

Jim O'Kelley had filled that post to a high standard, but in the end he decided he simply did not have enough time to continue writing about the face-to-face scene on a regular basis, since he was spending all that time organizing and playing within it. We still see his name on contributions now and again, but **Diplomacy World** sorely misses his quarterly presence.

Taking on a job as one of our Staff Editors is pretty simple. First, you email me and express interest. Then you agree that if accepted, you will do the following: contribute at least one article per issue, encourage others to write (especially new contributors), and participate now and then in our DWStaff newsgroup where we discuss the state of the zine and the direction we want to take it. So if you're interested, get in touch with me!

But, as I was saying, we have a variety of material this issue: some humor, some history (hobby and real-world), plenty of theme-related material on the play of Russia...and another detailed technical piece by Richard Maltz (with follow-up comments by Jim Burgess). I know articles of this nature may not be everyone's cup of tea, but I find them fascinating, and I believe a lot of our

readership would as well if they give them a chance. Granted, it isn't always easy reading, but it is well worth it.

I'm not sure that all of you are aware that we have a **Diplomacy World** blog. Aside from zine-related announcements, I also post various pieces of hobby news when I come across them. I'd actually like to find one or two others who want to assist in posting updates to the blog. My efforts ebb and flow and some backup would be useful. Get in touch with me if you are interested. And if you'd like to read the blog, you can do so at:

<http://blog.diplomacyworld.net>

There's an RSS feed as well that you can subscribe to, if you prefer to read blogs in that fashion. That feed it:

<http://blog.diplomacyworld.net/rss2.aspx>

Thanks again to all of you who submitted the recent Readers' Survey. The **Diplomacy World** Staff discussed some of the comments in great detail in our newsgroup, including plenty of ideas and opinions which we simply did not have the space to include within **Diplomacy World** itself. Taking the time to send in feedback is immeasurably valuable to us, so please feel free to drop me a line, whether it is a for-print Letter to the Editor or a private communication you would rather not have published. We never get enough feedback as I would like; considering the LARGE quantity of downloads each issue receives, feedback comes from less than 1% of the readership. My experience tells me this is a typical level, especially since **Diplomacy World** became free and started being distributed electronically.

Remember that **Diplomacy World** #113 will be the last in which a pre-announced theme will be stated, except for special issues where we decide to ask for such material. And, as always, theme or not, we're looking for submissions which are in any way related to Diplomacy. Don't let what you see here – or what you don't see here – limit the scope of your writing. If you're unsure about whether an idea can fit, just email me and ask!

I'll close by reminding you the next deadline for Diplomacy World submissions is April 1st, 2011. Remember, besides articles (which are always prized and appreciated), we LOVE to get letters, feedback, input, ideas, and suggestions too. So email me at diplomacyworld@yahoo.com! See you in the Spring, and happy stabbing!

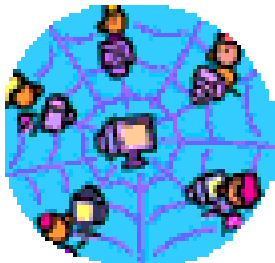
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Contributions are welcomed and will earn you accolades and infinite thanks. Persons interested in the vacant staff positions may contact the managing editor for details or to submit their candidacy or both. The same goes for anyone interested in becoming 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 #113: Using Social Networks in Diplomacy

Deadline for #113 Submissions – Apr. 1, 2011

Remember that after Diplomacy World #113, we will be publishing issues without designated themes. On occasion we will still plan special theme-related issues, and in those instances – as always – both theme and non-theme material will be welcome.

In This Issue:

Editorial: <i>Notes from the Editor</i> by Douglas Kent	Page 2
Theme Article: <i>White Magic – A Russian’s Secret Weapon & His Greatest Weakness</i> by Zachary Jarvie	Page 5
Strategy & Tactics: <i>Danish Pastry</i> by Alfred Nicol	Page 6
Convention Report: <i>WDC 2010 – So Close and Yet So Far</i> by Fabian Straub	Page 7
Theme Article: <i>A Tactical and Diplomatic Survey of Russia</i> by Joshua Danker-Dake	Page 13
Convention Ad: TempleCon 2011 Ad	Page 17
Hobby History: <i>The Invention of Diplomacy</i> by Richard Walkerdine	Page 18
Feature: <i>Systematic Cultural Obstacles to Engaging Problems Effectively</i> by Richard Maltz	Page 20
Feature: <i>Commentary on “Systematic Cultural Obstacles by Richard Maltz”</i> by Jim Burgess	Page 21
Convention Ad: World DipCon XXI Ad	Page 23
History: <i>The Man Who Conquered Russia Singlehandedly, Without Firing a Shot</i> by Larry Peery	Page 24
Convention News: Selected Upcoming Conventions	Page 25
Convention Ad: Fifth Annual CODCon Open Ad	Page 26
Feature: <i>Strategies for the Standby, or The Replacement Blues</i> by Jack McHugh	Page 27
Variants: <i>Variant Idea – “Admirals and Generals”</i> by Alfred Nicol	Page 28
Feature: <i>Diplomacy and Its Real Life Benefits</i> by Richard Walkerdine	Page 30
Feedback: Knives and Daggers – the Diplomacy World Letter Column	Page 30
Convention News: <i>World Diplomacy Championship Sydney 2011</i> by Thorin Munro	Page 31
Cartoon: <i>Above Board</i> by Zachary Jarvie	Page 32
Convention Report: <i>Euro DipCon in Paris</i> by Fabian Straub	Page 33
Hobby History: <i>My Life With Ulrika: Part 1 (The Early Years)</i> by Richard Walkerdine	Page 38
Hobby Service: <i>Ask the GM – An Advice Column for <u>Diplomacy World</u></i> by “Game Master”	Page 40
Hobby News: Qualification List for NADF 2011 Invitational Tournament	Page 41
Demo Game: <u>Diplomacy World</u> Demo Game – “Rotary Phones & 8-Track Tapes” 1903 - 1904 Results	Page 42

White Magic - A Russian's Secret Weapon, and His Greatest Weakness

By Zachary Jarvie

The player of on-line, e-mail or postal games will find this article of absolutely no use to them. I have no intention of laying out the basics of a good Juggernaut alliance. I will not be weighing the consequences of abandoning St. Petersburg in a southern campaign. You will find no reexamination of the Livonia system here. No, as far as I am concerned there is only one weapon that Russia should employ or that one should employed against the Russian. And that Weapon, good sir, is Vodka!

"Vodka spoils everything but the glasses." — Russian Proverb

Playing in a bar or in your home? I say try to get your enemies drunk! A drunken player is player more prone to making mistakes. I can't give advice on the how drunk or what the timing should be, but I'm sure those of you who are skilled at both Diplomacy and drinking can find a way to time your targets maximum inebriation to coincide with your planned stab.

But beware of overdoing it!

"Nobody in the world knows what [vodka] is made out of, and the reason I tell you this is that the story of vodka is the story of Russia. Nobody knows what Russia is made of, or what it is liable to cause its inhabitants to do next."
— Will Rogers, *Comparing Vodka and Russia*

A drunken player may not be as predictable as a sober one. It might be a good idea to find out what kind of drunk the individual is first. Happy drunks and sad drunks can be well managed. Other than bawdy jokes or uncontrolled weeping, they don't make much of a scene. Belligerent or angry drunks on the other hand tend to pick fights and throw punches. They may have to be physically held down at some point.

"Vodka is our enemy, so we'll utterly consume it!" — Russian Proverb

Beware! Other people may use the Vodka tactic against you! But don't worry; even if you lose the game your opponents are doing their utmost to make sure you have a good time.

So how do you go about getting someone to drink? Hopefully they are inclined to do so already. However if they are not you should play the "I'm offended" game. Who does he think he is, turning down your hospitality? Pear pressure works on most people one way or another. Muslims and Mormons may be a problem as a different kind of pear pressure is keeping them from the

drink. In their case spiked lemonade might do the trick.

Now that you've got them started drinking the next challenge is to get them to drink a sufficient amount. Again peer pressure should be applied! We've all heard or given this line in the bar with our friends. "Finish that beer, you pussy, I'm already 3 drinks ahead of you!" The problem with taking this tactic is that it defeats the purpose if you get drunk as well. If you do so you will lose your intended edge. Some can hold their liquor better than most but let's assume, for the moment, that you're not the drinking dynamo you believe yourself to be. I recommend a strategy of variety.

Prepare for your guests an assortment of ethanol based delicacies and be clear that you will be absolutely offended if they don't give each and every one of them a try. After all you want to know what they think. They must be able to tell you, which vodka in your little taste test is the best?

Bloody Maries, screwdrivers and even the unimaginative vodka and coke are all good and well. But they are not Russian spirits or even Russian in spirit. No self respecting Russian mixes Vodka with other liquids. Vodka however is renowned for its ability to "take" the flavors of other ingredients quite well and infused vodkas are a great way to provide the "assortment" I spoke of above. The following seven recipes are all taken from the book *Russian Cooking by Helen and George Papashvily, 1969*. In addition to these I recommend you try some experimentation of your own.

"Use a pint of 80 proof vodka, a linen napkin for straining, a bowl and a funnel to make the flavored vodkas numbered . . ." [as a personal preference, I also recommend the use of masonry jars for the finished product, they are cheaper then decanters]

1. Place the peel of a lemon in the vodka, taking care not to include any white pith; remove after 4 hours.
2. Place a tea bag in the vodka in a bowl; remove after two hours.
3. Add two teaspoon of black or white peppercorns; strain them out after two hours.
4. Put 20 halved, pitted dark sweet cheery in vodka for three hours.
5. Wash 20 cherry stones [gee where will you get those from?], crush them gently with a hammer and leave them in the vodka for 10 to 12 hours.
6. Place one teaspoon of anise seeds in vodka; strain out after two hours.

7. Put seven blades of *zubrovka* (buffalo grass) in vodka for 4 hours, then remove six of them.

Ok, the one with the grass may have gone a little too far, but you get the idea. Remember, **vodka should be consumed ice cold but never on ice.** I recommend keeping several of your mixtures hidden in the back of a fridge set to run just a little too cold. That way you can also bring them out one by one over the course of the game. This allows you to regulate your targets ethanol intake. Should they only be inclined to try each flavor you can easily add 2-3 additional flavors to the initial 3-4 you has sitting out at the start of the game. Having each in smaller jars to begin with might be a good idea in case they start to drink too much. In which case you can opt not to bring out the ones you have in reserve.

Should there be a lady present I recommend the following recipe of my own. It's sure to get her to give up her supply centers. Anything else she gives up, I take no responsibility for. It's great taken straight or mixed with soda water!

In a one quart canning jar: Pour one cup of white sugar (1/2 cup if she's a tomboy and in no way "girly") Place two lemons, unpeeled and thinly sliced, in the jar (any fruit or berry will do in substitution) Fill to the top with the cheapest vodka you can buy (it tastes the same regardless of the price of the vodka) Tightly close the lid leaving as little air as possible. Let sit for 6 months (1 is probably good enough) You may have to turn the jar over a few times during the first few weeks to get the sugar to dissolve. (it will look like a snow-globe.)

Regardless of how you go about it, alcohol may be the tool that propels your diplomacy game form being just OK to being absolutely brilliant. So remember . . .

"The Russian people drink not from need and not from grief, but from an age old requirement for the miraculous and the extraordinary Vodka is the [Russian's] White Magic." – Yuli Daniel

Danish Pastry

By Alfred Nicol

Most strategy articles either focus on the early game (with reference to openings) or are more generic in nature, such as how to conduct Diplomacy. This article, which is not revolutionary, is the opposite: a highly specific hypothesis on how to conduct an E/G alliance through the mid-game.

Let us assume a strong E/G relationship. Let us also assume that France has been defeated and the centers have been divided equitably. (Hint: Once the alliance has been arranged and a target identified, make a specific deal over the centers before you attack; it stops squabbles halfway through.) The common expectation is now an English stab on the poor unsuspecting German who so willingly promised not to build fleets. After all, the North Sea is adjacent to so many of his centers. Furthermore, the German player may struggle to sell the northern route to England, but St. Pete is a notorious dead end. This makes a stab on Germany seem the only viable option. However, my simple suggestion makes the northern route a credible option and allows, hopefully, for a long lasting relationship.

In most E/G anti-French alliances Belgium goes to England. This is because England needs two builds in the first year in order to build fleets in London and Liverpool. These fleets will be required to break into the Mid-Atlantic Ocean. The army in Belgium usually offers support of Germany into Burgundy. France, despite not losing a center until 1903, will be flambéed. Denmark, of course, goes to the German Kiel fleet, just before the notorious Sweden bounce with poor old Russia; why

doesn't he just go for the Baltic Sea instead I'll never know! The problem is Belgium isn't much use to England once France is dead, and the army there threatens Holland, plus Ruhr or Burgundy, which will make Germany feel vulnerable and may just be too tempting for England. In addition Denmark is of little use to Germany and would serve England's potential northern campaign. So the solution is simple, as hinted at in the title: England and Germany should swap Denmark and Belgium. The fleet in Denmark should go for the Baltic, and then Denmark becomes an excellent staging post for English armies.

England's attack now becomes much more reasonable as he sends armies to Denmark, and then by convoy into Livonia. This gives England a genuine chance of moving on Moscow and Warsaw. Germany can enjoy its own campaign in central Europe against Russia or Austria-Hungary, a little less vulnerable to the English stab. This is not a full guarantee of safety; Germany is still more open to betrayal than England yet at least England has a serious alternative direction. And who knows? If the east got bogged down in a gruesome stalemate early on, the E/G alliance might snatch a two way draw. In addition, England will gain a great reputation for trustworthiness which will be of benefit for some time. I tried this strategy once as England, and it worked great...that is, until I stabbed Germany. But hey, that's Diplomacy!

Something tells me I need to be careful the next time I play in a game with Alfred!

World DipCon 2010 – So Close but Yet So Far

By Fabian Straub (Photos by Dirk Brüggemann)

Some of you met me recently in Den Hague or Paris, playing WDC and EDC 2010 within a week of each other. Toby Harris is one of my “discoverers” in the Diplomacy hobby scene, and he asked me (and Gwen Maggi) to write about the tournaments, perhaps because we each played on both top boards. I like Toby a lot and I appreciate his marketing activities for the hobby, especially revitalizing the British hobby to its old strength. Due to the fact that Toby is actually too busy to publish another issue of Fungus right now, I am very happy that Diplomacy World is printing the article first instead.

I hope my WDC report will add some other viewpoints to the reports in Diplomacy World #111, and will round out the picture of the WDC tournament – with a very very close finish. I hope you enjoy both this report and my one of Euro DipCon 2010.

WDC – 19.08.2010 – 22.08.2010 in Den Hague

Where to start? I know that playing tournaments outside of your home centers can make many a little bit nervous, and some players don't attend for that reason. This is a pity; you will miss meeting interesting individuals and having a lot of fun. I have been travelling to FtF events since the beginning of my Diplomacy days (my first FtF-tournament was in December 2004 in Milano, and it was lovely) and the best way to do it is the way you approach any other area of the hobby: be open minded, say hello, who you are and where you are from. Remember even the inner circle of the hobby all started as newbies too. In my opinion the Diplomacy community is really international, very tolerant, and you can make friends quite easily compared to normal life. For example I will (hopefully – No Staaaaab☺) enjoy good advice on what to do in Vancouver or New Zealand if I have a chance to take a vacation in either location someday.

I travelled by train to Den Hague and after a 10 minute walk I arrived at the hostel. Lucky, Dirk Brüggemann - the “Laurent Joly” of the German hobby - was already inside to open the door for us (I am 40 now, and not used to the rules of a hostel such as strict bed times and no drinks in the room). I shared my room with Frank Oosterom (it is always a good idea to share a room with the tournament director), Moritz am Ende (#3 at EDC 2009) and the defending European Champion 2009, Andre Ilievics. The location was really nice for a hostel and the rooms were clean. We could hang around and drink outside next to the river. There I met mainly the Commonwealth and French delegations.

Later I was talking to James Hardy, an experienced player who is like an incorruptible Knight of the Round Table. James and I meet regularly on WDCs since 2006, and he was the game master of the teaching email game

organized by Toby Harris in 2006 for these talented German players. I was asking how many English players are coming, who is who, and so on (Diplomacy tournaments are 24/7 sometimes ☺). Honest and accurate as he always is, James told me also that one missing player would be arriving the next morning: Dave Wreathall. This name would become very important later on.



(Dave, Dan Lassiter, Grant Steel, Dave Simpson with glasses, Steve Aggs and James Hardy with crossing arms)

I met the German players as well. Frank Oschmiansky (Top Board 2010) noticed that I was really hot to rock this tournament. A healthy competition describes our relationship quite well, and therefore we prefer playing on a team to avoid meeting each other on the same board. This sounds silly for some of your readers, but I believe that you can program yourself for some things. If you only want to enjoy the game, then you will probably not make it to the top board. It requires work, a strong will to win, and self confidence. There is much more involved as well, like positive thinking and so on, but this is an article, not a book, so I won't go into more detail. But believe me, it works.

At night we had a 2-round no press warm-up tournament, which was perfect for me. I played badly; I always manage to somehow attack the best tactical player. After 2 turns I'm usually defending. But I still enjoyed gaming, and this gives you the right portion of humility for the real tournament. Mr. Björn Thalen won this warm-up (he finished 33rd in the main tournament). Close to midnight some late travelers arrived, including one of my best friends, Igor Kurt (Iggy). We went out with a lot of other players for some beers. Because I was really thinking I had a chance to reach the top board I left at three in the morning and was in bed about 3:45. I heard Iggy stayed out until 5am – and the following night until 7am – and he still made it to the top board as #1. A “little” hangover might be not the worst for a successful game; maybe it helps you relax.

1st Round

The next morning I just made it to breakfast at 8:58, and I signed in for the first round just after that. Everybody had to wear a name tag including your nationality. By 10am we were all waiting for the announcement of the boards. This is an exciting part of a tournament. A good start is very important, and this does not necessarily mean only winning. To find your game and enjoy your board, to feel what is going on and to read people right, are the most important things. If you don't find your rhythm by the end of your first game or beginning of the second game, the top board will be probably be out of reach. If this happens, I try to tell myself that the tournament is over for me, and start enjoying myself, trying new strategies. I am fully convinced that this mental shift might help sometimes in some way.

Austria, Dan Lester.....Germany, Fabian Straub....Russia, Nicolas Sahuguet. Unfortunately we realized right after the game that we could have been playing a nice eastern triple, but fortunately for me, Dan and Nicolas did not get along on this board. I did not know Mark Wightman (France), but now I can acknowledge that he knows the game, even though he treated me like a beginner in the first year. I asked for a bounce in Bur and he said there was no need to. So I suggested moving against England (Bas van Opheusden). Bas knows tactics from Email, but I think this was one of his first FtF-tournaments, so I was looking to ally with Mark. Why? Because Germany & France are really strong as allies, and can be faster in setting up the West against the East than the East can against the West. Mark stabbed right away in Spring 1901(!) by playing A Par – Bur with support from A Mar! Immediately I knew this guy wanted my centers, especially because he tried to sell this move with being scared about A Mun – Bur! I proposed a Bounce there before, which is safe enough. So now we both tried to get Bas as an ally.

In the East, everybody believed that David Wigglesworth was a beginner; he was like a poker player asking “are 3

Kings and 2 Aces any good?” Dan started working with David, offering him Gre in 1901 just to transfer Gre to Rum for Turkey, with Austria getting Gre in 1902. This maneuver was looking too perfect, so I was threatening the board “...this is looking too good, stop Dan and Turkey is his paladin...” It “worked” to stop Dan, but the paladin was always allied with one of his 3 neighbors (Italy, Austria and Russia) during the whole game, finishing in a tie for first place with me. My first game was really a lot of work, as I was talking to almost all the players every round except Turkey (because time is short at FtF-tournaments).

At some point in the game, France stabbed England with deadly results, and I tried to help him to get his centers back. But England was helping his biggest offender against me! Sounds weird – but it's the practice. I see in 2/3 of the games that the attacked country, once broken (2 or max. 3 centers left), offers its units to the conqueror of its home centers. Then they attack the guy who was trying to help him before! I had saved England's life earlier, because I gave him Norway instead of giving it to Russia...but the Dutch way of saying thank you to a German player is trying to get more of his centers ☺. Going back and forth, I split 1st place with Turkey, and Mark finished third.



(Frank Oosterom – standing – prepares to start the next round)

2nd Round

After the first round I went out for coffee with Iggy, Emmanuel and Laurent Joly. The fresh air helps to calm you down and clear your mind. The second round was interesting, 3 English players were on my board; I was Turkey, Toby Harris played Germany and Fabrice Esser (a very strong player who wants to show the spirit of the game within his play) was playing Italy. And funny, Dave Wreathall, the guy James Hardy was telling me about, was on my board. I'd met him before the first round at reception and said: “Ahh, you must be Dave, a strong and reliable player who likes to play effective moves?” Dave asked “Who told you this?” and so there comes one word to the other. I proposed that if we met on the

same board we should try to work together. And God wanted us to do so, so he gave Dave Russia. After we hooked this up I was able to attack Steve Agg. This was somehow a pity, because after our first conversation I was felt he knew the game and we had good chemistry. Unfortunately my decision was done, and I knew, “3 English is 1 to many” (another way to get alliances or powers on a board). Fabrice was trying everything to convince me to stab Dave. True, there was once a point there we (Italy, Austria and me) could shift the balance of the whole board if I would have stabbed him. But I decided to stick with tournament Diplomacy (preferring a “boring” game for success, without risking a strong alliance) instead of playing “good” Diplomacy, which includes stabs. Dave and I found a flow of negotiation we both enjoyed. If someone had the better argument, then there was no need to discuss it any more. This was building our trust in each other, and was strengthening our confidence in the alliance. Toby tried hardest to get us to stab one another, using his baby-I- didn’t-do-it-and-didn’t-say-anything-face to persuade me to stab. Luckily, Dave and I reached our target for this game: a good result (Dave 2nd, me first).

I was feeling quite happy, because I figured I was in the top five now. One more good result and I should make the top board. It is not easy to reach a top board, because you have to play every game with full concentration. I met the other players at “dinner” in the lobby of the hostel and had some beer. Like in every tournament, some game addicts were playing other silly games, but the hostel was closing at midnight, so we went out to the city and enjoyed ourselves. A lot of Swedish players were with us and I think they never give up, but they found their master in Igor ☺. The districts on the way to downtown had wonderful lights even at night.

3rd Round

“...Anything except for Russia...” I was thinking for the 3rd round. I think I don’t play Russia very well. That lack of confidence would be visible to skilled players. Of course I got Russia...Austria was managed by Philippe Dumay (leading the Tour de France circuit), Davide Cleopadre took Italy (German Master 2007) and (Don) Marco (Diplomacy Enzo) Ferrari (Italian Master 2005) was Turkey. I’ve known both Italian players since my first Ftf game, and they are therefore Diplomacy friends of mine. Fortunately for me, Phillip was the only French player on this board, so he needed a friend; I am a strong ally if you need one...honestly ☺! Marco has good instincts about who to ally with, and I suggested Austria and Turkey should work with me. This would allow me to focus on the north and stop Holger Fiedler, a young talent of Germany, who played England. Both of my allies trusted me, but not each other, so it was my job to keep us together. In a case like this sometimes you get an extra center, because you cannot share one center with both allies, and both prefer that you get it before the other does ☺. This strategy might not be so

intelligent, but it can work under some circumstances.

After a while the board realized that we were allied and were almost able to stop us. But at this decisive point I grabbed Holger and “talked” to him so long that he changed mind, just for one move. That’s all we needed to get through the stalemate lines, and I could build fleets in the north. This is another example of how communication and diplomacy can work much easier and more effectively sometimes as tricky tactics. I finished first with 10 centers, and both of my partners finished second with 7 centers each – after I suggested a draw (I think the timing of a draw can be a science in itself).



(Manu Leinich explains to Holger Fiedler how to play FtF. Fabian Straub and her husband Daniel listening closely).

4th Round

After 3 rounds I had already qualified for top board, so I could relax. Looking back, I think this was a mistake, as I lost my focus for the 4th round and did not top this board (like I did at all other boards at EDC and WDC). This was the team round and of course I played with Igor Kurt. Andre Ilievic joined us. Iggy was also qualified for top board, so our game was not as dynamic as it normally would have been. Maybe I should have been drinking more of this energy drink every player got for the last round for free, called Pussy; pure, natural, and with its own special flavor makes this drink unique. A friend of mine is selling it in German speaking countries so I got them as a sponsor for the WDC.

I got Austria (at least I was already qualified so this didn’t upset me). Rene v. Rooijen, one of the strongest Dutch players, was playing Italy. With Xavier Blanchot (Top Board) as France, Rene was busy, and this was good for me. I offered Peter Yeargin (Turkey) an alliance, reminding him that I just need a good result for final ranking, so a split first or second would have been fine for me. He agreed and we worked very well together. Furthermore, I was thinking I should do something good for the hobby by supporting such a talented American

player. At a decisive point of the game the English player changed his moves; instead of moving as we'd agreed, he chose to make moves not in our favor. Usually this would be no problem, but he removed his order sheet from the box to change it (you are not allowed to change orders after you have them thrown in the box). This is a WDC, and by doing this I feel he is destroying the balance of the game.

We all wasted time waiting for the Tournament Director. Some got emotional and lost balance...like me in this case. At this point in the game Turkey and I had units in Germany, and Turkey was just getting StP. Because the Tournament Director decided in favor of the English player, I did not get the 8th Center I needed to catch up with Xavier and Peter. If I had, I would have agreed to a draw, which the English player had proposed and the other players were in favor of. But with the change in English moves, he destroyed his own proposal. Oh well...this is Diplomacy; it drives you crazy sometimes and makes you do irrational things.

The English player said he changed his mind because if he stabbed Germany the German wouldn't agree to a draw. After the game I asked Germany (Jan Hedelung, very friendly guy) and he said he would have agreed to any draw regardless! I have to admit I was angry and so disappointed, because England changed his mind and did not trust me; it was I who taught him how to play FtF Diplomacy. In the end I felt England's explanations were proven to be silly, since he didn't survive the game.

That was only one part of bitter things I had to taste in this game. After this mess Turkey stabbed me (too late) and I was pissed, because he could not win the game and there was no chance to reach the top board. Why stab? Maybe he was thought it was a good time for a stab because of how emotional I'd gotten. If Peter is going to stay in this Diplomacy scene he should be aware of the fact that many players will meet again. I hope he knows there is nothing to be proud of for this kind of stab. But I learned some lessons in this game, especially not to trust players from USA if they talk about trust like Peter. You can say thank you to Peter the next time I stab an American.

At the end of the game I was able to stop Peter's growth, and Xavier won. This game cost me 2nd or 3rd place at WDC, so hopefully I've learned to stay fully concentrated in every game if I play WDC/EDC again.

Top Board – WDC 22nd of August 2010, Den Hague

Now we come to the game which might interest you most, the top board at the WDC. I knew more or less all the players but Peter McNamara (AUS). There is no doubt that he must be good, otherwise he wouldn't have been #2 on this board with more as 70 players attending. My friend and team member Igor Kurt (GER, #2 EDC 2008) was #1, Xavier Blanchot #3 (FRA, #1 EDC 1994), me 4th, Gwen Maggi 5th (FRA, 4 x winner of EGP

circuit), Chris Brand 6th (CAD, second time WDC top board after 2008) and Frank Oschmiansky (GER, quite "regular" attendee of top boards) sneaked in as "Lucky Number 7". This ranking is important as you and I will see later. It is quite common on top boards that players choose their countries, starting with the leading player. After the game is finished and the centers are counted, it might be the case that 2 or more players have the same number of centers. If so, the player who has chosen his country last wins. Igor skipped his first choice and passed to the next player. Peter was taking France, the normal choice of the first picker. If someone picks a country the drawing starts again with the remaining leading player, and the last player asked has to choose a country. Igor refused again and Xavier Blanchot took England. Now if Igor took a country I could pick directly after him. Please note that it is no secret in the scene that Igor and I are best friends (we knew each other before playing Diplomacy). Both of us were so happy to make our dream come true: to play WDC Final together! Therefore it was better for us not to be neighbors (or play on the same board if possible). Otherwise we would be attacked, even (or especially) on a top board.

Unfortunately Xavier was taking England (we were hoping Germany would be the second pick) and Igor was taking his second favorite, Russia. I was thinking about passing, but I know Gwen and I was sure he would have taken Italy under these circumstances. After some thought I took Italy; I like Italy because it represents the best balance of power of all Diplomacy nations. Typically on top boards you can win with 8 or 9 centers, and that is certainly within Italy's grasp. Gwen was surprised that I took Italy (I really had no choice with Germany, Austria and Turkey left; they were all neighbors of Russia/Igor). Gwen said playing between Igor and me "is a nightmare" – so he took Germany (a good country for winning Gwen; maybe you are an actor as well)! Chris Brand knew me from the WDC 2008 top board playing Austria. I guess he wanted to try something "new" so he picked Turkey for 2010 and Frank Oschminansky took what was left, Austria (a good country for top boards).

If you've read this far you've noticed that I have my own way of seeing and describing things. I may be providing too much detail, and risking boring you. But in my view these details are what make the game so interesting. There are many different ways and combinations of skills which might bring a player success, or will help one to understand the game better. I think it is really interesting to see same situation through different eyes, so I look forward to reading Gwen's report when it is available.

This was my second attempt at winning the WDC crown and some players (except those on the top board) wished me luck and gave me some moral support. Thanks to these guys for believing in me – even though I "disappointed" after all.

The game started and I made a DMZ with Peter/France in Pied, GoL and the Western Med. Due to the fact this was a top board, there was not really a chance for fancy openings like A Ven – Tri (what I like as Italy). My next concern was that Russia, Austria and Italy were all being played by German players. I was sure that if we attacked Turkey, we would instantly face a Western Triple against us. 3 Germans are 1 too many, and this was the reason I tried to stab Frank in Fall 1901 by taking Tri and bouncing in Gre with the support of the Turkish. I think Chris did a good job working with all 3 Germans around him, but maybe he was switching too often between Igor and Frank. On the other hand, who can blame him under these circumstances? By the way, I would love to read an article from Chris about the diplomatic relationships between him and all 3 German players (including hobby gaming, or sharing his room with Frank/Austria) and what they said about the others☺.

It should also be noted that this “German Triple” could easily have made one of them the WDC champion by sacrificing centers to one player easily (e.g.: taking out Turkey quick and dirty and giving Italian and Russian centers to Austria end of the game). Frank “smelled” my stab....or did Chris tell him the plan, or Igor? Who knows in this game? I try not to get paranoid by asking myself who did it (or who didn't) for very long.

I bounced in Tri with Frank and I had no build in 1901! This is maybe one advantage with Italy; this weakness (no build) will not be punished instantly by becoming a target like it would for Germany. Frank was not amused, but he had his emotions much more under control this time, and we both agreed a fight between us would kill any chances either of us had to win. This was the last chance for us to patch up differences, and maybe the relationship was not that bad.



(Top Board Arena: Rene v. Rooijen is reading orders for all players)

Now the West was busy with itself, Gwen was preparing a nice stab against Xavier/England, who was going full force against Russia. Peter was trying to set up a very

flexible position (F MAT and F SPAsc), which I like myself. We both came to the conclusion that he could take only 1 center of mine (Tun), and this will be it. Keep in mind that Tun is an important stalemate center, and this showed me that the other players were pleased there was no German triple. France would have been too slow to gain ground against me, leaving himself open like a window for a stab from England. Coincidentally I warned Peter at the right time that Xavier would likely pull back and stab him with fleets in Eng and Nat. So I proposed F Mat – Iri and F SPA – Mat...and all my predictions came true.

I did not really know it, but it made sense that Xavier would try a stab, because he was thinking Peter would go for Tun in the same turn (I call this “chain-stabbing”). Because I, A and R had found a way since 1902 to play against Turkey, we pulled Chris back to his home centers, then to 2 and later to 1 center. I only helped to imprison Turkey with one fleet in Aeg, and after this I moved against France. There was also one unit in Tyr. I wanted to keep Russia and Austria busy with Germany, but both were stuck. If they eliminated Turkey too quickly, the rest of the board would turn against them - and me! If Austria moved to Boh and Gal/Sil, we would have a great position against Gwen, but Frank would be open to stabs from me, or in this case even more so from Igor. Therefore Frank stabbed Igor by taking Rum.

Igor was really disappointed, because Frank did not stab me instead of him; that would have been much more reasonable to Iggy! FtF Diplomacy gets emotional sometimes, and this is one reason we play it. Igor knew at this point that the game was over for him, so he helped Gwen by being passive and suggested a draw. Of course I refused this instantly – Gwen does not need such gifts☺.

At the same time that Frank stabbed Igor, I was attacking France and took Mar, which I could defend against France at this point. Unfortunately I made a mis-order (A Ven – Nap, instead of Pied) and this caused me to lose the center. Still, I was thinking I couldn't have gotten any further than Mar anyway. Furthermore, most of my units would have been busy trying to keep it. A situation like this is an invitation for Frank to grab some centers from me. Gwen Maggi said “Fabian, you never make mis-orders”, so I leave it up to you if this happened, because I am still a nervous human being, or.....

Something interesting did occur in the West. Gwen could convoy a German army to Edi! It looked like Xavier was going down quickly and Gwen would be close to a win. At this point I arranged peace with France (Peter had been taking Mar back already) and England, and together we could try to stop Gwen at 9 centers. Igor was cooling down by now and came back to help us.

In the meantime I turned back to Turkey to finish what

my German mates could not. Placing my fleets around Austria, I next stabbed Frank again by taking Tri, because he had stabbed Igor before (it is always good to have a reason ☺). We only had a few turns left, so I had to strike now before Frank did. But Frank struck back and Xavier - after he got UK back - stabbed Peter (and me) very hard. I think it was too hard for Peter— after all look at all he (and I) had done for Xavier. But I still say: respect Xavier! He was almost dead, German army in Edi, fleet in NTH and French fleet in Irish Sea. He had come back like a phoenix.

There was some movement in Austria and with Germany. I guess if I hadn't have stabbed Frank he would have done it one move later anyway to try to win. He won his home center back – but not for long.

Last turn of the Game

Now we come to the boiling point.



(FLTR: Frank Oschmiansky, Gwen Maggi hiding his face and Fabian Straub also under pressure)

It was 1908. I had 6 centers, Gwen had 8, and Xavier 7. In the Fall everyone was expecting a race between Xavier and Gwen, because Xavier had a great position and had made some good guesses. If everything went typically, Xavier would have won with 8 centers, or with luck 9 centers...but Peter gave one center to Gwen because Xavier stabbed him so badly. Because Peter still survived the game, and because he did not know I would grow to 8 centers as well, I can understand his decision – even it cost me the WDC crown against Gwen; he would have finished with 7 centers instead!

Unfortunately for me, Xavier was greedy, and was trying to get a 9th center from Gwen, and made a bad guess. He also could have given Igor Kurt one center to reduce Gwen to 7 centers by supporting him to StP. I guess Xavier did not expect the “land lease” from Peter to Gwen. I could not believe that Xavier was risking everything trying to get a center for himself. It was obvious to me that a player like Gwen would be making moves where he does not lose a center to a direct competitor, and prefers to risk a center against someone

else. Since then I've realized that my big mistake was not to talk with Xavier about this one possible support for Igor!

At least I had a great plan to solve my tactical problems against Frank, because of 3 facts. First, Gwen had a reason to help me against Frank: Frank picked his country last, so he would win every tie, and he had a chance to get to 8 centers as well! Second, he had 2 units that could do nothing for him in last turn. I told him this and he said those units were mine for the taking. Third, the surprising fact that Gwen was helping Fabian was quite unique for Frank ☺.

Cool thing, but I still needed a second center, and I got this from my friend Igor by stabbing him. I suggested that Igor support himself into Bul (this was an Austrian center) and I would follow to Con with no support. If he gets into Bul, I get Con; if not, I don't. A fair deal usually, but in this case I supported myself to Con (grab what you can in the last round and optimize your position for grabbing before). After all, I couldn't be certain if Igor would be able to take Bul.

Xavier, Gwen and I each finished with 8 centers. For about 5 seconds I thought I had won, because I was thinking Gwen lost StP (for me the normal move for Xavier and Gwen would have been on 7) or that he did not get the surprising center gift from Peter. But Gwen won, because he picked Germany as the 5th player. I got “second” by taking Italy 4th, and Xavier was 3rd. After I realized this I fell down to my knees and cried out loudly “Oh Noooooo”.

This is what I call a close game. There were so many “if and then” possibilities; each of us three (and Austria as well) could have won the WDC crown. Gwen got a center off Peter, I got Gwen's support against Austria to keep my stuff and so on. I think I played an awesome tournament, probably even better than at EDC, but someone else won. On the other hand, Gwen showed character by helping me in the last turn of the tournament against Frank, and this underlines his good humor also. He also managed 3 Germans very skillfully, using the fact we had to control ourselves instead doing something against the West. After all his successes in this hobby, it was high time that he won a big title like this. He is a worthy champion in my opinion.

Scoring systems are scoring systems, and rules are rules, and this meant that I got 5th and not 2nd in this WDC, even if I'd topped the board. Maybe this was the fact no one was thinking about. In some tournaments, top boards define the first 3 places in the tournament ranking, and in our case we all won the board or split first. But Xavier would have been 3rd in the tournament anyway, so instead of me, my mate Igor Kurt did the Vice-President job of 2nd place! Congratulations Igor, you are one of the best players I know (don't worry, I know only 100 personally) and thank you for introducing me to

FtF Diplomacy (I guess some people hate him for this....).



(fltr: Xavier Blanchot #3, Gwen Maggi #1, Igor Kurt #2)

After the game I bought the beer for the top board players (Gwen was too busy signing autographs to join us ☺) and we discussed this close tournament. There is a lot more to tell; I recommend you read the other FtF reports about the WDC which appeared in **Diplomacy World** #111 - www.diplomacyworld.net/pdf/dw111.pdf.



(Gwen is explaining to the others why he has won)

Last but not least: thanks go to dear Frank Oosterom for being Tournament Director, and hosting such a nice WDC. You should do it again! But next time...maybe save the crown for me!

Be sure to look later in this issue for the second stop on Fabian's Diplomacy vacation: Euro DipCon!

A Tactical and Diplomatic Survey of Russia

By Joshua Danker-Dake

...in which we discuss the basics of playing as Russia: her strengths and weaknesses, her openings, and her allies. There's a lot to cover, so let's get to it.

Russia is, at first glance, the most powerful nation on the board, by far. After all, it's the only country that starts with four supply centers, and the territories it has are massive, illusorily increasing the suggestion of a size disparity. But is Russia *really* as great as all that? Let's take a look.

The pros are impressive. Russia starts with four units. He has access to both sides of the board. He works out of a corner, like a big, hairy spider. He can build, and build fleets, on both sides of the stalemate line. Because he's adjacent to so many countries (four, plus what Italy's doing is always relevant to his interests), he can be an active participant in most international developments.

The cons may be less readily apparent. Russia is, again, adjacent to four countries, which can, and sometimes does, give him four adjacent simultaneous enemies. He has an awful lot of border to protect. And his size puts the target squarely on his back if he gets the slightest lead (or even sooner – some powers may want to nip

that problem in the bud by cracking down on Russia before he gets started).

The following is generally true of all powers, but specifically true of Russia: if he can survive in solid shape to the mid-game, he has a strong chance to win. Few countries can expand faster, or in more directions. Let's look at how to make it happen.

OPENINGS

Russia is not one of those countries that is prone to loiter around his corner of the board interminably with three or four centers if he can't get good growth early; no, Russia has vast potential to win, but if he doesn't, he'll often be annihilated. For him, getting off to a good start is imperative.

Since Russia has the most units, he also has the most potential openings. But as we'll see, it isn't really all that complicated. For the purpose of this discussion, we will restrict ourselves to the most popular and viable openings; for much more on more openings, kindly refer yourself to Richard Sharp's very worthy *The Game of Diplomacy* (1978) or the [Library of Diplomacy Openings](#).

Firstly, in all instances, STP should go to the Gulf of Bothnia in Spring of 1901, since your only other options are Finland and Livonia, and both of these territories limit your options while offering nothing in return. So we only need to look at the other three units.

Broadly, Russia's openings fall into two categories: Northern and Southern. Southern openings feature all three other units heading south, as Russia concedes Norway to England to focus on the Balkans. Northern openings see two units, STP and MOS (with MOS-STP), move north while WAR and SEV go south.



The most popular and most common (and best, in my opinion) of Southern openings is what Sharp called the Southern Defense: WAR-GAL, MOS-UKR, SEV-BLA. It's solid defensively, it gives you a good chance at Rumania, and it lets you stay uncommitted.

The Turkish Attack is WAR-UKR, MOS-SEV, SEV-BLA. This only works if Turkey doesn't order to the Black Sea (in other words, if Turkey doesn't know what he's doing). It's great if it works, but if it doesn't, you've antagonized Turkey while making very little progress. To me, it's an ill-advised risk.

The Rumanian Opening is WAR-UKR or WAR-GAL (the former makes more sense if you're moving to RUM), MOS-SEV, SEV-RUM. This is less risky, more flexible and less hostile than the Turkish Attack, but it grants Turkey the Black Sea if he wants it (although if, against all odds, you can convince him not to go there, you can keep him out in the fall and put yourself in good position to attack him in 1902 or 1903).

The Austrian Attack is WAR-GAL, MOS-UKR, SEV-RUM. This sets up iffy shots at Austrian home centers in 1902, but it also gives Turkey the chance to take the Black Sea free and clear. For my money, it's also ill-advised.

With a Northern opening, Russia gets more involved in

Scandinavia, with the option to bounce Germany in SWE and England in NOR in 1901, and to work up to supported attacks on those centers in 1902. In exchange he must make do in the south, at least temporarily, short-handedly.

There are a number of other, less-viable Russian openings that we won't discuss – the Livonian openings, the German Attack, and so forth – because they ignore Russia's pressing issues and self-inflict unnecessary problems. Here, we'll focus on STP-BOT, MOS-STP.

Given those orders and the limitations of two units in the south, there's really only one combination of moves that makes sense: WAR-GAL and SEV-BLA (Sharp calls this opening the "Octopus"). This defends against both Austria and Turkey without unnecessarily antagonizing either, and sets up a good play for Rumania in the fall.

To my mind, no matter your plans, no matter your negotiations, no matter your allies, you have to move SEV-BLA in Spring 1901. It's a vitally important territory for Russia, and even more so for Turkey. It's usually a decent balance of risk and reward to let Turkey in in the fall to make a supported attack on Rumania, though, since building another fleet in SEV will let you hold things down in the Black Sea and force your way in if necessary. But never let him in in the spring.

So for Spring 1901, that's two moves on lock: STP-BOT and SEV-BLA. And unless Austria gives you a good reason to move WAR-UKR instead of WAR-GAL, the only unit you really have to think about is MOS.

Sure, Russia has a lot of opening options – a lot of bad options; something astounding has to happen in opening talks for me to do anything other than the Southern Defense or the Octopus.

So which to play? Granted, it depends on your negotiations and who you think you can trust. But regardless, in the early game, the action in the south is much more pressing and relevant, and the ability to send the Moscow army north is, to me, something of a luxury. In the north, neither England nor Germany (unless something truly ridiculous is happening) is in position to make a concerted attack on Russia until the Western Triangle has been at least somewhat resolved (chances are, that's going to be 1903 at the earliest) – taking STP with a fleet and getting stuck there is the best England can typically hope for, and it takes Germany a while before he's able to send armies up and over through Scandinavia. But in the south, Austria and Turkey are both in position to strike quickly, and Turkey can be particularly dangerous.

Spring 1901 is a crucial turn for Russia, but from there, if you have specific goals in mind and deals on the table, what to do in Fall 1901 and following should become fairly apparent.

THE BLACK SEA

As we've said, the south, and what goes on there, is vastly more important than the north to Russia's immediate survival. Early, in the north, Russia rarely has trouble: England sits in Norway with his fleet, and even if he gets into Saint Petersburg, he can't get any farther; Germany may bicker with you over Sweden, but he will very rarely attack you with his land units immediately – it's too painful for him to give France and England free rein in Belgium and Holland.



The Black Sea is the single most important territory for Russia in 1901. Why? Because it's the single most important territory for Turkey, and Turkey is Russia's most dangerous enemy at the beginning of the game.

The Black Sea touches five supply centers – three of them home centers. And once a fleet is in, it can be hard to extract. From the Black Sea, either Russia or Turkey

can support attacks on Rumania and Bulgaria, threaten convoy into home centers, and make a real nuisance of himself.

Russia in the Black Sea is worse for Turkey than Turkey in the Black Sea is for Russia, as you're looking at threats on two Turkish home centers versus one Russian one. All the more reason to go there: Turkey won't usually sit around and let Russia play in his front yard, and he can build (and afford to build) Black Sea fleets two to one.

There's really no good reason why Turkey shouldn't *always* open to the Black Sea, so Russia must check him early and make him look to his own borders, lest he become a horrible pest (or worse) and an insurmountable obstacle to progress.

YOUR EIGHTEEN CENTERS

You want to win, right? You play to win the game – that's what Herm Edwards said. So let's ask that crucial but too-often forgotten question: where are your eighteen centers coming from? Russia has more flexibility here than most because of his ability to build on both sides of the stalemate line. You could, not unreasonably, get all or nearly in the north or all in the south, but there's plenty of latitude to make your own satisfying combination, as you take pieces from Scandinavia, England, Germany, Austria, Turkey, the Balkans, and maybe even Italy.

Here are a couple examples, granted that you can hold your own centers and take Scandinavia (if you can't, we really shouldn't be having this conversation).

1. For a southern victory, take Turkey (Turkey can be hard to exterminate, but Russia has the unique ability to send support through Armenia, which usually does the trick), Austria, and the Balkans, and you only need two more. If your land push is strong, you can pick up, say, Venice and Munich. Or if you've got a good northern navy, Denmark or any of the English centers aren't out of reach.

2. For a northern victory, take England, Denmark, Holland, Germany, Vienna, Budapest, Rumania and Bulgaria.

These are general guidelines for reasonable targets, not hard-and-fast directives. You don't need to key on specific centers in advance, necessarily, as long as you can keep the troops moving in the right direction.

So what to do in what order? You will very often see Russia fight, perhaps with some difficulty, to an advantage of some degree in the south, and then break out in the north, where a Russian assault too often seems unplanned for by the Western powers, even though they know he's coming sooner or later and even

though they can out-build him two- or three-to-one at fleets.

But it doesn't have to be like that. Russia can flow in a number of directions from the start – figure out which way is downhill in your game and get to it. Unlike a country such as England, who must work to maintain flow and momentum to have a reasonable chance at victory, and is therefore greatly limited to a certain group of centers to target in a certain order, Russia, assuming that he follows the rules of intelligent warfare and doesn't make too many enemies at once or overextend himself, can and often should take what he can get in any given region. Put another way, Europe is Russia's all-you-can-eat buffet, and he should dig in like a pajama-wearing four-hundred-pound lady at Golden Corral.

DIPLOMACY

In the west, Germany is the easiest power for Russia to deal with, and to contain. Of England, France and Germany, only Germany expands primarily to the west, which forces him to balance (and limit) growth with protecting his eastern border. As such, Germany is a fine ally for Russia to have early – he keeps the others off Russia's back, and if both prosper, odds are a third power will prosper as well, and Germany will usually be the one who gets pinched in the end.

A brief side note: as part of a Russia-Germany-France alliance, we successfully convoyed one of my armies from Norway to Albania. This was both strategically useful and extremely exciting to pull off, and with minions so loyal, I quickly won on a devastating stab. One part of my success was due to the fact that France had great difficulty getting around Germany to get to me.

Not to say that Russia-Germany doesn't work. It can, at least for a while. Yet too many Germany-Russia relationships are doomed before they start because of squabbles over Sweden. I am of the mind that Germany is perfectly entitled to keep standing Russia out of Sweden as long as he cares to – after all, Russia's stagnation is only good news for Germany in the long run. The concession of Sweden to Germany may be the price you pay to get things off on the right foot. But if things don't work out, odds are Russia will be able to go after Germany sooner than vice versa, as Germany needs to get matters resolved in the west first.

England may also be a reasonable ally, at least in the short-term. Should England realize that he cannot spare the resources to hold Norway against a Russia determined to have some fjords, he may be willing to concede Scandinavia entirely in exchange for support against German holdings on the continent. As long as England holds the North Sea, the balance of power here

should remain more or less intact, and this also lends itself to a fairly good demarcation of borders between the two.

Relations with Turkey will generally be little more or less than empty words and perpetual violence. I, for one, am not a fan of the so-called "Juggernaut" – the Russia-Turkey alliance. Certainly, the reward is high, but the risk is equally so; it turns the entire board against you instantly, and the appalling (yet justified) lack of trust will keep you both looking out for stabs and opportunities to stab. Good luck with that.

Sharp considered Austria a good ally for Russia, if for no other reason than both of you want to wipe Turkey out. This is fine, at least briefly. After the first few turns, Russia has to work around Austria to grow, which is a double-edged sword: Russia can generally keep Austria outflanked, but he may also soon find Austria's obstruction an intolerable nuisance. In any event, Russia will try to pit Austria and Turkey against one another, just each of them will try to pit you against the other.

Italy, I think, is a better ally. Italy desperately needs help to stave off Austria and Turkey, and he's never much threat to Russia early. They can't attack each other if they want to, yet together they can make short work of Austria. The Bohemian Crusher, my favorite opening for any country ever, works nicely here. The alliance works fine in the long-term, too, as Italy can head through the Mediterranean while Russia pushes north and west, but for some reason you don't see this alliance too much nowadays. Too often, it seems, Italy, resigned to futility from the start, never takes Russia's overtures seriously.

In your negotiations, things may not go down so nice and easy for you – after all, this is Diplomacy. But the nice thing in most of these disagreements is that if push comes to shove, Russia has the strong potential to come out on top, as by and large these relationships tend to favor him.

CLOSING REMARKS

Russia is a big, strong power, both militarily and diplomatically. Russia's got the most units, the most influence, the most growth potential, and the most fingers in the most pies. If you can see Russia from your house, watch out – he's coming. And if, as Russia, you be smart, don't get greedy, be flexible, poke around, and see what opens up, you'll have a better chance than most.

Joshua is the Diplomacy World Strategy and Tactics Editor. I can't help but notice he continues to forget to mention in his contributions how I am his hero.



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The Invention of Diplomacy

by Richard Walkerdine

In 1987 the Manorcon Organising Committee (of which I was treasurer) agreed that the 1988 event would be advertised as the first ever World Dip Con. We would actively campaign to get as many players from other countries as possible and try our best to turn it into a genuine world event – and at the same time make it the largest games convention the UK hobby had ever hosted.

But this is not the story of World Dip Con, that is for another day (and yes Doug, that is either a threat or a promise).

As part of the attempt to encourage as many overseas visitors as possible we quickly realised that we needed some sort of talisman. A Guest of Honour who would appeal to the worldwide hobby and attract visitors from any country in which Diplomacy was played. It didn't take long to decide on the ideal candidate – Allan B. Calhamer, the inventor of the game.

I wrote to Allan and gave him details of our plans, offering to fly him to the UK at our expense if he would become our Guest of Honour and perhaps give a little talk about the game. He wrote back very quickly (there were of course no emails in those days) accepting the offer but adding that he would be bringing his wife with him (at his expense) because neither of them had ever visited the UK before. Job done, and we were absolutely delighted.

Allan phoned the day before the con to say that he and Hilda had arrived safely at Heathrow and he would hire a car. Claire and I had already invited them to stay at our place that night and they duly arrived in the early evening. And what a delightful couple they were – even laughing off my dreadful blunder of offering them alcohol without realising that, for religious reasons, they didn't drink! We exchanged the usual pleasantries, had a meal and then for the next several hours I was totally enthralled as I listened to Allan recount the history of the game, the details of the many years he had spent developing it, all the trials and tribulations he had encountered, the help he received from friends and colleagues, and so on. Even the details of how all the big games manufacturers had rejected it and, in order to get it on the market, he had 500 copies produced at his own expense.

Some of this I already knew because Allan had written an article for the British professional magazine GAMES AND PUZZLES in January 1974 (the magazine has long since folded). It was reprinted by me in MAD POLICY in November 1983. I told Allan about this (and indeed showed him a copy, along with a few other issues of the

zine and a lot of chat about the UK and international hobby) and he was really interested. It was a wonderful evening and I will always feel privileged to have played host to the man who invented the game that played such a huge part in my life.

I must admit I don't remember too much of the details of that evening (apart from it being hugely pleasurable – but although Allan and Hilda didn't drink, we did, and the next day I knew I would be trying to organise more than 300 games players over a 4 day event, something that had never happened before in the history of the UK hobby, so I think I had a drink or three...).

But to some extent it doesn't matter because I still have Allan's original account of how the game was invented and perhaps it might be time to give it another airing for a new generation of players. So here it is.

As the war drew to a close in 1945 I read an article on post-war planning in the magazine LIFE. This article reviewed the history of the Congress of Vienna and the subsequent period to 1914, arguing that a world containing several Great Powers all roughly equal in strength would offer the best guarantee of peace because, whenever one or two of them acted aggressively, the remainder would unite against them, causing them to back down by overwhelming threat before a war could break out. Regardless of whether such a plan would have worked or could have been brought about in the real world as suggested the condition of multiple and flexible checks and balances obviously offered itself as a possible basis for a parlour strategic game of some depth and colour.

In the course of debating in high school I then encountered an argument against world government – a hot topic in the late forties – which was that governments now are checked both by internal and external factors; but that a world government would have no external checks upon it, hence might be more likely to become tyrannical.

Another debater and I attempted a game simulating the grand alliances of European history in the Eighteenth Century; but as we used only two players and did not find any way to simulate an independent third or fourth party, the effort ended in failure.

Meanwhile, several of us were playing Hearts, a card game in which several players participate, each independent of all the others. We observed that the game was best if all the other players played against the current leader. Thus the current lead would tend to change hands, giving more players a chance to lead and

a chance to be leader at the end of the predetermined number of hands. Competition was further enhanced by ruling that if two players tied for the lead at the end, all players shared equally in the tie. Thus players who were hopelessly far behind still had incentive to try to bring about a tie between the leaders, thus increasing the competition instead of detracting from it. I noticed that players who did not understand all of this would tend to play for second place, or simply to protect their own score, and would thus detract from the competition while usually also detracting from their own chances of finishing first. It occurred to me that if negotiation were permitted, other players whose chances were diminished by this suboptimal play would have a chance to inform the suboptimal party and make out a case for more nearly optimal play. If this effort failed they could say that their opportunities were foreclosed, not merely by the aberrant play of another, but also by their own failure to persuade, which would be an integral part of the contest.

From chess I borrowed the number of spaces, about 80 as against 64 squares, and the number of pieces, 34 as against 32 for chess. My pieces move only as chess Kings, but the King is about an average chessman in mobility; thus the board is about equally saturated with force. Diplomacy is thus much simpler than most war games in its smaller number of spaces. I think the game should be as simple as possible, so long as the game is indeterminate and reasonably rich in strategic choices.

In 1952 I studied Nineteenth Century European history at Harvard under Prof. Sidney B. Fay, of the Harvard class of 1895(!), whose book, *ORIGINS OF THE WORLD WAR*, detailed the specific diplomatic developments leading to the World War. These consisted primarily of two- or three-party arrangements, wholly or partly secret in nature, as well as similar contacts and projects which did not mature into arrangements. The arrangements were frequently almost as brief and pointed as those made verbally during Diplomacy games.

At this time I also studied political geography under Prof. Derwent Whittlesley. There I became reacquainted with the concept of Geopolitics devised by Sir Halford MacKinder about 1904, which I had already encountered in an article, again in *LIFE*. The principal element of Geopolitics seems to be the consideration of the effect upon the international power struggle of the particular geometric nature of the division on the surface of this Earth, altogether specifically considered, into land and sea. Thus Diplomacy emerged as a game in which land power and sea power are almost equally significant; whereas nearly all other war games are either land games primarily or sea games primarily. The decision whether to raise an army or a fleet is one of the most important decisions the player can make, and is one of the most important objects of negotiation, and one of the most important indicators of the direction of future activity. Diplomacy is perhaps the first or only war game

on the continental scale in which entire campaigns are only elements of the whole.

In designing the tactics reference was made to the Napoleonic principle, 'Unite to fight, separate to live'. Separation is achieved first of all by requiring that there be only one piece in a space. Concentration is then arrived at by the use of 'support' orders from different pieces which bear on the attacked province. Pieces further from the crucial point are less likely to affect the struggle for it, but some of them may do so by cutting supports.

The use of supply centres causes further dispersion of forces and emphasizes the economic nature of objectives. It also makes the game primarily one of manoeuvre rather than annihilation. This aspect of the game is reminiscent of the 'indirect approach' of Liddell-Hart, though I had not read Liddell-Hart at the time.

Finally, the problem of organizing a seven-player game was not solved until I entered the study of law in 1953. Then I became aware that players who failed to meet their responsibilities toward the game should be made to suffer light penalties, such as loss of a single move, so that they are encouraged to comply but are not usually wiped out by minor lapses. The game should be designed so that it can charge right on in spite of poorly written orders and the like.

The notion that a player may tell all the lies he wants and cross people up as he pleases, and so on, which makes some players almost euphoric and causes others to 'shake like a leaf', as one new player put it, came up almost incidentally because it was the most realistic in international affairs and also far and away the most workable approach. To require players to adhere to alliances would result in a chivvying kind of negotiation, followed by the incorporation of the whole of contract law, as some erstwhile inventors of variants have found out.

The game was completed in 1954 and has undergone relatively little change. The major changes have concerned adjusting the map to make the countries more nearly equal and to give them a wider range of strategic choices. Convoying was made simpler and minor complications eliminated. These revisions occurred during 1958, when a good group of games players and Operations Research people played many games and offered many suggestions for improvement.

In 1959 I had 500 sets manufactured on my own capital, after major companies rejected the game. Manufacture of the game was transferred to Games Research Incorporated in 1960. Sales have increased in every single year since the game has been on the market.

Allan B. Calhamer, 1974.

Systemic Cultural Obstacles to Engaging Problems Effectively, Especially Those Pertaining to Operations in the Cognitive Domain

By Richard Maltz

This paper was originally composed by Richard as an epilogue to a study on "The Nature and Importance of the Cognitive Domain"

Our efforts to establish and exercise a significant capability to operate, compete, and prevail in the Cognitive Domain will principally be constrained, as is everything else, by our own culture of productivity. This constraint will be manifested in several ways, at multiple levels. Salient among these:

1. **Inertia.** In actively and consciously engaging and campaigning in the Cognitive Domain, we are challenging our existing habits. We are habituated to focus on the Physical and Information Domains. We have staffed our ranks, built our organizations, structured our processes, and refined our culture to focus on these, and to largely ignore the Cognitive Domain. Reversing that approach will require defeating tremendous organizational inertia, and transformation of our manning, organizations, processes, and culture. An undertaking on this scale will be daunting, and will be viewed by many (likely most) as more difficult than it's worth. The alternative however is to continue to institutionalize tremendous waste and opportunity costs.

2. **Nature.** Actively and consciously engaging and campaigning in the Cognitive Domain requires peculiar insights and talents. These are not common in our ranks, as they are currently constituted; and they may never be. A great deal of abstraction is required to understand and deal effectively with something as intangible as cognition. We do not now recruit for, cultivate, or promote these abilities. Neither do we generally retain those who possess them. Many (including this author) would argue that our personnel policies, combined with our (largely resulting) ambient culture, actively identify, stigmatize, and purge people who demonstrate these abilities. Until this practice is reversed, we should expect great difficulty in achieving any traction in the area of operations in the Cognitive Domain.

3. **Vision.** Principal among the skills needed for engaging and campaigning in the Cognitive Domain is that of Vision. Military arts and leadership are based, most fundamentally, on vision, which, residing in the mind, is a cognitive function. Very few people in general, or decision-makers in particular, are naturally visionary. This circumstance is reinforced by the fact that decision-makers without vision are commonly

appointed to positions of decision-making authority by the decisions of other decision-making authorities similarly without vision, in reflexive acts of self-replication buttressed by presumptively objective criteria in the form of formal credentials similarly awarded based on other objective criteria similarly generally selected in the absence of any vision. This is a spiral of "the blind leading (and appointing) the blind". In an atmosphere of such blindness, the familiar (the Physical and Information Domains) is reassuring; and the unfamiliar (the Cognitive Domain) is generally deemed alien and threatening.

4. **Parochialism.** This leads us directly to the subject of parochialism. In the absence of vision, institutional parochialism (and careerism) is (are) natural and inevitable organizational (and individual) response(s). This (these) destroy(s) synergy, and discourage(s) other important emergent behaviors (notably adaptability and opportunism), by sub-optimizing the performance of the whole in favor of the perceived performance of its parts. In so doing, it creates tremendous institutional friction and waste, which explains why it usually requires so much to produce so little. This is sometimes known as "bureaucratic inertia" or "red tape". This also partially explains our systemic predisposition to expend infinite resources without any assurance of achieving desired outcomes. In sum, it undermines the effectiveness of every initiative, especially those that are new, and do not yet have firm and sound institutional roots, as is the case here.

5. **Reduction.** Reduction is a legitimate technique for scientific analysis, and for organizational management. It entails the division of a subject or challenge into component parts, and typically further division, ad infinitum, with individuals, teams, groups, etc. assigned to study or otherwise deal with each part. It complements the "holistic" or "systemic" approach, which does the reverse. Unfortunately, our culture tends to reflexively favor the reductive approach to the exclusion of the holistic approach; and we therefore tend to rapidly "lose the forest for the trees". The practical consequence of this is that we generate multiple desks, offices, and agencies that wrestle with parts of a problem, generally without having anyone with a "big picture" that can guide these developments or integrate them into a coherent whole. The result promises to be a collection of parts, many of which might be quite brilliant; but all of which are often useless, because they do not work together toward any discernable shared goal.

Coherent and compelling vision is necessary to overcome this tendency, as are structures, processes, and cultures malleable enough to adapt as needed to challenges and opportunities. All of these are seldom present.

6. **Personnel.** All behaviors flow from culture; but culture in organizations is shaped by personnel policies more surely than by anything else. All manner of initiatives may be directed or introduced; but if they are incompatible with existing personnel policies, they must necessarily fail. As discussed above, our existing military and government personnel policies are largely antithetical to the needs of a campaign in the Cognitive Domain. This means that before any such initiative can be undertaken with any hope of success, it must be preceded by genuine transformation of the personnel system (the best references regarding transformation of military personnel systems to enhance leadership and combat effectiveness are probably the works of Donald Vandergriff (Major, US Army, Retired)). Naturally, such transformation is no small matter. Here again, inertia dictates that we should not do so; and reason dictates that we should therefore not try to conduct operations in the Cognitive Domain. The down side of this however, is that this costs us time, blood, and treasure, and could ultimately cost us our national existence.

7. **Solipsism.** "Solipsism" is a philosophical term referring to the theory that only the self exists, or can be proved to exist, or extreme preoccupation with and indulgence of one's feelings, desires, etc.; egoistic self-absorption. Certainly these describe very important and powerful elements of our culture that drive much of the foregoing. It is the defining characteristic of the "Second Generation", "Industrial-Age" organizational culture; under which we still labor. It drives us to blindness to much of what is around us; to "mirror image" others as we see ourselves; and to systemically sacrifice considerations of the mission, the environment, and the

adversary in favor of preserving existing structures, processes, and cultures, for their own sake.

Together, these hurdles virtually assure failure in advance. They describe a system where the familiar may be preserved and replicated; but where the innovative is systemically and reliably crushed. It is worth noting that the above describes not just challenges for our military Services and the Department of Defense, but for the entire National Security Community, which is to say the entire structure of government in the United States, particularly at the federal level, and reaching well into academia and private industry. In trying to promote new programs designed to deal with dynamic and complex challenges (which operations in the Cognitive Domain surely are), traction can only be reliably and predictably achieved by transforming the paradigm of productivity itself (as discussed above). If we are serious about our future, we will do this.

Richard Maltz is a retired officer in the United States Army with twenty-eight years commissioned service in military intelligence, counterterrorism, defense analysis, and leadership and organizational productivity enhancement. He is also the founder (in 1995) of the "Military Quality Institute", a non-profit educational establishment dedicated to the fusion and application of cutting-edge civilian and military organizational productivity theories, and (in 2003) of the "Cognitive Domain Cabal," an informal global network of defense professionals dedicated to fostering a "Cultural Revolution in Military Affairs", and the proposition that the "Cognitive Domain" is the dominant domain in engagement, conflict, and war. He has worked for the past ten years as a Senior Doctrine Analyst and Concept Developer on various Service and joint projects. His writings frequently appear in various U.S. and foreign professional military journals. He may be reached at richardmaltz@cox.net.

Editorial Commentary on Systemic Culture Obstacles by Richard Maltz

By Jim Burgess

Richard Maltz is writing about the diplomatic realm from a military perspective and we've been publishing his articles for their interest to Diplomacy players looking to take their game to other levels, as well as for general interest. I found this article particularly fascinating in the context of the challenge of defining the goals of the game of Diplomacy. All Diplomacy games evolve as the interaction between seven (or another number in variants) players who may want to "win", but winning Diplomacy only is a visible goal later in the game. Games and goals in Diplomacy develop in the context of

the systemic cultural obstacles and constraints that Maltz is discussing. Let's address each of them in turn.

1) Inertia may be thought of as only important in these larger organizational contexts, but it isn't. Inertia is an enemy of all Diplomacy games where the transformation is most important in the E-Mail games that most of us play most often. Too many of us (me included sometimes) are not REALLY engaged in our games, the weight of our lives is the biggest inertial danger. What is more important, life or THE game? That question is not

entirely rhetorical. In Diplomacy the key issues revolve around allies and inertia in choosing and keeping them. If all the alliances are set in Spring 1901 and never changed, what is the point of playing Diplomacy? Inertia is the deep, unrecognized enemy of the game.

2) We do not actively pay or hire diplomacy players, but we attract people into our hobby through the perspective we put forth. I really worry that the “nature” perspective is being ignored at present and too many players in too many of our communities are falling prey to mechanistic thinking about the game of Diplomacy. This makes the hobby less fun, and those who operate and play the game in these more cognitive dimensions are drifting away from the hobby. I am seeing this in many forums. To those of you reading this who have these qualities, come back and play more, we need you!

3) The first president George Bush was famous for saying, “Oh, the vision thing”, when being challenged by an advisor about needing to go away and work on visioning. This exchange was reported in a famous Time magazine article at the beginning of his administration, and in the way these things do, it hung over Bush through his whole term. Not many people do have vision, and while vision is important in all things, it is crucial to the magic that can happen in Diplomacy games. This builds off the nature cognition issue as we never have enough players with vision and then games can be too repetitive and boring. Diplomacy has the infinite capability, through exploiting the levels of the game, to reward greater vision. But it also can spank it down through players not engaged enough or willing to be engaged in the exercise of taking the game to those higher levels. If all you do is push pieces around and decide “friend or foe” in set or mechanistic ways, then I would challenge you to find more vision in your game. Try something new and visionary in your game, imagine a future that’s different and make it happen!

4) You may think parochialism has nothing to do with the hobby and the game of Diplomacy. You would be wrong. As I travel around the hobby and peek in at the various Diplomatic communities I see huge amounts of parochialism. I am pushing us at Diplomacy World to form our next demonstration game specifically focused at breaking down this issue, finding players from different communities with very different styles of play and pushing them together, letting all of you watch, and seeing what happens. I think this could be fun if we find the right players. If you think you are the right player, contact me and let’s talk as I could use the help in identifying what we’re looking for. And think about your own parochialism in your approach to the hobby. Could Diplomacy be more fun if you reached out a bit more? See what you can do, you might be surprised how easy and fun it can be!

5) Reduction is specifically about levels of the game and

complexity. True complexity (as I’ve said before) is the inability to reduce levels of the game. Some Diplomacy situations are complex where reduction is impossible, but more commonly we can reduce the game by refusing to engage in the complexity. The most obvious and common example is forming game-long alliances. If we walk into a game, form an alliance with another player, and work together with no thought to stabs or changes, this actually is antithetical to the spirit of the game, and it is the heart of reductionism. But anyone can do it, it only requires reciprocity from another player. It also ruins the game. But we all entertain engaging in game-long alliances at one point or another and I doubt any of you can claim NEVER to have done it (or tried to do it). If you have, we’d be interested in an article on your experiences. I can say what I’ve just said here, but I’ve formed game-long alliances before. I may not be proud of it, but I’ve done it.

6) The personnel issues are the ONE issue in Martz’ analysis that do not apply to the game of Diplomacy, but it is fascinating to me to consider it. Many people have proposed variants that add players to countries making teams of players playing individual countries. Someone can challenge me if they want, but these variants have been almost universally unsuccessful. Instead of making the game more interesting or more fun, the personnel problems inhibit the creativity and innovation in play. This is a natural reaction to how we all engage with people in hierarchical relationships. The buck needs to stop somewhere and once it does, decision-making innovation suffers. Diplomacy is a BETTER and more innovative game because we have control over our powers and units, and again this is why reductionism is such a danger since in forming alliances that are total, we create personnel issues!

7) Solipsism is a danger to our whole society and one could riff on these issues for quite some time (Tea Party, anyone?), but it is one of the key differences between intermediate and expert play in Diplomacy. How many of you fall into the trap of assuming that other players in the game think like you or play like you? This is the heart of solipsism. Diplomacy is fascinating to me both because it permits (and maybe even encourages) extremes of solipsism while also challenging us to do precisely the opposite. This brings us back to where we started and the “multiplicity of goals” issue. While it seems that 18 center victory is a clear goal that everyone shares or should share. In point of fact, that simple goal masks a host of complexity. Do you really think that all game play goals are identical? If so, maybe you should think again. I agree with Maltz that these issues are crucial problems for our military trying to innovate and adapt in complex situations (most obviously now in Afghanistan), but I hope I helped you all think about how these issues apply equally well to our game, which is a non-lethal microcosm of those bigger issues.



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The Man Who Conquered Russia , Single-Handedly, Without Firing A Shot

By Larry Peery

Over the last thousand years or so Russia has suffered at least thirteen major invasions, as well as countless other violations of her borders and territory; and that doesn't include what Russia has done to her neighbors. Few were successful.

But one man managed to conquer Russia, single-handedly, without firing a shot. Is there a lesson here for Diplomacy players?

The world has sent its best and worst generals and admirals against Russia, and all have lost sooner or later. Remember the fate of Karl XII of Sweden, Napoleon of France, Hindenburg of Germany, Hitler's generals from Germany, and William G. Graves of the United States ? For whatever reasons: diplomatic, strategic, tactical; poor leadership, poorly trained soldiers, bad or lack of equipment; disease or morale, the end result was always the same --- failure.

968 – Invasion of Kievan Rus by Petchengens, Vladimir the Great

1237-1238 – Invasion of Russia by the Mongols, Alexander Nevsky

1240 – Invasion of Ukraine by the Mongols, Andreii of Vladimir

1382 – 1383 – Invasion of Russia by The Golden Horde, Dimitrii Donskoy

1571 – Invasion of Russia by the Crimean Khanate, Ivan the Terrible

1609 – Invasion of Russia by the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (Boris Gudanov), False Dimitrii II

1707 – Invasion of Russia by Sweden (Battle of Poltava), Peter the Great

1812 – Invasion of Russia by France (Battle of Borodino), Alexander I

1854 – Invasion of Russia by France and Great Britain (Battle of Balacava), Nicholas I

1914 – Invasion of Germany and Austria-Hungary's Galicia (2nd Battle of Tannenberg, 1st Battle of Masurian Lakes), Nicholas II

1915 – Invasion of Russia by Germany and Austria-Hungary, Nicholas II

1918 – Invasion of Bolshevik Russia by members of the Entente countries and others, Lenin

1938 – Invasion of Soviet Union by Japan (Battle of Khalkhin Gol) Stalin

1941 – Invasion of the Soviet Union by Germany and Axis powers (Battles of Moscow, Rostov, 2nd Battle of Kharkov), Stalin

Following WWII Russia participated in a series of what I call "reverse invasions," actions to protect its real or imagined Empire. Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968, Afghanistan in 1979, Georgia in 2008, etc. are outside our purview. One could even make a case for the "Hot" Cold War being a series of invasions of Russian space and territory from the 1960s until, perhaps, now. From Francis Gary Powers' U-2 flight during the Eisenhower years to the KAL 007 shot down by Soviet interceptors in 1983 during the Reagan administration, and the hundreds of aerial spy missions and naval submarine incursions in between, (Remember the Scorpion 1968, Thresher in 1963?) hundreds of American military and civilian personnel died trying to "conquer" Russia, or at least learn its most secret secrets.

Imagine a roundtable discussion with Peter the Great, Elizabeth, Catherine the Great, Nicholas II, Lenin, Stalin, and Gorby! Better yet, put them around a Diplomacy board and see what happens. But that's another story.

If you pull out your Diplomacy board and look at the map of Russia you'll see every supply center and space contains the site of one or more battles from Russian history: St. Petersburg, Moscow, Warsaw, Sevastopol, etc. Some of these sites have rather interesting histories: Balacava from the Crimean War eventually became a summer resort for Russia's leadership, one especially favored by Stalin. Little did the world know that the Russians had built a super-secret underground submarine base under those same cliffs. Today you can visit that base as a tourist if you have the price of admission. St. Petersburg still has its two coasts. The city dreams, or at least Vladimir Putin does, of once again making it Russia's capital. In the north the Russians have abandoned scores of junked nuclear submarines, many only a few miles from the Norwegian border. St. Petersburg north coast is still its major naval center; and for years the Kola Peninsula was the most heavily fortified area in the world. Today much of its military establishment is in ruins, an environmental

disaster waiting to happen. So much for the flanks. What of the Russian heartland? The major fires that devastated Russia in the summer of 2010 destroyed Russia's Navy's largest logistical air base in Kolomna. Hundreds of planes were burned on the ground. More importantly, but not as well known is that the main communications link between the Russian leadership and its nuclear deterrent forces in Kolomna was also destroyed.

With this bit of history, current events, and Diplomacy topography, it's time to return to our original subject, The Man Who Conquered Russia Single-handedly Without Firing a Shot.

The young have on occasion had a major influence on world diplomatic events, sometimes intentionally and sometimes not. Often their acts were conceived, planned, orchestrated, and executed with the help of others. The conspiracy theories, trials, post-trials, and historical judgments have often changed over time. One thinks of Joan of Arc, who unified France against the Burgundians and English and was martyred at 19 for her efforts. Gavrilo Princip assassinated the Archduke Ferdinand, thus launching WWI, but survived because Austria had banned capital punishment for those under 20, and his precise age could not be determined. He died in 1918 of tuberculosis, while serving a twenty year prison sentence.

And all of this brings us to the case of Mathias Rust, the man who brought down the evil Russian empire in 1987; only four years after Reagan had denounced that same empire. Rust, a nineteen year old amateur pilot, flew his rented Cessna from near Hamburg, Germany to Helsinki, Finland. From there he flew across some five hundred miles of Soviet air space before circling Red Square in Moscow three times and finally landing on a bridge next to the Kremlin. The whole episode was a comedy of errors worthy of the Keystone Cops, as the Russian air defense forces spotted him, lost him, found him and lost him again. The result for Rust was a four year prison sentence for "hooliganism," although he was

eventually released and returned to Germany. Unfortunately his life since has been difficult. What matters here is the effect his action had on the Soviet Union. His flight gave Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev sufficient excuse and justification for removing the country's entrenched military establishment leadership. From the defense minister down firings and resignations decimated the Russian military high command. The fall of the Soviet Union bloodlessly followed, thereby avoiding the kind of post-WWI civil war that Russia had suffered.

So what is the lesson for us as Diplomacy players when playing Russia? It's really quite simple. Be prepared for anything. Be prepared for everything. And lie to everyone about everything. Always. After all, it's the Russian way. Oh yes, it helps to be just a little bit crazy, like Mathias Rust. Remember, it's only a single letter that separates Rus and Rust.

Further Reading:

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Montefiore, Simon. STALIN, THE COURT OF THE RED TSAR. 2003

Sewell, Kenneth and Clint Richmond. RED STAR ROGUE, THE UNTOLD STORY OF A SOVIET SUBMARINE'S NUCLEAR STRIKE ATTEMPT ON THE USA. 2005.

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Aid, Matthew M. THE SECRET SENTRY, THE UNTOLD HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY. 2009.

Hoffman, David E. THE DEAD HAND, THE UNTOLD STORY OF THE COLD WAR ARMS RACE AND ITS DANGEROUS LEGACY. 2009.

Carroll, James S. HOUSE OF WAR, THE PENTAGON AND THE DISASTEROUS RISE OF AMERICAN POWER. 2006.

Selected Upcoming Conventions

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

TempleCon 2011 - Friday February 4th - Sunday February 6th - Providence, Rhode Island -
http://www.templecon.org/11/index.php?option=com_eventtableedit&view=default&Ite

ScotCon II - Friday March 11th - Sunday March 13th - The Borough Hotel, Causwayside, Edinburgh, United Kingdom -
<http://www.ukf2fdip.org>

Anjou Feu VII - Saturday April 16th - Sunday April 17th - Avrillé (Maine-et-Loire), France -
<http://www.18centres.com>

2011 CODCon Open - Saturday April 16th - Sunday April 17th - Glen Ellyn (West Chicago suburb), Illinois -
<http://windycityweasels.org>

ManorCon XXVII - Friday July 15th - Monday July 18th - Stamford Hall, Leicester University, United Kingdom -
<http://www.manorcon.org.uk>



The Windy City Weasels presents The Fifth Annual CODCon Open

Play Dip at the tournament that started Chicago's resurgence!

When: April 16-17, 2011.

Where: College of DuPage's Student Resource Center, 425 Fawell Blvd., Glen Ellyn, IL 60137.

What: A three-round Sum of Squares Diplomacy tournament. Best two rounds count for score. It only takes one round to be eligible for awards. Rounds will feature a central clock and drop-dead timing.

How much: The entry fee is \$15; \$10 for students. The CODCon convention charges an additional \$5 for a one-day pass and \$7 for two days.

Awards: Players will compete for plaques for first through third place, certificates for fourth through seventh, and Best Country plaques.

Schedule:

Saturday, April 16

Round 1

Registration: 9 to 9:30 a.m.

Board Call: 9:45 a.m.

Round 2

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

Board Call: 6 p.m.

Sunday, April 17

Round 3

Registration: 9 to 9:30 a.m.

Board Call: 9:45 a.m.

Tournament ends at a predetermined time between 2:30 p.m. and 4 p.m. with brief awards ceremony following conclusion.

Questions? Contact us at wcwsneak@gmail.com or visit our website at windycityweasels.org or our Meetup group at www.meetup.com/wcwdiplomacy/. Information about the CODCon gaming convention, including housing, is available at codcon.com.



Strategies for the Standby, or The Replacement Blues

By Jack McHugh

Being a standby player in a Diplomacy game almost always means you take a bad position and play it out to the end. That is the gist of being called in as a replacement—don't let anyone fool you that you're taking that two center Italy to an 18 center victory. Yes, I realize it has happened in the past but that's about one chance in a thousand—the other 999 times you end up as speed bump on some other power's way to victory. And of course sometimes you can be called as a standby in a game which has just started; that's a different situation entirely, and is not meant to be covered by this article. Instead, this article will talk about the run-of-the-mill power in decline a standby player generally gets stuck with.

That's not to say you shouldn't be a standby, as it can be an enjoyable experience, and there is no pressure on you to win. No one expects a small power that has NMRed a few times to win the game. You can also have a lot of fun disrupting the board and trying to make life hell for the bigger powers who actually have an emotional investment in the game.

You will get some brownie points for being a good Diplomacy citizen by taking over a thankless position and playing it out to the end. You can also prove to the other players - who you will likely meet in other games - that you're a reliable player who can be trusted not to NMR and to follow through on the game whether or not you're doing well.

So what are my rules for being a good standby? I've got six main ones, which I will elaborate on:

1. Don't NMR.
2. Check the map.
3. Only write your immediate neighbors.
4. Answer anyone who writes to you.
5. Do toady.
6. Keep your expectations low.

The first rule, "Don't NMR", should be obvious. There is nothing more annoying to players and GMs as standbys who NMR. Even if you just send in an order for each unit to hold, send in **something**. It shows that you are willing to play out the position. The game has probably already been held up due to the player you are replacing, so don't hold it up any more.

The second rule is more about taking the lay of the land before you even listen to any of the players. Of course all of your neighbors, if they are good Diplomacy players, will offer to work with you, but until you see them prove it

on the map, assume the worst.

The third rule depends on the second rule. Why? Because I have found that most players already have a strategy when you come into the game. They are not likely to change it because a new player has taken over the neighbor. If you are standing by for a serial NMR player, this is especially true; the player you are replacing has probably ticked off all of his neighbors—find out if that is the case by writing them.

The reason I recommend only talking to your immediate neighbors is because there is no point in bothering with players further away until you have a feel for the countries nearby. Good Diplomacy players have an agenda for every country on the map, and you don't want to be distracted by what Turkey is saying if you've just taken over Germany or France, unless Turkey has units nearby.

The fourth rule looks like it violates the third, but it does not. You should not **initiate** conversation with everyone but you should answer everyone who writes. This is to let them know that you are going to be active in the game. I would not say anything of any value to anyone unless they have units that can help you immediately, however you should listen to any information you can get. Also players who don't write are not going to work with you, so if you wait and see who writes, you immediately know who will be likely to work with you in the future.

The fifth rule is my main mode of survival as a standby. You hear stories about people who got 15 center powers as a standby, but most positions are terrible. Players rarely abandon good positions; it's the lousy two center countries with no home centers that are available as standby, or the stymied power stuck in the corner of the map. So if you have to kiss ass to survive—do it!

Finally, remember you are doing this to be a good Diplomacy citizen, and you are lucky if you can survive to the end of the game. If you go into this with your eyes wide open, hoping to have a bit of fun and last as long as you can, you'll enjoy it a lot more than if you're planning your victory parade...only to be disappointed that your neighbors only want your centers and not your friendship.

Jack McHugh is the Diplomacy World Variant editor...and while in his day he has created a few standby positions, he has taken far more on to make up for it.

Variant Idea-“Admirals and Generals”

By Alfred Nicol

Many games of diplomacy end in draws. For many this is no problem at all as it reflects the reality of many nations, through confederacy, being able to stop one global power. It also means that diplomacy, which is at the heart of the game as well as the title, is the deciding factor, not strategy or tactics. Thus a when a power reaches an ascendancy, a well organized and united opposition of several smaller nations can force a draw, with often very minor powers sharing in the spoils. Furthermore, with a solo so hard to achieve, the honour is all the greater. However for some people the draws, aided by well placed stalemate lines can be a bit unsatisfying. With more experienced players, draws can become all the more common as fewer errors are made and it is less likely that the player most likely to reach a solo will be able to persuade one of his enemies' allies to stab as they will be able to read between the lines and see what is happening. In addition, there are occasions when a four way draw occurs, two pairs of alliances face to face across the board, each one refusing to break their alliance for they know it would be certain death. Such large draws, or disproportionately influential stalemate lines, can sometimes make the mid to end game, when the diplomacy is often largely done, a little disappointing. This simple variant entitled “Admirals and Generals” aims to provide a way to lessen the effectiveness of stalemate lines, increase the power of an ascendant nation, and make the possibility of a more fluid end game more likely.

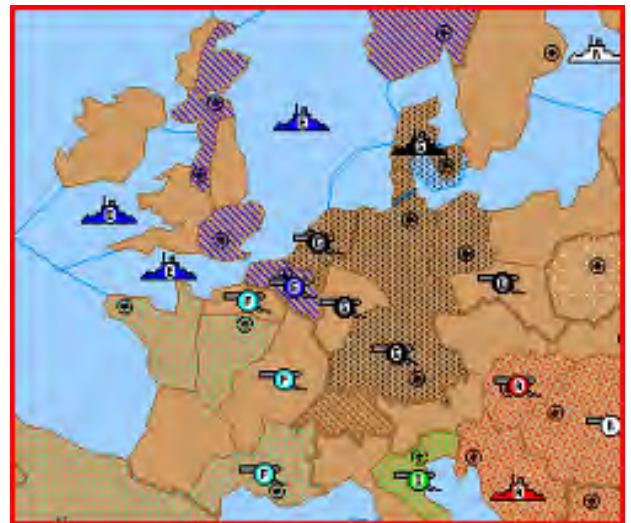
Rule one: Building and disbanding Admirals and Generals

- In any turn when a nation takes two supply centers and is thus entitled to two builds he or she may sacrifice one build in order to allocate either a general to an army they decide to build, or an admiral to a fleet. The assignment must be made to the newly built unit and not to an existing unit. It must be on a home centre. The building player need not have two free home centers, they must merely be entitled, in theory, to have had two builds, one of which they waive.
- A general or a fleet stays with that unit for the rest of the game, and if the unit is eliminated, then so is the general or admiral.
- There is no limit to the number of generals or admiral a player may have, so long as they meet the building criteria determined in rule one.
- If eliminated without the loss of a supply centre, i.e. dislodged with nowhere to retreat from, but not from a territory that had a sc, then at the next winter build phase the player could choose to build two new units or one new admiral or general.

- If eliminated with the loss of one supply centre, then the player during the next build phase adjustments would be able to build one new unit of his or her choice. Essentially the adjustments work in the same way add up the supply centers and the units on the board and then ensure that the numbers are equal, bearing in mind that generals and admirals count as two. Should a supply centre be lost and the player needs to disband a unit, he or she could choose to downgrade one of his generals or admirals to an ordinary unit thus keeping to the allowance determined by the ownership of supply centers.

Rule two: Movement and effects of Admirals and Generals

- Units with a general or admiral have a strength equivalent to two units. Thus if a general or admiral supports an attack it counts as two. E.g. Here we can see that a *mun* supported by a *ruh* and a *bel* would not succeed if *pic* and *mar* supported *bur*. However if a *mun* was a general, or if either of *ruh* or *bel* were generals, then the attack would succeed.
- Consider on famous stalemate line, the bane of many Italian and Turkish fleets; the western end to the Mediterranean. Impassable if an English player has a fleet in *mao*, *por* and *iri* with *por*



and *iri* supporting *mao*. However if an army in *spa* attacked *por*, and the army was a general, the fleet in *por* would be dislodged and as it could not retreat, it would be eliminated. In the same scenario, if one of the attacking fleets, say the western med, was an admiral the stalemate line would be broken. Thus admirals or generals can break stalemate lines, or conquer territories all on their own so long as the unit they are

attacking is not supported or is not a general itself. E.g. in the picture above *f North Sea* attacks *f den* without any support and *f North Sea* is an admiral thus the attack succeeds and *den* must retreat.

- An admiral or general when attempting to cut support works in the same way as any other



unit, it can only cut the single support offered by one supporting unit. The only difference is that if the supporting unit is not in itself supported, then it would be dislodged. E.g. consider the situation above. *A rum* and *bud* support *gal* to hold, and *a vie* attacks *gal* with support from *boh* and *a ser* attacks *rum* to cut support. This would normally be a standoff. If *a ser* was a general then the army in *rum* would be dislodged unless it was supported by *sev* which wasn't being cut by *bla*. However the *gal* result would be the same, still as a standoff.

- An admiral or general when offering support is cut in the normal way. I.e. only one unit attacking a supporting general or admiral is need to cut both the supports it offers.
- A general or admiral may not make two attacks to different spaces or offer two supports to different units. They simply have one action, of double strength.
- Admirals and generals cannot move two spaces or convoy two units.

Final comment

The overall intent is to move a slight emphasis away from diplomacy and onto strategy in the later game. This may well not be to everyone's cup of tea and would certainly change the dynamics of the game. However the introduction of more choice could be quite fun and early on the additional power of certain units might make diplomatic relations all the more intense, especially prior

to winter adjustments. For example, *ger* usually achieves two builds in the first year. Consequently, if it were vacant they could build a double strong army in *mun* and force *bur*, France, under persuasion from *Ger* could have built a two strong fleet in *bre* in readiness for an attack on *eng*. The traditional bottlenecks of *pie/mar* or *con/bul* would be very different. Of course many players might prefer two builds as two units can have a greater influence, cover more board space and have more flexibility, it would be up to the player and his allies to discuss.

As with any variant it really needs play testing many times and I doubt it ever will, but for those who find the end game, when alliances are settled, and skilful players can see a deadlock, it might just liven up the game and give a little momentum to those nations in the ascendancy, against a confederacy of smaller nations. I would be interested to hear of people's views on this variant.

I imagine a variant similar to this one has been tried before in some fashion, but offhand I couldn't think of one. How about some of you variant-heads out there?



Diplomacy and Its Real Life Benefits

by Richard Walkerdine

Have you ever thought about how the skills you learn in playing Diplomacy might benefit you in real life? The more you play the game the better you get at negotiating, at getting your rival to do what you want him/her to do to your own benefit (and to an extent to theirs as well) and hopefully without them even realising how much of an advantage it will give you.

In the real world we all have to deal with other people and in many cases (in particular in a work/business situation) try to gain an advantage over them for the benefit of our own position and often for the benefit of our employer. It's just normal business practice and it happens in every industry on the planet.

I started playing Diplomacy in the early 1970s and continued for around twenty years. I don't know how many games I played, both face to face and in a huge number of postal zines, but it must have been well over a hundred. And I did quite well – I don't wish to boast but although I was never at the top of the rankings I was usually fairly near the top. With that much experience you can't fail to pick up a few negotiating skills.

I worked for British Aerospace which at the time were part owners of Airbus. Every few years we would be trying to launch a new aircraft and trying to get the

various governments (British, French, German and Spanish) to lend us some money (which we always repaid including interest – Boeing please note) to help finance the new project. The position I held then was such that it meant I was part of the negotiating team.


I was mainly tasked with putting together financial forecasts of the new project, both from the Airbus perspective and that of the UK Government, to show that it would be of benefit to all concerned. But every once in a while we would get a request from some Government official for more detail about some aspect of the proposal. It often required no more than a short report on the subject matter, but sometimes it needed a meeting in London with the relevant officials.


I was always part of the team at the meeting – and we always got our way. I do not suggest for one moment that it was my negotiating skills that swayed the decision, I am sure the other guys could have done it without me, but I like to think it was of help.


Diplomacy is more than just a game.

This article will self-destruct in ten seconds.


Knives and Daggers - The Diplomacy World Letter Column

 **Richard Walkerdine** – "Richard Walkerdine lives in a universe all his own." Doug, you have never, ever made a more accurate statement...

 **Dr. Walter Buchanan** – Just got my hardcopy, it is great, Doug! And I think quarterly is just fine. I quickly found out every 2 months was too much. Don't burn yourself out. We want you around for a long time!

 **Benjamin Hester** - Thanks to Jim-Bob, Suzanne, and Rick for their insightful and entertaining commentary, and to Doug for hosting the event. My apologies for my (repeated) faux pas regarding the commentary; not sure why the concept of the demo game was so difficult to wrap my head around, but it was.

The commentary was an extremely useful read, and has already shaped how I play the game. The oft-debated "B. style of play" is a thing of the past, largely as a result of this game. I also took away from the experience a few new ideas about large variant strategy, and maybe a few pointers about tactful negotiating as well. The commentators' generous praise of my tactics is very kind - they were also correct in their assessment of my diplomatic weaknesses and excessive stabbing however. One smiles at praise, but learns from criticism, so I thank all three of you for both.

 **Richard Maltz** – You neglected to mention that my article was originally an address delivered to the Army's Twentieth Annual Strategy Conference at the Army war College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania last year; and that the Army's Strategic Studies Institute has requested that it be expanded it into a monograph for publication in their "Advanced Strategic Thought" series. You may also wish to give readers my Army e-mail address: which is richard.maltz@us.army.mil.

World Diplomacy Championship Sydney 2011

by Thorin Munro

With 2011 upon us, and a couple of requests for articles, I've cobbled together a rough Sydney World DipCon status update. Maybe it will motivate you to consider joining us?

Why host WDC Down Under?

First some background for those who came in late. The third World Diplomacy Championship was held in Canberra in 1992 and ten years later, the twelfth was again hosted in Canberra. The Australian hobby has a long history of tournament records, one of the most complete in the world, and in 2011 will celebrate 25 years of organized tournament Diplomacy. The idea for hosting in 2011 was strengthened when New Zealand won the right to host the 2011 World Rugby Championship, which was expected to help attract rugby/diplomacy fans. This time, the 21st Diplomacy Championship will be hosted in Sydney from October 1st to 3rd. The dates selected coincide with the midpoint of the RWC, allowing fans to either arrive early for the preliminary games or stay later for the finals series.

Ultimately by hosting WDC in Sydney we're aiming to invigorate the local hobby. Attract many retired or social players back to the field. And celebrate the game we all enjoy with our International friends, in an Australian beachside setting. Think of it as a "three-day Diplomacy party in Australia". Book your flights now!

State of the Down Under hobby?

The 80's and 90's were the golden era for FTF Diplomacy Down Under. Once the internet arrived and youngsters found their gaming fix online, the numbers at FTF events declined. Also the pace of life, family and work commitments have impacted participation. Given all that, the hobby has remained organized through the Diplomacy Association of Australia and New Zealand (DAANZ), maintained a calendar of tournaments spanning Sydney, Melbourne, Auckland and Brisbane and managed to attract some 60+ players to at least one tournament each year. In 2009 we were proud to send Australian Champion, Andrew Goff to the World Championships in Ohio, where he secured the title with three solo's from four games. The Down Under style of play tends to focus on supply centre accumulation. With the relatively small pool of players, the many games over years with familiar players can form into long 'conversations' about the game, alliances, battles and competition.

WDC website for information and registration?

The DAANZ is fortunate to have the services of an accomplished web administrator, Will Black. He's maintained the DAANZ site for many years and has created space for information and player registration. You can see the results of his hard work at:

<http://www.daanz.org/wdc2011/index.php>.

Currently there are 50 players already registered as either confirmed or possible. At this stage there is no formal registration required, simply three fields, which all helps to build momentum for the event. So far seven previous World Champions have confirmed they will attend - Yann Clouet (from France, won in 2004); Andrew Goff (Australia 2009); Cyrille Sevin (France 1997 & 2001); Rob Stephenson (Australia 2002); Steven Gould (Australia 1992); and Vincent Carry (France 2003). All registered players will receive email updates as the event nears, and the information page will indicate Accommodation and Tournament details in the not too distant future.

Where is WDC, how do I get there and where can I stay?

Locating the venue was one of the first things I needed to do after the hosting bid was accepted. The criteria were - Sydney beachside, able to host 100+ players in a single room, good transport, nearby accommodation options, bars, cafes, restaurants, entertainment. Early on I'd had in mind the Coogee Beach Hotel, having attended corporate functions there in the past. On enquiry, their function centre was available over the period we needed and the quality and location met all requirements. You can read more about the venue in "Fungus Down Under volume 1" which is at the website.

International travelers to WDC will fly into Sydney and be best advised to take a taxi to their accommodation at Coogee. It's a short, 8km trip and should cost less than \$30AUD (AUD is almost at parity with the USD these days, thanks to all the coal and iron ore we sell to China). In Coogee you can choose from backpacker to 4+ star accommodation. We'll post a list of recommended places to stay on the website. Visitors will need to book their own accommodation.

What to expect at the Tournament?

You'll be welcome to the tournament as you register to play. The function room will hold the entire contingent with space for 15 tables. The room has a massive private balcony looking out over the beer garden and bistro to the sparkling Pacific Ocean off Coogee Beach. Coogee beach is literally across the road from the

Euro DipCon in Paris

by Fabian Straub

Winning as a German in the Netherlands can only be topped by winning in Paris! I had attended World Dip Con, and was now looking forward to Euro DipCon in France's capital. Between the tournaments I spent a few days with my wife and our lovely daughter in Scheveningen in the Netherlands. I needed this time to reflect on what happened to me at World DipCon. I think improving your learning curve is one of the most important things you can do to improve as a player. You have to be honest to yourself about your performance, and appreciate other players' good moves, even if they have been against you. Despite this, I had to deal with the fact that I just barely missed winning the WDC Championship so close; but a miss is as good as a mile! It is probably a natural reflex to ask yourself over and over why you didn't do that or do this. This was especially true in my case, because I could think about only one turn: Fall 1908 on the WDC Final Board. I knew it was more or less bad luck - I had done everything right except for the last move! And I know from experience that this can eat you up inside if you don't face it and get past it. It's probably human nature asking yourself again and again what you did wrong, and why. Thank God I have my wonderful wife Astrid, who knows how to soothe my soul.



The happy couple at their wedding, August 29th 2009, about one year before this WDC and EDC.

Leaving the Netherlands, I arrived in northern Paris by train. The hotel Xavier Blanchot had picked was located in St. Germain and was very close to the station (a taxi cost about 15 EUR). By the way, I would like to say a big thank you to Xavier for doing so much for the hobby! If you stayed in this hotel for playing Diplomacy, you only paid half of the normal rate. This price is unbeatable in Paris for this downtown location (Notre Dame and The Louvre are just a 10 minute walk away). Furthermore,

Xavier sponsored the gifts for the winners: good French wine or even champagne. "Unfortunately" he is also a very flexible and successful player, but greedy ☺ like a gentleman thief (from now on I am going to call him Arsene Lupin - ask Peter McNamara if you need an explanation)!



This time the event took place in a public school, about 20 minutes away from the hotel. Thank you Emmanuel Du Pontavice (Manu) for providing "your" school as the stage for our European Diplomacy Championship! Manu is really a good host, coming in second at EDC and "offering" the 1st place to a Non-French participant. I have to admit that Manu is one of my favorite players in France, even if we have different playing styles. Hopefully most of you will know what I mean, if I say that you sometimes meet a player and chemistry between you is just great, and together you can rock the board. This is the feeling I share with Emmanuel.

Enough of celebrating the community! On Friday, Yann Clouet (WDC 2004 Champion and Mr. Diplomat) organized a get-together. Due to some language problems, some thought this was meant to be a big party ☺. I met Andre Ilievics there, and we shared a room as we had at WDC. Maybe next year I should "sell" my room to the guy who wants to be the next European Champion? Saturday morning we went out for breakfast together with Moritz am Ende, and met Stefan Unger who had just arrived. Since punctuality is a typical German virtue, we arrived in time and almost first at the tournament, but we had to wait until school was over before the gaming could begin ☺.

The first round was special, because the round was played up to game year 1920 if necessary (usually we play up to 1908 in Europe), but draws were allowed. This meant that solos could happen much more often as they usually did, and if you stab someone the other side has enough time to fight back sufficiently. Furthermore, this kind of game can last for a long time, and I prefer not to spend all my energy playing very long games. You

always feel it the next day!

We had around 60 players, and half of them were French. Being native is an advantage for winning EDC, as you can easily see for the previous 3 EDC's (see <http://www.europdip.eu>). This should be a good reason for you guys from London, Britain, Scotland, Wales or Ireland (and whoever else I have forgotten) to attend the EDC 2011 in the UK!

Most of the foreign players had also participated at WDC the week before, so consequently the level of play at EDC was very high. I met my favorite player from New Zealand, who looks like a wrestling coach, Grant Steel; I met him at WDC and liked him right away, not the least because of his name! I also found out that he was the best player in New Zealand according to international FtF rankings (far ahead of mine). In Paris we were hanging out a lot together, and we talked about everything but Diplomacy (usually a good sign for good dialogues). Some Americans had also joined the tournament, like the entertaining Mark Zoffel, and Nathan Barnes the actor, and we all had a lot fun.

1st Round

With only 5 Germans participating in this tournament there was a snowball's chance in hell of getting on my board. But my nickname wouldn't be Felix (Latin for the "lucky one") if I hadn't the luck to meet Ulrich Degwitz who was playing France to my Germany. This is one of my favorite alliances, and in this case the ease of communication forced the alliance choices. England, Austria and Turkey (Vicente Carry, WDC Champion 2003) were French players - but the other players and I understood only Vincent. The Czar was Grant Steel, our first game together, and Italy was represented by Peter McNamara. I started with Ulrich and gave him Belgium to get him to ally (he feared a stab, but I think I never did stab him....) and "offered" Sweden to Russia. This was to get Russia to join me in an attack on England later, where we would get Norway for him and cede Sweden to myself. Italy (together with Russia) was taking care of the East, so I was sure that Vincent would have problems getting out into the Med (if he did, even I wouldn't have been able to stop him☺!). After a while the English "question" was solved, meaning the next decision had to be made soon: whether to attack France or Italy. I felt I needed Russia as a friend to keep Italy under control (both are from the "new continent"). I offered Italy an alliance against France if he would take a center from Austria (forcing him to stab). Unfortunately he didn't, so instead Grant and I decided to go with France and against Italy. Italy had no build and therefore was too weak to fight France effectively. After this was set up it worked like a machine. Some players blamed me for this kind of style, because it is boring for the other players. But once again, if you want to play on the top board you have to adjust your style to the scoring system. In this case it meant "centers mean everything," so a second place with 11 centers would still be a good

result. Accidentally I won with 12 centers; France and Russia finished with 11 each, because Austria refused to survive with one centre. Playing Germany requires a lot of diplomatic balance, because you are in the middle of things and can be squeezed easily. That's why a lot of security bounces were necessary (in the end 5 or 6 of my units were just bouncing). So here is one hint for you: as Germany you need 2 centers more than the other 2 countries around you.

As usual we had a hobby meeting (going together for dinner and afterwards some drinks), and finally ended up back at the hotel. 10 days of playing Diplomacy at a tournament level can be very challenging and demanding, so I went to bed quite early.

2nd Round

Two players had solo victories the day before, so I took the bait because I had played in a boring way. I needed a very good result which meant lots of centers and a good lead over the other players. Luckily, I got France and I had 3 French players as neighbors. Germany was Jeremie Lafrancois who runs stabberfou.org. Romain Gagnier was England; I'd met him previously at the French NDC in Paris. The third was Lei Saarleien playing Italy, who knows a lot about openings. First, I tried to get Germany as my ally in order to play my beloved F&G alliance. Unfortunately, Jeremie - who is playing too much the electronic mail Diplomacy - preferred to wait and see. Romain Gagnier (playing England) told me that if I opened to Bur, he would work with me against Germany, him building fleets and me armies. So I tried to get Italy in the same boat, and offered Mun to him if he was willing to go to Tyr. Because I had talked to Jeremy first, I came back to him 2 minutes before deadline and told him I was moving to Bur and he would probably be my primary target (sometimes it's good to be honest). He became nervous, of course, and I was pretty sure Italy would move to Tyr and would not bounce there. Nathan Barnes represented Austria, who is a very friendly player trying to pretend that he is not ☺, while Christophe Hoareau, a French mate, was playing Russia. Dave Simpson, my new friend from UK, was the Sultan.

Everything worked out very well. Jeremie is a survivor and I think his strength is his tactics. He offered me his units as "Fremdenlegion", but I refused, since I thought it was too early (you have to break Germany into 3 or 2 centers, then you can switch). I was taking my fleets into Mid and Spa(sc), so I could go to Italy and England as well. Of course both became very nervous, so I had to make a decision soon, otherwise England and Italy would have decided for me ☺. So I stabbed England in a very damaging way, just then his fleets had gone completely against Russia. I could convoy an army to the island to demoralize England. Due to my greed, the only partner left was Germany, and on top of things I took Mun from Italy - you see, I still have to learn a lot when it comes to discipline and modesty. Jeremie was

suggesting good moves to help me and let him survive (I promised him this in exchange). This was an advantage for me, because I let him do all the calculating stuff, which left me a lot of time for negotiations with Italy, Austria and Russia. Fortunately for me, the situation in the East was still not resolved, the nations connected to each other like a child and a mother. Keeping themselves busy they could not stop me, and in Fall 1905 Jeremie had a very good idea how to solve things: we switched centers and I gave him Mun. Mun is of course the weak point, but if the East is attacking me there, at least they are not hurting me directly (I believe the effect of a different nation is he is not viewed as an enemy, even if he supports the "wrong" nation). At the end of 1905 I had 11 centers; Italy, Austria and Russia each had 6 centers, so I could persuade them to vote for a draw. If they would start attacking me, Austria could stab Italy and Russia could stab Austria later. In this case, players prefer to take what they have instead of risking an unbalanced position. If you want to talk about luck in this game, in this case it was the order of picking my partners and changing then. Nathan and I talked about it. He still appreciated my game, but he also knew that it could have been the other way around. You don't know how a player will react after he is broken (either offering you his units, or fighting you until death); in this case I was right.



3rd round

This was the team round...and I discovered there was one team who seemed almost unbeatable (Cyrille Sevin, Yann Clouet, Gwen Maggi and Fabrice Esser). I tried to get the best remaining players to give the favorites a challenge. Sadly, I had to pay once again for my boring style in the first round: if I would get eliminated then I risked missing the top board. If I skipped this round (assuming that we had too many players) I could lock in a good floor on points and this should be enough to get into the final. It turned out we had three players too many (or four too few, depending on how you look at it), so I said I would only skip the round if Yann Clouet skipped, so both teams would be weakened. Of course my team members (Alex Lebedev, Emmanuel Pontavice

and Lei Saarleien) were a little bit disappointed in me, because I founded this team and then I didn't play! This was the first time I didn't play a team round in a tournament, but it was worth it somehow. It is really interesting to watch good games on big tournaments and see people's body language, facial gestures, and stuff like that. I saw Cyrille playing Russia together with Patrick Ganier's Austria – just beautiful sometimes, but he did not stab (he had enough for top board) and his game lost a little bit of attraction. Grant Steel had a tough game playing Turkey. At a decisive point in the game he believed his skills could let him stab for the win. After 4 game years I decided to use the time exploring Paris. Afterwards I heard my team, "Challenge Yann & Gwen Friendship" (because both play in the same team, to avoid playing on the same board) got third, and an English delegation made a surprising second place. Of course the unbeatable French team went unbeaten, making 1st Place at the Team Championship at EDC in Paris – congratulations.



Late that night I met Dan Lester and his American friends Dave Maletzky (who makes advertisements for very fashionable hats), Nathan Barnes, and Mark Zoffel (I think both should try for a career in TV) enjoying some beer together. Dan missed the top board but I am sure he will make it again soon (#2 at WDC 2009...and now I know personally how close it can be). You need some "fortune" to qualify for such things, or to win a tournament. Without any you won't, even if you are skilled like Dan. Even more, Dan is really a likeable, optimistic and humorous player who can stand having other good players next to him. We were talking about different styles of playing Diplomacy between Europeans, North Americans and the new continent AUD/NZD connection. These kind of discussions are often combined with valuation about what is "good" and what is "bad" play. Of course some moves are bad on every continent, but I think you have to adjust your style to the mentality of the country or continent where you are playing. To give away centers to other players

(because somebody else attacks you) is a common way in the U.S. to "defend" against aggressive stabbers. In Europe they consider this kind of playing as poor Diplomacy. This game is about negotiation, and to me this means I have to avoid such situations if I don't want to deal with them. Of course these conversations are also nice tricks to manipulate players into showing "good" Diplomacy ☺. Overall it was a very funny discussion, with a lot of beer.

Top Board EDC– 29th of August 2010, Paris

One week after WDC I played in a top board (#6) again. This is what I would consider as a perfect Diplomacy vacation. It was a close calculation to get into the final, but I also had one ace in the hole, because I knew even the 8th place could have been enough in this case. Not surprisingly, I met 4 French Players in the final: Cyrille Sevin (#1), Emmanuel Du Pontavice (#2), Gregory Gicquaud (#3) and Gwen Maggi (#7). With a solo in the first round, Conrad Woodring (#4) joined us, and because Yann Clouet (#5) did not play the final, Grant Steel (#8) from New Zealand completed our board. This time I knew all players except for Gregory, who was only known by Emmanuel (I had to watch out if they became neighbors). Players I have had difficulties to work within the past were Gwen Maggi as a natural competitor and Conrad Woodring (I think I am just not his type ☺ ... or he doesn't understand my way of playing). I don't fear big names, but of course I had to be diplomatic enough not to get targeted by all the French players.

Additionally, I had to be friendly to the other non-French players to avoid being isolated by them. Usually you play the players and not against the countries, but in this case it was very important for me who would be sitting in which country. Despite my painful experience in the final at WDC, I knew that Italy is still the best choice for me (I am #5 picking, so France or Germany will be taken before I get my chance) - if I get it: defensive and balance of power country, and 8 or 9 centers are enough to win a top board. I hoped to erase all that had happened one week before.

Cyrille was skipping like Emmanuel, and Gregory took Germany. Restarting this procedure Cyrille passed over again and Emmanuel took France hoping to build a strong Germany & France alliance. This was not good at all and one of my nightmares was coming true. I hope I remember right that Conrad took Russia after Cyrille skipping one more time, because he would have preferred England, but maybe he knew what I knew. Lucky for me, Cyrille did not know and he took England (otherwise he would not have picked England), because Russia was already chosen (he plays this country too well). With Cyrille in England I have someone I can count on to fight against Germany and France best, giving me time and peace somehow. I took Italy (again) and some players were surprised, thinking I would try another country instead. But there was still my Dip-Brother Gwen Maggi, choosing Turkey and not Austria (I did not know about his Austria-phobia). This

constellation was not good for me if Gwen and Conrad allied. If they would have built an alliance, well, then bye-bye to my dreams! But there is my friend Grant Steel from New Zealand enjoying the spirit of the game and just being satisfied to be a New Zealander in the European Final – great job Grant! With Grant I could communicate with Conrad, like an interpreter or translator.

In the beginning we formed a kind of A/I/R alliance just for prophylaxis to secure against possible French intrigue. We moved against Gwen - it is quite easy to attack someone who has just won WDC. The West was happy to see Gwen under control, so Cyrille did a great job fighting France and Germany. I made an agreement with Emmanuel not to move into Pie, GoL and Wme so that I could do it "my way" and he could play his game in the West. It turned out that Conrad had a good start as Russia, and I feared that I would not catch up with him. I lost my patience and made a terrible mistake, stabbing Grant in Fall 1902 just to win Turkish favor (who was under hard pressure), and kept growing. Yes, correct - Gwen and I finally found a way treating each other with more respect, even if we started stabbing again a little bit during this game. But I can only apologize to the board for this bad move. This stab was really too early and not worth ruining a good relationship for one or two centers. Grant showed me why he is a champion in New Zealand and demonstrated good tactics, fighting every move back like a machine, with help from Russia and Turkey! I tried everything to persuade Grant to stop. Conrad told me that Grant had finally decided it was over, and Gwen was trying to use this chance to expand (building a second fleet in W 1904). This was finally some luck for me, giving me a chance at a comeback.

I was down to 4 centers and I had already lost one: Venice to Russia in Spring 1905! But France had sent an army to Piedmont to help me get it back and stop Russia. I think Conrad should have won the game, but he wanted too much at the same time and lost control. I remember that I told him (one of the very few moments he allowed me to talk to him) to stop now and not to take Venice, but instead concentrate his units and not grab for everything everywhere. If he would have allowed Grant to recover and take some centers from me, I am sure Conrad would have won. I also had to deal with the fact that I had 3 armies and only one fleet. Gwen made a mistake by building his second fleet, so I could threaten the others with being unable to stop the "dangerous" Gwen if he has two fleets (there was no Austrian fleet alive to help). I persuaded Grant to support me into Greece (a Turkish center) in the Fall so I could build a second fleet. The same Grant Steel was still fighting me in Venice...Diplomacy does sometimes require a very abstract way of macro-strategic thinking ☺. It was also good for me somehow that Conrad was so greedy. He refused to allow Grant to take back his home centers more than one time. Even the most reliable fellow will lose his loyalty and start to help the other side again in

those circumstances.



In 1906 I stabilized my position and also managed to get France to retreat his army from Pied to Mar, arguing that otherwise I could not fight Turkey and Russia together with Austria and Germany. Emmanuel is a gentleman and we both had an eye on our borders, but we did not attack really each other. Some players blamed Emmanuel for being too passive against me. But it is not that easy. If France would have turned against me, he would be risking that England would follow him...and in this case, England was played by Cyrille. In 1907 I was up to 6 centers and I could get another center with the help of Germany, but I refused payback in Fall. So this was a kind of stab on Germany to avoid his growing stronger. I think if I would have done the support for Germany, France would have been trying to attack me, because he could count on effective help from Germany. So, it was very tricky and not obviously viewable for everybody what kinds of "forces" were at work. Some of these forces were dooming Russia to 6 or 5 centers. In the last year it was a close race between me and Emmanuel. We both could get to 8 centers and in this case it would be me who won. But you never know what is happening, because there is much negotiation about who is a worthy champion, whose game was good and so on. Maybe because of my whole performance in both

tournaments, barely missing the WDC crown and topping all boards but one, I was the popular choice. The last year did not have all the surprises that it did at WDC, but in this case I prefer boring moves...especially because I finished with 9 centers, ahead of Emmanuel with 8 and Gregory - who played a great tournament - third with 6 centers.

Final

Yes, I am proud of myself for winning the EDC Championship on my second try. I admit there was some good luck that helping me win. And yes again, life is sometimes unpredictable. On one side you don't win where you should have won, and on the other side you win where other players did better than you. Since starting playing FtF in December 2004, I have met a lot of interesting and friendly people from every corner of the world just by playing Diplomacy, and I still enjoy doing this ☺!

I am not looking for retirement after capturing the title at EDC but – fortunately for my opponents – I'm going to try and slow it down, playing only 2 or 3 tournaments a year due to the fact my wife and I expecting our second child in December. One little hint for how I get into the right mood for top boards: I try to "enjoy" these games, because you will come much closer to the spirit of Diplomacy with a high quality of players. At this stage you need a little good fortune anyway. I adopted this attitude from Frank Oschmiansky; thanks buddy. Finally, I want to say thank you to some players who really influenced my game and tried to teach me when I was starting out: Igor Kurt, Cyrille Sevin, Yann Clouet and Toby Harris. Of course I will give you a good fight when you try to take the title away from me - even it will be in UK (and because Germans never know when it is over ☺)! I want to encourage everyone who enjoys Diplomacy to attend. There is no better way to improve your game than going to (big) tournaments and playing with experienced players. And after a while, it could be you who is trying for the EDC crown!

I also want to thank Xavier Blanchot. He made me feel good after I won the EDC, giving me a big hug and telling me he is happy that faith shared the wins between the best two players of 2010, because only Gwen and I played both top boards. Thanks a lot Xavier, this compliment from a player like you means a lot to me (or you are just a skilled Diplomatic Warlord!). Anyway, like so often in Diplomacy, I can only say: "I agree with you ☺."

My great thanks go to Fabian for his detailed and entertaining accounts of his WDC/EDC adventure! I hope he'll continue to contribute, even if he slows down his ftf travels.

My Life With Ulrika: Part 1 (The Early Years)

by Richard Walkerdine

Look, you've got to believe me here; I really didn't ask for this, it just happened. One of life's strange little twists or turns that changes your life completely and you are never, ever, the same again. In fact you become almost a different person; in my case a very different person. (Oh, and I originally used the word 'funny' instead of 'strange' up there, but it was hardly ever that – well, maybe now and then..). But let me try to begin at the beginning. If I tell you everything you might even feel a bit sorry for me, or at least begin to understand why I am what I am. But hey, do I deserve that? Probably not, but you can be the judge.

I met her in 1976, in MAD POLICY game X (1975FW – yes, there were a lot of games in those days), and we have been together (well, perhaps it would be better to say 'interacted') ever since. She first appeared (written by John Lettice if memory serves) as a press character disguised as my wife (Claire) in the dungeons of the White House, intent on saving Holmes and Watson – although Holmes turned out to be not as we expected and Watson didn't last too long (which was Ulrika's fault actually, but perhaps after all this time we don't really want to dwell on that). It was all a bit bloody though (but I would get used to that later). Birks lost much of his skin (part of which had the map written on it), Lettice, Piggott and myself were constantly arguing about who was actually writing the press and Ulrika's bLassiter was working overtime. In fact at one point she disposed of all of Piggott's frog-masked storm-troopers just as John Lettice broke the first, second and third laws of the press release and destroyed most of time and space (and all in one issue!). We had a temporal black hole and we were in trouble. I didn't know what to do so I poured myself a pint and watched as the doors, windows and my mouth flew open and a huge assortment of humanity and various inhuman abominations poured into the pub. It was a bit like the gates of Mordor opening – dozens of SS soldiers, daleks, traffic wardens, boy scouts, Nazgul – good god, it was the gates of Mordor opening! But then, as I crouched behind the bar for cover, I saw Ulrika slowly moving up the stairs, still firing her bLassiter. It quietened down after that with the daleks gone, the Green Berets failing to call down their air strike and 'X' game finally reaching its end in mid 1977. It had been a close call but at least I had survived. But what of Ulrika? I would not know for some time.

In fact it would be quite some time. I folded the zine at the end of 1977 (although it was not a messy fold, with all games and subscriptions being passed on to new GMs. I was basically just tired.) and it was a full five years later that I decided to start it up again. July 1982 to be exact.



The first game of the re-launched zine was 'AK' (1982DV – still lots of games in those days) and by December of 1982 it had reached Spring 1902. That's when she appeared again (dammit!).

It was of course in a press release, this one datelined 'The Museum of London'.

'When is a simulacrum not a simulacrum?' I subvocalised as I stood within the gates of Newgate Prison and peered into a dank cell at a decaying, legless corpse whose face yet bore sufficient traces of humanity to stir faint, nauseous feelings of semi-recognition.

"How about 'when it is a little sweet?'"

I whirled round. It was Ulrika Meinhof, looking as menacing as ever, and brandishing an energiser gun. "B-b-but I thought you were destroyed with 'X' game in the last incarnation of MAD POLICY!" I stammered.

"Did you now, honey? Well, that was a little bit stupid of you, wasn't it?" she said, advancing in an ominous fashion.

I had re-launched the zine with the sole intention of trying to achieve total Hobby domination – and now here was this psychopathic killer who I thought had perished half a decade before. This could be the end of everything. What was I to do? I decided to play for time.

"Hey, cool it Meinhof. How do you know I'm not a simulacrum?" A shadow of doubt crossed her lovely face so I decided to distract her further. "Who's the guy who bought it? He looks familiar."

Ulrika looked at the legless corpse and brushed away a tear. "That was Duggie."

"Duggie?" I asked.

"Look, liebchen," she replied, "it was the Bader-Meinhof group, right? He flew the planes and I did the blasting. His luck ran out, that's all. I guess he was on the wrong side of the Cosmic Balance back when the very fabric of time was destroyed."

That's when I finally recognised the corpse. Of course, it was Douglas Bader, the legendary British legless flying ace from World War 2! My heart missed a beat, this was getting a lot more complex by the minute.

Then her eyes narrowed and she brushed away another tear. "But I'll make those damned Time Lords pay for it."

Now I knew I was in serious trouble. If Ulrika was intent on eliminating the Time Lords my plan for total Hobby domination was in deadly peril – The Doctor was absolutely essential to my schemes and could not be put at risk. I sat her down and switched on the viewer, slowly going through the chronicle of the warped press from Lettice, the evil machinations of the infamous Piggott, the brave soldiers turned into molluscs and then of course the full ramifications of the collapse of time and space.

"...so you see Ulrika, the forces ranged against you are increasing by the minute. I can't have you turning up in press releases like this just when you feel like it. It's too dangerous."

She stared at the viewer for what seemed like an age, not moving. When she finally turned to me there were more tears in her eyes. "B...but, I don't care about the danger to me. I just wanted to protect you. Now that Duggie's gone you're all I've got left." With a cry she fell into my arms, sobbing uncontrollably.

I held her tightly as she buried her face in my neck, her tears wetting my collar as she pressed her warm soft body against me. I walked her over to the couch and we lay down. Then I paused. What was happening here? This woman was a psychopathic killer – had the whole fabric of time and space been destroyed just for it to end like this?

With a mental shrug I dismissed the thought and began unbuttoning her shirt...

I awoke from a deep sleep and yawned. I glanced across at the still sleeping form of Ulrika and smiled as I recalled the events of the previous night. She looked so peaceful, lying there beside me, it almost seemed a pity to wake her. Still, the plan for total hobby domination must go ahead...

We made our way to my main control room, hidden in an asteroid near Stargate Magellan. It was there that I kept my huge bank of computers, quietly humming away as they gathered the statistics of all the Diplomacy games

in the galaxy. We walked across to check the latest results, but as we did so we were suddenly plunged into darkness and a high-pitched whine filled the air. I recognised the sound immediately and shouted to Ulrika to take cover. As I dived to the floor I heard a massive explosion and felt myself being flung across the room...

I came to amid a pile of debris. The control panel was a shattered ruin and part of one wall had collapsed. I looked around for Ulrika and saw her body lying next to the smoking ruin of one of the computers. With a despairing cry I rushed to her side. But as I turned her body over my cry of despair became a gasp of horror, for where her head had been was now a fused mass of wires and silicon chips. She was an android! A simulacrum! I rose to my feet, my mind a turmoil of conflicting emotions, and staggered to the escape hatch. Clearly, there was nothing to keep me there now. I somehow managed to crawl into an escape pod and press the firing button before I collapsed, my last thoughts before I lost consciousness being where was the real Ulrika Meinhof?

Of course the story of my escape pod being caught by the massive black hole at the centre of Stargate Magellan has been well documented (see DW110) so there is no need to repeat it here. But I must admit I was fortunate indeed to be rescued from a horrible fate by the auburn haired beauty in the tight fitting pink trouser suit. I will always be grateful to Emma Peel. (Thanks again, Emma, and I'm glad you finally found Steed).



But what of Ulrika (the human one)? Did she even exist? I began to have my doubts, and not least when I returned from vacation after issuing MAD POLICY 84 to see a footnote on the front page suggesting that even I might be a simulacrum! How could this be? Were there any real people in the One True Hobby? I began to

wonder. (And at another time I would discover that there were actually very, very few – about six in fact, if memory serves. But that really is a story for another time.)

But it got worse. Having been rescued by Emma from the singularity I finally found Ulrika again – but something was wrong! Everything around me seemed to have subtly changed. Well, perhaps not so subtly. Ulrika still looked as menacing as ever, still armed (unfortunately) with some sort of wicked looking construction of steel and glass and a very sharp looking sword, although she did seem a little scratched and battle weary, but Battersea Power Station had been transformed into Florence Cathedral and the bodies of Piggott's henchmen had mutated into some kind of prehistoric mollusc. (Mollusc? That reminded me of something, but I couldn't quite remember what). I looked at her closely. Could the soft, feminine and utterly ruthless psychopath that had been Ulrika Meinhof still lurk beneath that jump suit? A shadow fell across me and I spun round in time to see her sword fell a passing

pterodactyl. 'At least we know where we stand,' I thought, and decided I needed a drink.

But when I finally staggered out of the pub the situation got even worse. A high pitched screeching noise filled the air and a blue police box materialised in front of me. It was the Tardis! Had The Doctor (or even Emma) come to my rescue? But alas the answer was no. For the creature that emerged was the misshapened form of the evil Piggott! Now I knew I was in deep trouble, and Ulrika was nowhere to be seen. He smirked (he did that a lot) and pointed his needle gun at me. "All right Walkerdine, get inside. This time your plans of hobby domination are finally ended."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Richard Walkerdine has been a tremendous addition to Diplomacy World since I blackmailed bugged him into contributing!

Ask the GM

An Advice Column for Diplomacy World

Dear GM:

I like playing the corner powers, England and Turkey—what are your favorite powers to play in Diplomacy?

Likes the Witches

Dear Likes:

The GM doesn't have a particular power that he enjoys playing, although, since he rarely uses a preference list, he often ends up playing Austria or Italy.

If the GM had to pick a favorite power it would be Italy since it can affect both the East and West and generally has the lowest expectations of any of the major powers. The GM prefers to be the underdog and over looked by the other powers as he finds it is easier to disrupt the board when one is ignored.

Your Pal,
The GM

Dear GM:

What is the best way to win a gunboat game?

Gunboat Admiral

Dear Gunboat:

The best way to win at gunboat is to grab all the dots you can as quickly as you can. Ignore those people who tell you to play a nuanced game—the best way to win is to get to your 18 centers as quickly as possible. Gunboat is Darwinian Diplomacy at its finest: survival of the fittest.

Your Pal,
The GM

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

The North American Diplomacy Federation
Would like to congratulate all those who qualified for the
2011 Masters Invitational Tournament:



Graham Woodring	Condy Creek	Peter Yeargin
Colin Davis	Andy Hull	Doug Moore
Roland Cooke	Brian Johnson	Tom Kobrin
Christian Pedone	Chris Brand	Chris Martin
Chris Campbell	Manus Hand	Andy Bartalone
Cyrille Sevin	Joshua Shank	Ed Prem
Andrew Goff	Steve Cooley	Frank Jones
Dan Lester	Robert Rousse	Mike Binder
Conrad Woodring	Charles Steinhardt	Chris Mann
Christian Macdonald	Jon Saul	Seth Vaughn
Carl Ellis	Eric Mead	Dirk Knemeyer
Luke Dwyer	Adam Silverman	Dave Maletsky
Robert Holt	David Burgess	Chris Glassburn
Amanda Mclean-Thompson	Jim Burgess	Nick Rohn
Richard Maltz	Colden Rouleau	Nate Cockerill
Brian Ecton	Christopher M. Davis	Robert Zahn
Todd Craig	Thom Comstock	Kristin Genchi
Edwin Turnage	Andrew Bartlein	Jason O'donnell
Paul Pignotti	Grant Smith	Sam Williams
Mike Morrison	Mike French	Merle Robinson
Don Glass	Don Williams	
Nathan Barnes	Daniel Byars	

Diplomacy World Demo Game

“Rotary Phones and 8-Track Tapes” – 2010B

The Players:

Austria: Steve Cooley

England: Bill Quinn

France: Buz Eddy until *after* Spring 1903. David Hood takes over after that.

Germany: Mark Fassio

Italy: Melinda Holley

Russia: Don Williams

Turkey: Vince Lutterbie

The Commentators:

Jim Burgess (**BOLD**)

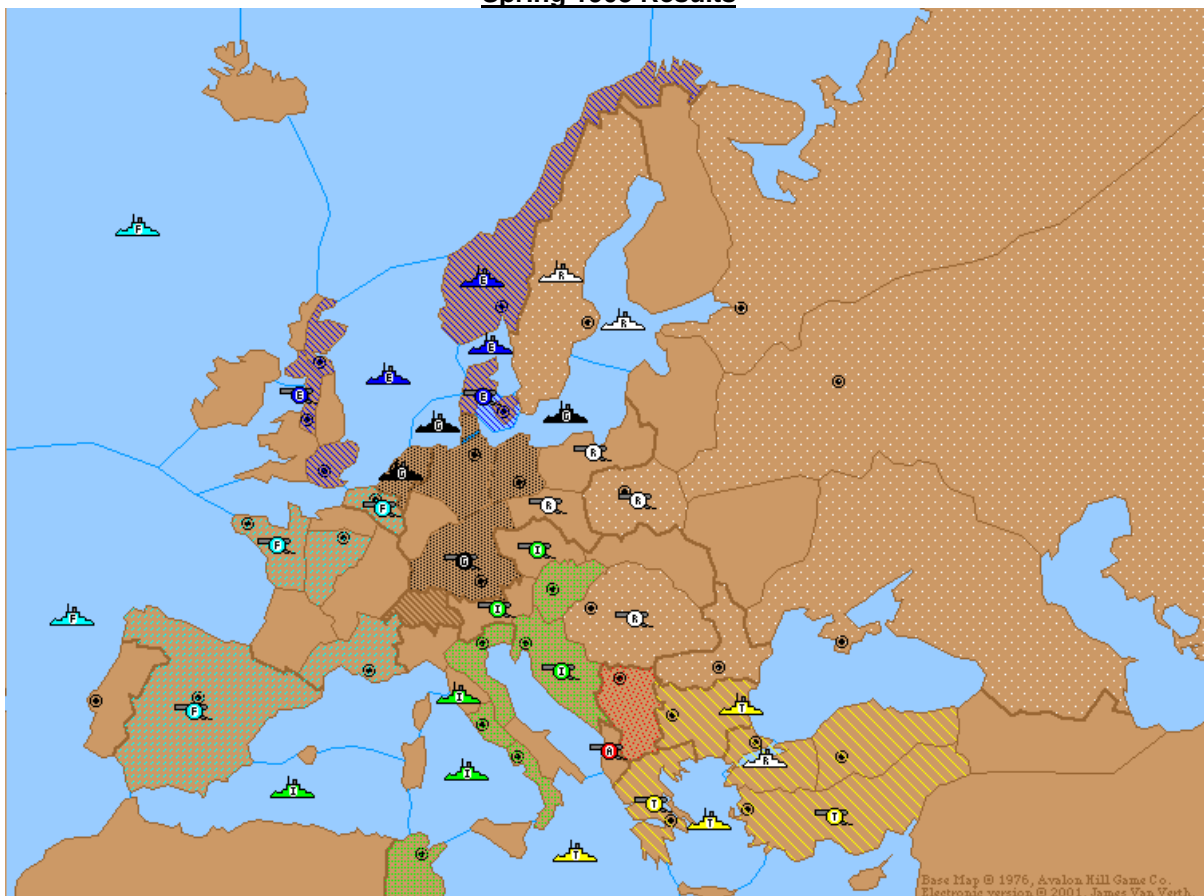
Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

The GM:

Douglas Kent

Spring 1903 Results



To quote Gene Wilder in *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*, “The suspense is killing me. I hope it lasts.”

Austria: A Albania - Serbia (*Bounce*).

England: A Denmark - Kiel (*Bounce*), F English Channel - North Sea, A Liverpool Hold, F North Sea – Norway, F Skagerrak Supports F English Channel - North Sea.

France: A Belgium - Holland (*Fails*), A Brest Hold, A Gascony – Spain, F North Atlantic Ocean Supports F Spain(sc) - Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F Spain(sc) - Mid-Atlantic Ocean.

Germany: F Baltic Sea - Kiel (*Bounce*), F Helgoland Bight - North Sea (*Fails*), F Holland Supports F Helgoland Bight - North Sea (*Cut*), A Munich - Kiel (*Bounce*).

Italy: F Ionian Sea - Tyrrhenian Sea, F Rome – Tuscany, A Trieste Supports A Tyrolia, A Tyrolia Supports A Vienna – Bohemia, A Vienna – Bohemia, F Western Mediterranean - Mid-Atlantic Ocean (*Fails*).

Russia: F Black Sea – Constantinople, A Budapest - Serbia (*Bounce*), A Galicia – Silesia, A Livonia – Prussia, F St Petersburg(sc) - Gulf of Bothnia, F Sweden Supports F St Petersburg(sc) – Gulf of Bothnia, A Warsaw Supports A Livonia - Prussia.

Turkey: F Aegean Sea - Ionian Sea, F Bulgaria(ec) Hold, F Constantinople - Aegean Sea, A Greece Hold, A Smyrna Hold.

PRESS

CARSON, CALIFORNIA: The old magician and the young boy walked slowly down the tunnel beneath the foundations of the LA Galaxy stadium. Merlin's staff provided all the illumination needed to avoid the rocks and stones, and occasional puddles of murky water that covered the floor. They walked slowly but steadily, descending ever deeper into the bowels of the Earth.

"Merlin," asked Brooklyn, holding the old man's hand even tighter, "what are those little twinkly lights on the walls?"

He smiled. "They are pieces of quartz Brooklyn. Little bits of crystal embedded in the rock and reflecting the light from my staff. Nothing to worry about."

"Oh, right," replied the boy as he loosened his grip on the magician's hand and looked more closely at the walls of the tunnel. "We've done that at school too, but this is sure way neater than just silly lumps of rock on my desk in class."

Merlin laughed, and tousled the boy's hair again. "I like you Brooklyn, you are bright, observant and full of life. We are going to get on well, and you may find some more interesting things as we descend further."

The young boy looked up at him and grinned. "Is that the destiny thing again?"

The old magician stopped and looked down at his young companion, his eyes twinkling in the light from his staff. "It may well be Brooklyn, it may well be," he whispered. "Come, a little further and I think the tunnel ends."

They continued their journey for just a few more minutes and then the tunnel opened into a huge cavern, too large for Merlin's staff to illuminate fully. They both stopped and looked around them, staring in awe at the massive stalactites and stalagmites that filled much of the caverns interior.

"Oh Brooklyn," murmured Merlin, "this place is old. This place is very old." He took a deep breath.

"Yes," he added, "you can smell its age in the very air we breathe."

Brooklyn looked at the vast cavern with eyes wide with wonder. "Wow Merlin," he gasped, "it's absolutely huge." Then he frowned and looked up at the old man. "But Merlin," he asked, "which way do we go?"

The old magician looked down at his young companion and smiled. "I have no idea at the moment," he replied.

"But if you would step back a bit I will try to discover the path."

"Wow, more magic?" asked the boy as he took a few paces back.

Merlin just raised an eyebrow. Then he marked a circle in the sandy soil of the cavern and stepped inside it. He raised his staff in both hands above his head, looked out into the depths of the cavern and slowly began speaking in a language totally unknown to Brooklyn. "Anál nathrach, an aimsir fháistineach, claiomh dar data roinn bhinse an Ri."

Brooklyn took another step back. "Was that a spell Merlin?" he whispered.

"Only a small one," replied the old man. Then he took the boy's hand again and pointed with his staff. "Come, we go this way."

The two companions made their way slowly through the vast cavern.

(Somewhere on a foggy mountaintop) - The door to the shack was flung open hard enough to bounce against the outer wall. The woman shaded her eyes with her hand and stumbled to the front steps. With a groan she sat down on the porch and held a bottle close to her chest. "Freaking sun," she irritably muttered. "All I wanted was to go to town, get some grub, hit the casino, have a little fun..." She heard the chattering chipmunk and sneered in his direction. "Food's gone, lost at the casino, and came back with this sinus infection."

She coughed for several seconds then slowly opened the bottle. "Freakin' cities with their freakin' air pollution!" She eyed the open bottle of Jack Daniels then regretfully shook her head. "Waste of good liquor," she muttered.

She took a large swallow then threw her head back and gargled. She then spat a stream of Cap'n Jack across the front yard. Squinting in the sunlight, she watched as the chipmunk ran across the yard and dived nose-first into the liquor puddled on the ground. "Huh," she grunted. "Free entertainment."

She started to repeat the process when she heard a car turn off the road and onto the gravel driveway. Spotting the police car, she sighed. "Of course." When the car stopped and the pot-bellied Sheriff exited the car, she raised the bottle in greeting. "Mornin' Sheriff Stuck."

"That's Kluck! With a 'K'!"

"Yeah, whatever."

Sheriff Kluck suspiciously looked at the bottle in the woman's hand. "You're not planning on driving, are you?"

"Nope. This is only for medicinal purposes. Got a sore throat," the woman explained. "I don't actually ever drink this stuff."

"Good for you."

"No, I prefer a Chateau Rothschild '67," the woman continued with a nod. "So what brings you out my way, Sheriff?"

"Came by a few days ago. You weren't here. Mind tellin' me where you were?"

"Went into the big city," the woman explained. "I do it couple of times a year. Makes me appreciate what I got here."

Kluck glanced around at the wheel less Ford truck, the non-working satellite dish, and the rickety shack. "Uh-huh. Anybody able to verify your whereabouts?"

The woman absently rubbed her throat. "Yeah, a Captain Banks in the Major Crimes department of the police force. Don't have his number on me, though. You can probably find it pretty easily though."

"Why would a Captain Banks in the Major Crimes department be able to verify your whereabouts?" Kluck demanded.

The woman shrugged. "He can explain it a lot better than me. And you can read the official reports. All I can say, because of possible pending litigation, is that it involved an Elvis impersonator, a ceiling fan, a rubber chicken, a nail gun, and orange marmalade." She watched as Kluck's mouth dropped opened. "And that the rumors you'll undoubtedly be told are just that...rumors." She stood and waved her hand in farewell. "I'm heading back to bed now. Have a nice day."

Muttering under his breath, Kluck stomped back towards his police car. "Rumors, huh? I'll bet..."

As the woman watched him drive away, she tapped the bottle of Jack Daniels with one fingers. "Rumors? Huh...yeah, Rhiannon." Smiling she closed the door and sang, "Rhiannon rings like a bell through the night and wouldn't you love to love her?"

Outside, Duke raised his head and howled in pain.

(Ger to Eng): You know the scene in the original STAR WARS episode – the one where Obi-Wan fights Darth Vader on the Death Star and then simply raises his light saber to allow himself to be vaporized and give Luke & Co time to escape? In about three turns I'm going to be Obi-Gone from this game. And when that happens, "Don" Vader (Williams breathes like that in real life, too) is going to jam *his* light saber up your backside to see if the light comes out through your nose....And his Sith minion, Vince Maul is going to do to Melinda now that R/T snookered all of you and are heading west. Have fun without the fence you tore down.

(Ger to Aus): Steve, are you still there? Bet you outlive me! Bet you don't care, either.

(Ger to Fra): You deserved a better neighbor than me, Buz...I will inadvertently drag you into the abyss with me. Very sorry.

(Ger to Board): Thanks, all, for zero letters since late July. I've been able to catch up on my knitting in the interim, and that's really helped a lot.

Carnac the Magnificent to Moscow: Fleet Black Sea, Army Armenia, and Army Bulgaria.

Carnac Reveals the Truth: Where will there be Turkish units after the Spring?

France: I repeat I'm an old "used to be". But I can fill up your blank space with reprints of my old material from Kathy's Korner if you want corruption.

You might recall that I appeared there as Gladys. Kathy's observation was that "Buz already has a nickname. What he needs is a real name like Gladys."

From Kathy's Korner 176 December 1991

Gladys sat at her massive oak desk. The beautiful slender blonde woman glanced at the corner of the large office and smiled. The large soft bed was perfectly made and the mirrors on the wall and ceiling were perfectly positioned. There was indeed a Santa Claus. Gladys has become the owner of the Seattle Mariner baseball team.

Gladys touched the button on her intercom. "Send in the first one" she said trying to sound officious.

The big red-headed Irishman walked slowly into the office, smiling brightly. His eyes brightened at the sight of the gorgeous new owner and then softened in adoration. "Hello, I'm Pete O'Brien" he said.

Gladys stood up. She was wearing a wool skirt and a neat white blouse. At first glance she appeared to be professionally dressed, but these were her only two pieces of clothing.

"I'm told" smiled Gladys "you have a big bat, I want to find out if you know how to use it." She turned and walked slowly toward the bed. The absence of shoes stockings and bra were immediately apparent, and the jiggle of her lightly enclosed bottom suggested a lack of panties as well.

Pete watched the vision of feminine loveliness float lightly toward the bed, then lifted his sagging jaw with his thumb. He toward the bed dropping a trail of clothes behind him.

By the time Pete arrived at the bed Gladys was naked and smiling. She looked at the hulk of a man who still had his pants on. "I don't like high flies" said Gladys, high flies are no good.

The big first baseman smiled. He wanted desperately to please the new owner. He waited while she checked out his equipment. "Your bat is plenty big and plenty hard" she said, and she slid into the big man's arms and rested her head gently on his shoulder.. She looked up at him and smiled. Their lips met wetly and warmly. "Alright" she whispered, "batting practice." Gladys pulled back the covers.

The large red-head slid his arms under Gladys and laid her on the bed. He snuggled his massive body beside her. "The first thing they teach us about batting" said Pete, "is that we always have to pay attention to what's going on on the mound. He traced his fingers around the hard nipple lightly.

Gladys closed her eyes and let the flood of sensation engulf her. She let her fingers play in the man's curly hair and across his broad back. She felt the kiss of his lips on her neck, and the shift of the heavy weight as it settled on top of her. She heard the man's whisper. "We have to be careful of our position in the box" he said quietly, "If we are too high in the box the ball comes to quickly.

"Not good", said Gladys rolling her body against his.

He Brushed her cheek with his lips. "So we have to start out low in the box, and try for a hard line drive to center, he continued. Pete O'Brien entered the box and took a few smooth practice swings.

Gladys thrust upward to meet him. "Rhythm and timing is everything" He said, letting his hands slide down her writhing body. "A ground ball can be very good if it's in the right place."

Gladys twisted against the hard man and felt the volcano explode inside her and the violent hot lava course through her body. "And the" panted the big man, we move high in the box and drive the ball as hard as we can.

Gladys ripped into his hard back with her fingers as the hard bat drove violently. The consuming fire in her body began to subside and the warmth glow relaxed her. Pete O'Brien rolled off the beautiful woman and took her in his arms. "Good at bat" smiled Gladys.

One by one Gladys interviewed the rest of the team, and most of them showed why they were worth outrageous amounts of money they receive. Edgar Martinez delivered a double and Ken Griffey Jr. used his magnificent young body for a grand slam.

After a day of rest Gladys began with the pitching staff. Eric Hansen enter the office. What's your claim to fame? she asked.

"The curve!" he said looking at the beautiful woman with obvious desire.

Gladys knitted her brow and tilted her head

"They call my weapon "Big Charlie" said Eric cupping his hands sideways as a large "C".

Gladys soon learned that neither the size nor the shape were misrepresented. And the tall man knew how to use his tool.

The next man into Gladys office was the biggest man in baseball, Randy Johnson. Gladys looked up and up at the huge frame before her. "You're specialty?

"Fastball!" said the surly giant.

Gladys face clouded with disappointment.

"But" he continued, "it's the hardest fastball in baseball there is, and I'm always good for seven or eight innings."

He was better than his word and showed that when called upon he could go extra innings with great effectiveness.

Gladys worked through the pitching staff until she came to the final name. "Mike Schooler" said the hard looking man, "and I'm a reliever."

Gladys spread her palms.

Hansen and Johnson can do a good job but then they need four or five days rest. I can give you the relief you need with one inning maybe two , if necessary, every day.

A little later Gladys lay smiling in Mike's arms. "'I'm glad there's a Santa clause" she said quietly.

"Who really cares" said the pitcher. He only comes once a year and then down a chimney."

Albania-Berlin: It's funny. When I first saw you open to Tyl, I wondered if you might take a shot at Vienna. I dismissed it. I was certain it would lead to disaster for both of us. I was wrong . . . to dismiss it.

Capitol of Serbia-Constantinople: thanks for not eliminating me. No, really, I appreciate it.

Albania-GM: Isn't there going to be a suspension of my writing for DW on the basis of this game? If not, there ought to be.

GM – Albania: No. As you only have one unit, as punishment you must write multiple articles every issue.

Spring 1903 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

Well, this is certainly an interesting move!

We've got Russia moving through Turkey, who's moving through the Ionian to border Italy, who is moving West against France (or past France?), who is setting up a convoy to England while attacking Germany, while Germany is trying to take the North Sea and while England is moving into Skag (to hit Russia??)

That's a lot!!

As a general rule, the Silver Age 1980's Postal Diplomacy players (who are represented here) were less tied up with where the units were than who was talking to whom about what. What you wanted to do was to make a difference. There could be "big trust moves" and "big stab moves" and the former sometimes set up the latter. As a result, what Rick is identifying as interesting is more or less business as usual for the players in this game.

Well, let's start with the East. The fleet movements (Bla - Con - Aeg - Ion - Tys) make it clear that Turkey, Russia, and Italy are all coordinating orders. So at least for the time being we have an Eastern Triple, though it is an unusual one. (A/I/R and A/R/T are more common). If this is real, we should see a lot of SCs falling their way - Munich, Serbia, and perhaps Berlin right away.

True, and that is precisely what they have in mind. What they also have in mind is that Steve is expressly being allowed to stay in the game (Vince wasn't doing anything with A Greece, and could have supported one or the other in there, Don to put Steve out). The idea of huge triples, or even huge quadruples, were quite common. They didn't stay together necessarily for all that long though, so this one may not last too long either.

Or it could turn into an I/R. right away.

It's hard for me to see a justification for Russian F Con if there's really a triple. France only has two fleets; if three Italian fleets don't suffice, surely the extra Turkish fleets will be enough! Well of course I'm being disingenuous here. Somebody is eventually going to stab somebody.

Precisely.

I am going to assume that Don is writing the "Carson, California" press and that Melinda is writing the "foggy mountaintop" press. I know I shouldn't conclude that a female narrator doesn't imply a female author, but that's my guess.

Yeah, that first one might be right, but I'm pretty sure Faz is writing the "foggy mountaintop" press.

Mark, Steve, and Faz have all identified the press that _they_ wrote.

Right, the OTHER press they wrote.

Many of the Fall moves should be easy to predict. Melinda will take Munich and Don will take Berlin (probably) and we'll see a fleet in GoL.

I think that is all correct as well.

The French cannot lose any SCs, but they shouldn't be able to gain any, either. Well, except for Portugal. And he should take that. Unless he forgets again.

Going back to old Gladys press illustrates that Buz really is living in a previous decade.

England could probably force Sweden, though he could lose the North Sea if he tries.

Germany could try for the North Sea again, or try to hold onto Berlin and Kiel and Holland. Holding onto Munich would be an amazing feat.

I don't think Faz seems to care all that much if he does. I'll be surprised if he is doing much of anything but trying to get everyone else not to hamstring his attack on England.

If E/F/G actually negotiate a bit here, their collected position isn't terrible. It's bad, but not terrible. I hope they put up some kind of defense.

Rick is correct that a Western Triple SHOULD form to oppose the Eastern Triple, but will it? I doubt it.

Here are some more specifics on what each power is up to:

1) Austria: Steve is in "trying to survive" moving to his center mode. I doubt Steve is that engaged in the Diplomacy otherwise. We'll see how long Don and Vince (and maybe Melinda) let him survive. I would expect they do this for a long time, and WHEN the stab in the east happens, people will try to engage Steve's unit and Steve will get to decide whom to help.

2) England: If Bill would just make up with Faz, they would be able to put the hurt on Don in Scandinavia, but I just don't see it happening. Bill will be focusing on Faz, and so expect both Sweden and St. Pete. to remain Russian. Does it make sense? Perhaps not, but that's what's going to happen.

3) France: Buz HAS to take Portugal, doesn't he? Well, no, he might not. You could see the convoy of Brest to Portugal. That would probably be the best tactical move, but I wouldn't be shocked to see Mid head north either. Buz will be a bit chaotic, in all likelihood.

4) Germany: Faz is on a quest, I've seen him on quests before. He will keep attacking Bill Quinn, and keep angering Bill. Period.

5) Italy: Melinda will let Vince's fleet keep coming. Seeing Melinda in GOL/Wes/NAf would not surprise me, with Vince in Tyh.

6) Russia: Don is just laughing his way toward a solo. He might get it. Remember, the brilliance of good Edi Birsan style play is convincing other people not to attack you. No one is really attacking Don, and he is vulnerable.

7) Turkey: Yes, Vince, why does Don have to move through Con? Remember that the ally move is that it is there in Spring, moves on to Aegean in Fall. Expect that. But EVENTUALLY, Turkey will pay.

Press: Carnac's prognostication is even worse than mine. But most of the rest of the press is engaged in the people stuff, which determines the board stuff. It is NOT the other way around. The Gladys press, of course, is a classic. As I recall it, it is reprinted with all the numerous unintentional typos intact, let alone the intentional ones. Still, no one writes stuff like this in the diplomacy hobby today, big shame. Are any of the rest of you Diplomacy hobby people paying any attention whatsoever??? If not, you should be. If you have to ask why it matters, you are already hopeless.

SPRING 1903

By Richard Walkerdine

The briefing room was in silence. The entire ship's complement of the 'Further Glory', apart from the essential crew on the bridge and the wounded in sick bay, stood with heads bowed. Those on the bridge and in sick bay bowed their heads also as they watched the proceedings on the view screens.

General U'til entered the room and took his place on the podium. He faced his crew and trainees with a very somber expression and for a minute or more said nothing as he wondered what fate had in store for these young and inexperienced warriors. He feared the worst, but kept his silence. "Hail Fndili," he cried, with crossed tentacles.

"Hail Fndili," responded his audience.

"Gentlemen," he began, "it saddens me beyond words to have to say that this is something I never expected to have to do on this mission. The attack by the unknown ship has left five of our colleagues in sick bay and three have perished. We are here today to honour the memory of the fallen and consign their bodies to the mercy of the Goddess. You will all please kneel as we mourn their passing."

Lower tentacles were retracted and the crew and trainees all assumed the position of ultimate grief as the General continued.

"Great Goddess, whose name we never speak," he began, "we consign to you today the bodies of three of our fallen comrades. Three honoured Fndili warriors who did their duty, fought bravely and gave their lives in the service of the Empire. Lieutenant S'mal, communications officer and proud son of P'lon and A'graka. Sub Lieutenant P'tak, deputy navigation officer and proud son of T'les and B'ranik. Corporal D'sat, assistant weapons officer and proud son of F'son and G'linta. A message has been sent to Homeworld describing the recent events and the parents will be assured their sons died as heroes of the Fndili Empire. We now destroy their bodies in the nearest star knowing that it will free their souls and let you gather them in to be with you forever. Hail Fndili!"

"Hail Fndili," came the response, though only whispered from the position of ultimate grief.

The old General waited for a moment, still thinking about what might be to come on this mission. Then he cleared his throat. "Gentlemen, thank you. You may now rise and watch the view screens."

They all did so. The three containers, cargo pallets hastily converted to coffins and painted with the Fndili flag, hovered on anti-grav motors near the doors of the cargo bay. The doors slowly opened and, at a sign from General U'til, Sub Lieutenant C'mol, deputizing for the injured navigation officer Lieutenant K'mak, powered up the thrusters. The three coffins, with their precious cargo, slowly exited the cargo doors and gradually accelerated as they headed for the Sun. The bodies would be consumed by the nearby star and, according to Fndili belief, the souls released to the Goddess. The containers would also be consumed, never to be used for a lesser purpose.

General U'til waited until the three coffins disappeared from the view screens on their final journey. The briefing room was still in silence as the entire ship's company took in the full impact of what had happened. Then he grasped the lectern. "Trainees, there is still a briefing due and this mission must continue. But under the circumstances I will delay it until tomorrow. Hail Fndili!"

The next day the mood was still very somber as the old soldier stood at the lectern and looked at the young trainees. "Hail Fndili," he cried in the time honoured ritual.

"Hail Fndili," they replied, though their response was far more muted than on previous occasions.

General U'til looked at them for a few moments before continuing. "Gentlemen", he began, "you are soldiers of the Fndili Empire, the most powerful empire in the galaxy. You have experienced your first losses and I share your grief. But we will suffer more in the continuing expansion of our empire and that is inevitable. We are soldiers and that is our trade, and you need to understand that. Hail Fndili!"

"Hail Fndili!" they shouted in reply, with tentacles waving. The General smiled.

"So let us view the latest developments, and I will make this brief because of what has happened. England continues its attack on Germany with the expected Russian support. France appears to be preparing for an advance against England but does it have to defend against Italy? Germany seems to be in all sorts of trouble with potentially England, France, Italy and Russia ranged against it. Italy is mopping up the remains of Austria and now seems to be moving west with presumably France as the next target. Russia is now attacking Turkey, no doubt with the understanding of both England and Italy, and so will be fighting soon on two fronts. And as for Turkey, a clear move against Italy but with huge problems from its northern neighbour."

"In summary therefore, I would say that England, Italy and Russia have the dominance. Germany has desperate problems and France and Turkey have to discover just who their allies (if they have any) really are. Hail Fndili."

Fall 1903 Results

Austria: A Albania - Serbia (*Bounce*).

England: A Denmark - Kiel (*Fails*), A Liverpool – Yorkshire, F North Sea Supports A Belgium – Holland, F Norway – Sweden, F Skagerrak Supports F Norway - Sweden.

France: A Belgium – Holland, A Brest – Gascony, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - Spain(sc) (*Bounce*), F North Atlantic Ocean - Mid-Atlantic Ocean (*Fails*), A Spain - Portugal.

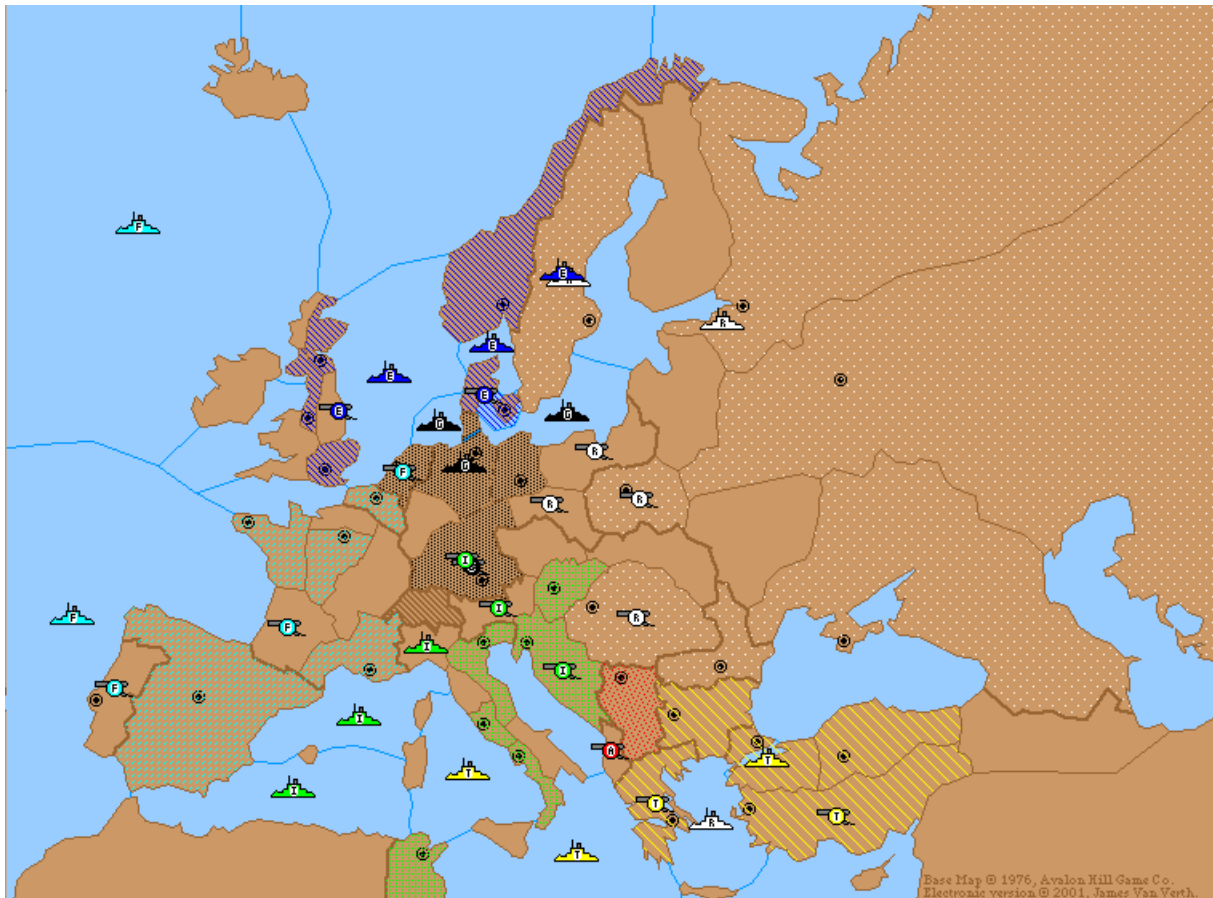
Germany: F Baltic Sea - Berlin (*Bounce*), F Helgoland Bight Supports F Holland – Kiel, F Holland – Kiel, A Munich—Silesia (*Dislodged*, retreat to Ruhr or Burgundy or OTB).

Italy: A Bohemia – Munich, A Trieste - Serbia (*Bounce*), F Tuscany – Piedmont, A Tyrolia Supports A Bohemia – Munich, F Tyrrhenian Sea - Gulf of Lyon, F Western Mediterranean - Spain(sc) (*Bounce*).

Russia: A Budapest - Serbia (*Bounce*), F Constantinople - Aegean Sea, F Gulf of Bothnia - St Petersburg(sc), A Prussia - Berlin (*Bounce*), A Silesia Supports A Prussia - Berlin (*Cut*), A Warsaw - Prussia (*Fails*),

~~F Sweden - Baltic Sea~~ (*Dislodged*, retreat to Gulf of Bothnia or Finland or OTB).

Turkey: F Aegean Sea - Ionian Sea, F Bulgaria(ec) – Constantinople, A Greece - Serbia (*Bounce*),
F Ionian Sea - Tyrrhenian Sea, A Smyrna Hold.



We've got a Boardman Number, a new French player, and baseball playoffs on the way. Not much more to ask for. Well, plenty more actually, but that's another story for another day. In the meantime, it appears the English have sent forces out to serve a subpoena on Bjorn Borg. Buz Eddy resigned as France prior to Fall 1903, and David Hood stepped in to wear the crown.

PRESS

CARSON, CALIFORNIA: Merlin and Brooklyn continued their journey through the vast cavern deep under the LA Galaxy stadium. Their progress was slow for the floor was rocky and uneven and they had to make their way around many huge stalagmites.

"Merlin," asked the eleven year old boy, "you know when you cast that spell to find out which way to go?"

"Yes boy," replied the old magician, "what of it?" His eyes sparkled with amusement. "More questions?"

"Well, yeah," said Brooklyn. "Well just one actually. What language were you speaking? It's not one I've ever heard and I've been all over the world with mom and dad."

Merlin laughed. "So inquisitive, I like that. The language was ancient Irish, the language spoken in Ireland

between the sixth and tenth centuries. It hasn't been in use for more than a thousand years. But it is a very powerful magical language, and ideal for the casting of spells."

"Oh, right," replied Brooklyn. "You sure are clever Merlin. But what would it be in English?"

The old man stopped. "A lot less powerful for a start," he replied. Then he frowned slightly. "Well, now we have come so far it shouldn't hurt if I tell you a little more. In English it would be: 'By the breath of the serpent, I will find, the sword of the king'."

"Gee, and what sword is that?" asked the boy.

"Enough!" said Merlin, a little sternly.

Brooklyn took a step back. "Sorry Merlin, is it that destiny

thing again?"

The old magician smiled and rested a hand on Brooklyn's shoulder. "It is. Come, let us continue."

They walked on for several minutes in silence as Brooklyn thought about what the old man had said.

Suddenly Merlin stopped, so quickly that Brooklyn walked into him. "What is it?" asked the boy.

The magician pointed with his staff. "Over there, next to that pile of rocks. I think it's a skeleton."

"Oh crikey," whispered the young boy as he followed him towards the rock pile, just beginning to wonder if this adventure might be a bit more dangerous than Merlin had admitted.

Carnac-Berlin: Hey, so even Carnac the Magnificent makes mistakes!

Albania-Constantinople: I think you hear me knockin' and I think I'm comin' in.

Occupied Budapest-St Petersburg: Your Tsarness, when you get a moment, can we speak about improving the infrastructure? The people are clamoring for a jobs program.

(Kie): The beauty of being on the sidelines is that you can watch the game uninterrupted. I'll warm a spot on the pine for the misguided souls soon to be joining me.

On a Frigate in the Skagerrak - The Irishman read a book of Greek history. On a battlefield two soldiers faced each other. Round them lay the dead and dying.

Several City States had sent their military units to the fray. Some were like the large rocks resisting the grind of metal on bone. Some were merely fodder before the reapers. Now only a few remained to decide how the day would end. Two such warriors now faced the other. Their lungs heaved their armor for breath to continue the struggle. The leather and metal was soaked with the sweat of their body and the blood of their adversaries. Now it fit them like a skin. They were transformed from men into the killing lathe of Aries. At such time some soldiers lost all reason and would strike out at anyone within range of their weapons. These two, though they had no alliance, could clearly see that to continue the struggle against each other would result in both being overwhelmed. The Athenian pointed his sword at two who approached him from one direction. The Spartan pointed at two who approached from the opposite side. At once they turned their backs to one another to receive the assault before them.

The Irishman put down the book. At this moment he would learn how they fared.

Messenger to GFL Lutterbie: Sir, we have received an invitation to try Melinda Holley's new whine testing in Marseilles?

GFL Lutterbie: Really? Let's see. HMMMM, her answer to whine in a box is, whine in a whisky jug?

Messenger to GFL Lutterbie: Is her whine a blush, sir?

GFL Lutterbie: I doubt it. Probably an off brand of indeterminate vintage?

Messenger: Perhaps a port?

GFL Lutterbie: Perhaps. Maybe full bodied, but I'd never say that!

Messenger: It ought to be an interesting taste event.

GFL Lutterbie: It ought to give everyone there a Buzz.

Messenger to GFL Lutterbie: We received a message from Mark Fassio. He complains that no one is speaking to him.

GFL Lutterbie: That's because I instructed all of the dungeon guards, as well as the other prisoners, to not say a word to him.

Messenger to GFL Lutterbie: I thought you liked Fassio, sir?

GFL Lutterbie: Of course I do, but Williams has spies EVERYWHERE!

Messenger: Why are you looking at me like that?

(Somewhere on a foggy mountaintop) - (Somewhere on a foggy mountaintop) - "Banana crême pie! You've got it!" The mountain woman screeched in delight causing the owner of the general store to wince. "Mr. Drucker, you're a gem!"

The thin, elderly man blushed despite the pain in his ears. "Well, I DO know my customers." He cleared his throat. "You heard about the Eddy place being sold, didn't you?"

"What?!" The woman walked to the counter, laying the pie box gently to one side. "When did this happen?"

"Saw the moving truck pull out yesterday," Mr. Drucker nodded with self-importance. "Some fella named Hood from the North Carolina bought it - lock, stock, and barrel."

"Huh...North Carolina, you say?" The woman's eyes narrowed. "Well, he oughta be able to do some decent bar-b-que. Seen him yet?"

Mr. Drucker shook his head. "Saw the Sheriff headin' out that way a little while ago, though. You know, that Sheriff is a neighborly sorta guy."

"Oh yeah. He's always popping in," the woman nodded as she paid for her pie. "Have a nice day, Mr. Drucker."

"You too. Enjoy the pie!"

Outside the General Store, the woman turned her head towards the Hood property. Her eyes narrowed in speculation, then she walked towards her '64-1/2 fire-engine red Mustang convertible. Softly she began to sing, " I hear voices in my head, They council me, They understand, They talk to me. I hear voices crying. I see heroes dying. I taste the blood that's drying. I feel

tensions rising. They talk to me...they talk to me."

She politely nodded at the older couple who walked past her. The older woman grabbed at her husband's arm. "Abner! Abner! She was talking about hearing voices!"

"I hear 'em all the time, Gladys."

Fall 1903 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

Well, the appearance of David Hood as the New France changes a lot.

A great deal. As "Gladys" illustrated, Buz wasn't up to revisiting some of the excellent press he used to write, and he's never been much of a player (he would tell you this too). David never was a great press writer, but he is one of the hobby's most careful and effective players. In sum, that changes everything.

While Faz is in self-destruct mode, Hood immediately does what is necessary to revive France. He's picked up Portugal and Holland and can put two builds on the board to try to hold back Italy. At the very least, he'll put up a defense that will sorely test the trust between Italy and Turkey. Presuming David puts forces in Marseilles and Paris, he should be able to hold the line for quite a while.

Agreed, and he likely will do that. David and Bill Quinn can be expected to VERY quickly get on the same page.

Bill follows the tried-and-true path for England of gobbling up the Scandinavian SCs. With France distracted by Italy and Germany collapsing, England is in reasonably good shape, at least with regard to the current alliance structure. I don't expect the current alliance structure to last too long.

I was a little unclear if the players knew, I think they did. So, this whole maneuver was caused by David Hood entering the game. Allow me to digress on replacements for a minute. So, I like to think about a new player like a health shock (such as a heart attack or stroke). The whole body of the game is set off its game and then needs to adjust and recover. At this time, usually, all the gaming and changes in alliances tend to run through and around the replacement. In a sense, it always ruins any game since it now is a different game. Here, it seems that it completely changes the Western alliances.

The four-way bounce in Serbia looks comical, but I can see the purpose it serves. If Austria loses Serbia,

whoever takes it from him will have a significant advantage in the Balkans. So, for now we see an arrangement to preserve the balance of power.

Not really, it's a trust thing. Everyone bounces and as long as everyone bounces everyone is cool. Most players underuse mutual bounce structures as a tactic. These players are not making that mistake.

One more thing: the loss of Sweden means a disband for Russia. Any disband other than F Aeg would be suspicious. Now, he should be able to take Berlin in the Spring (if Italy helps).

Faz will have two forces next year, and they should be in a very interesting position. Does he keep two fleets? Does keep an army in Ruhr? (or Burgundy!!)

I'll haphazardly predict that the Eastern alliance falls apart in the very near future.

Austria (Steve): Steve has agreed to the "stay in the game" everyone bounce over Serbia game. I don't think Steve is doing anything except agreeing to this, making the move, and waiting until the circumstances change.

England (Bill); Bill must be doing double back flips. He and Buz never appeared to connect, and now he has someone he really can work with. How firm is EF now? We'll see, but I'd bet on firm.

France (David): David is a great tactician, he will hold off Melinda if it is at all possible. Of course, with Italy in Munich, there is not a clear stalemate line to sit on. He will put the army in Paris and the fleet in Marseilles and we'll see.

Germany (Faz): Faz is going to stay on his anti-English stance, I believe. So he'll keep Denmark and Baltic Sea and will work with Don. But it won't matter very much.

Italy (Melinda): Melinda is moving well, but the key is what she does with A Munich. Can she get anywhere or does this just lock up? I am not

completely sure, but I wouldn't be shocked if we EXTRAORDINARILY quickly get to stalemate lines. As usual, Italy is the key. Will everyone just let that happen or will someone shake it up? Hard to see how Melinda does it without Vince stabbing her, so it may not.

Russia (Don): Don is losing the unit, it makes sense just to forget about the extra fleet. If Germany assists (as I expect) then Don will get the build back quickly.

Turkey (Vince): Vince may soon end up in the classic "sitting behind the stalemate line" position. Will he stab Italy or go along? We'll see.

PRESS: There's a bit too much "Destiny" in the Brooklyn press to be Faz. I am thinking it's someone else. Faz is a military guy and military guys don't believe in Destiny. I used to love the infield banter type press that is represented here by the continuation of the Carnac exchange, but you have to have more people doing it. Most of these are just dying on the vine. Steve comes in with a little dig, Don is talking to himself (maybe he could talk more to some of the other players?), and Faz is convinced he's dead (but not as destiny, as control). But that's pretty limited. In the Silver Age of the 1980's this would have gone on for pages and pages. Then we end out with some classics. I loved Faz' Athenian and Spartan frigate guys; GFL Lutterbie had me giggling, and Faz' mountaintop press remains instant classics each season.

FALL 1903

by Richard Walkerdine

General U'til was at his place on the podium looking out over the assembled trainees, noting their expressions of concern and disquiet. He did not blame them as he felt the same emotions, although he was careful to hide them. He crossed his tentacles. "Hail Fndili!"

"Hail Fndili!" shouted the trainees, even louder than in previous briefings. The old soldier realized it was a cry of defiance and paused for a moment as he felt another surge of pride for his young charges.

"Gentlemen," he began, "we have honoured the fallen and the injured are all making their recovery in sick bay. Although we are still damaged we have a nearly full stock of weapons and, with your extra training, we have increased crew numbers in all vital areas. The Science Officer has discovered that the Irillium mines were most effective against the unknown ship

so we have doubled the number of dispensers. If we are attacked again I believe we are now in the best possible state to defend ourselves and even take the fight to the enemy."

He paused and looked closely at the trainees. His words did seem to have had an effect as the expressions of concern had lessened and he even noted a few tentacle shakes of defiance. His own concern however was as intense as ever, but he was careful to keep that emotion from his expression. "This mission will of course continue, as the Empire would expect. The one thing we will not do is return to Homeworld in disgrace."

There was a murmuring of approval in the briefing room and a few more tentacle shakes of defiance. His heart beat faster as he felt another surge of pride. By the Goddess, he thought, I just hope we can complete this mission. These youngsters could be the pride of the Empire. But he was careful to give no sign of his thoughts.

"And so," he continued, "let us study the latest developments in Europe."

"England has captured Sweden, and is clearly prepared for a war with Russia as a result. The campaign against Germany is certainly going well and so they must be sufficiently confident to open a second front. I would expect that to mean that there is an alliance between England and France."

"France is clearly trying to defend against Italy and, if there really is an alliance with England, may yet have some hope. But Italy itself is now looking vulnerable, as we shall see."

"As for Germany, all I can say is to repeat that quotation from the legends of Q'lim: 'Oh how the mighty are fallen!' From the potentially greatest power on the continent it has fallen to one of the weakest - I suspect that the diplomatic activity by Germany has been a lot less than it should. But there is yet some hope as a renewed alliance with Russia is now possible given the latest English attacks."

"Italy clearly has its eyes on France, but has it left itself vulnerable to an attack from the east? I think it has. There seems to be a strong Turkish/Russian

alliance forming and that could well mean Italy in very great peril."

"Russia has had bad results in the north with the attack by England, but in the south it is looking very strong. The movement of its fleet from Constantinople to the Aegean is particularly significant and suggests a very close alliance with Turkey. And can we now expect Russia and Germany to mend their differences? Given the strength of England I expect we can."

"Finally we come to Turkey. Clearly there has been a great deal of diplomacy with Russia for Turkey is now in a position to invade the Italian mainland and, between them, they could wipe out Italy and take control of the entire Mediterranean."

"So in summary Gentlemen, I now see England, Russia and Turkey as the strongest Powers, Austria finished and Germany almost so unless it can be revived by Russia. France is dependent on the outcome of the potential Turkish/Italian war and Italy suddenly finds itself in a very perilous situation. It is indeed a very interesting conflict."

"Hail Fndili!"

The old General left the briefing room and went immediately to the bridge. "So, Lieutenant B'des," he said, "anything more from your analysis?"

His Science Officer saluted smartly. "Well Sir, there is one development. I have been studying the effect of our weapons with Lieutenant R'lok and I think we should speak with him."

General U'til went immediately to the Weapons Officer's console, with B'des following behind. "Lieutenant R'lok," he said, "what have you found?"

The Weapons Officer saluted. "Sir, we already knew the Irillium mines seemed to be the most effective weapon so B'des and I studied their distribution pattern. They were sent out in a scatter pattern around the unknown ship and of course their

movement was effectively random. But we discovered that mines in a spiral distribution seemed to have more effect, we assume it is something to do with the construction of their strange shields. In fact we think one might have even penetrated their shields, which is perhaps why they slowed their attack."

The General waved three tentacles in a show of delight. "Well done you two, that is very good work indeed, and may yet prove decisive. Change the distribution pattern to a spiral R'lok."

The young Weapons Officer looked slightly embarrassed. "Sir," he replied, "begging you pardon but I have already done so."

The old soldier laughed and slapped him with a tentacle. "By the Goddess that's the sort of thing I like to hear from my crew!"

But the words were scarcely out of his mouth before the acting Navigation Officer Sub Lieutenant C'mol, standing in for the injured Lieutenant K'mak, shouted from his console. "Sir they are back, approaching at high speed!"

General U'til reacted immediately. "Mines R'lok, right now! And C'mol, evasive maneuvers!"

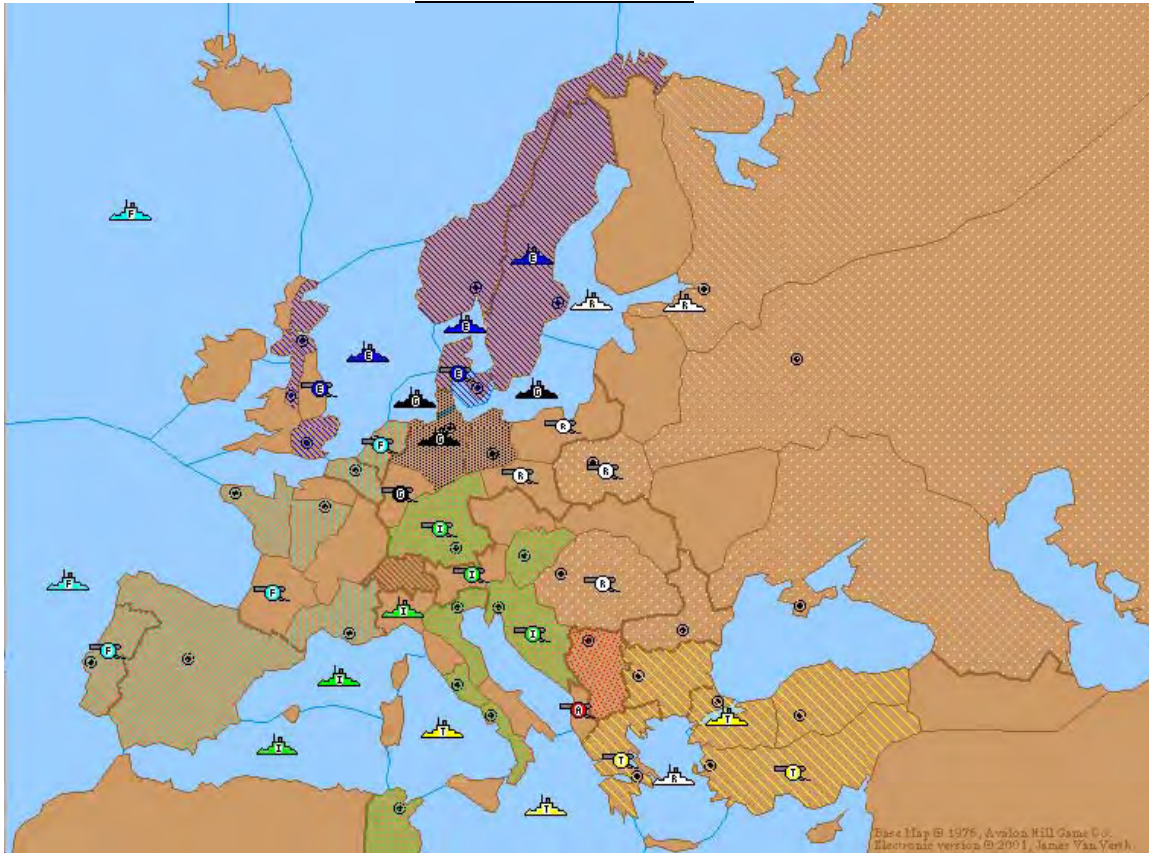
The 'Further Glory' lurched as the mines were released and then lurched again as it twisted in random patterns away from the attacking ship. "It's had some effect Sir," cried Lieutenant B'des. "They have slowed and their shields have lost some power, but they are still approaching."

"More mines R'lok," shouted the General. But as he did so the ship shuddered and a dull boom echoed through the hull.

"Mines deployed Sir," replied the Weapons Officer.

"But they've hit the shield generator," cried Lieutenant B'des. "Sir, the shields are down to ten percent. One more hit and we're done for!"

Autumn 1903 Results



No real surprises here...

Austria: Has A Albania.

England: Has A Denmark, F North Sea, F Skagerrak, F Sweden, A Yorkshire.

France: A Gascony, A Holland, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F North Atlantic Ocean, A Portugal.

Germany: Retreats A Munich - Ruhr..Has F Baltic Sea, F Helgoland Bight, F Kiel, A Ruhr.

Italy: Has F Gulf of Lyon, A Munich, F Piedmont, A Trieste, A Tyrolia, F Western Mediterranean.

Russia: Retreats F Sweden - Gulf of Bothnia..Has F Aegean Sea, A Budapest, F Gulf of Bothnia, A Prussia, A Silesia, F St Petersburg(sc), A Warsaw.

Turkey: Has F Constantinople, A Greece, F Ionian Sea, A Smyrna, F Tyrrhenian Sea.

Supply Center Chart

Austria:	Serbia=1, Even
England:	Denmark, Edinburgh, Liverpool, London, Norway, Sweden=6, Build 1
France:	Belgium, Brest, Holland, Marseilles, Paris, Portugal, Spain=7, Build 2
Germany:	Berlin, Kiel=2, Remove 2
Italy:	Munich, Naples, Rome, Trieste, Tunis, Venice, Vienna=7, Build 1
Russia:	Budapest, Moscow, Rumania, Sevastopol, St Petersburg, Warsaw=6, Remove 1
Turkey:	Ankara, Bulgaria, Constantinople, Greece, Smyrna=5, Even

PRESS

(Ger to R/I): I'm not going to bother either of you with a long press, especially as I don't have anything but "mouth" to back up my nation's abilities--thanks to you both--and also because I'm leaving for a weekend wedding and still need to pack.

BUT.....

Just remember: you guys shafted me big-time when I

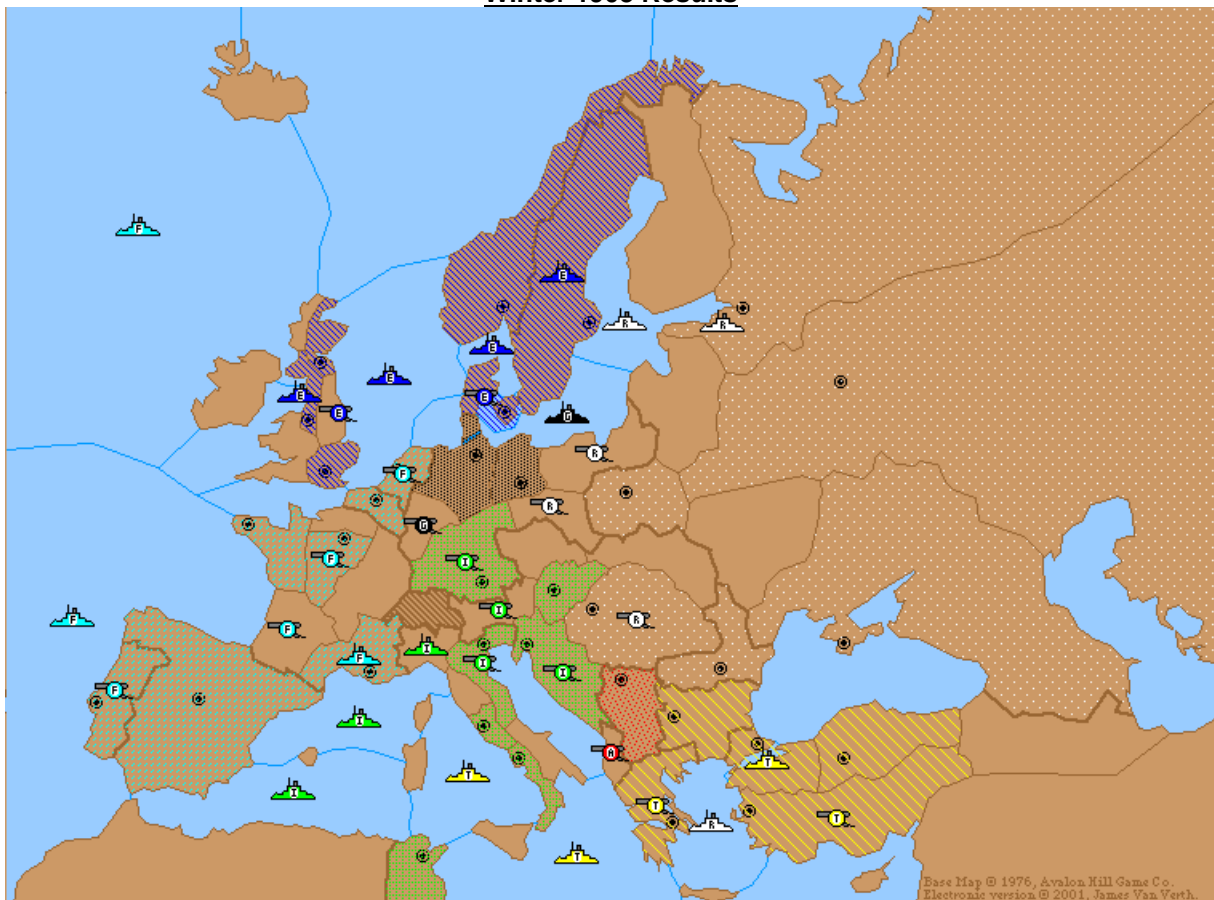
was a totally-loyal ally and had plans to run the board with you. And what did you get from it? You've got a Turk just waiting for the right time to take 2 from you, Melinda, and maybe more -- and you're so out of position that it's funny. Russia's flanks and rear are potentially both "in the air" as well now. Will be interesting to see if you have a good ally in Turkey, and if this is all some sort of a Williams-like "think beyond the next few turns strategic plan" that you pride yourself for, Don...but I doubt it.

E/F have kissed and made up. If you cooperate, you two will maybe get BER this turn (maybe), depending what I do with the retreated unit and who I hit. (And also depending if Den/Hol hit Kiel and mess me up.) I've offered to convoy Quinn to LVN and might hold defend BUR and MAR with France until the Turkish scimitar falls on your rear, m'dear. Of course, they're probably as greedy as both of you and will prefer to take me down before you two do, but at least I've got tons of (useless) options. Of course, if you leave MUN and turn away from

BER, I'm sure you'll totally enthrall me to come back to the fold; abused nations always seem to gravitate back to their tormentors.

I wish it wasn't like this, obviously, and much of blame lies with me for being underwhelmed with the entire process. But you could've made Vince and Bill a memory just by 'dealing with the devil you knew' and keeping the triple. Now you've got the legions of Satan out there to deal with instead, and your foundation is riddled with termites. Will be an interesting mid-game.

Winter 1903 Results



The builds and removals in a game can be one of the most telling aspects, or the most deceptive.

Austria: Has A Albania.

England: Build F Liverpool..Has A Denmark, F Liverpool, F North Sea, F Skagerrak, F Sweden, A Yorkshire.

France: Build F Marseilles, A Paris..Has A Gascony, A Holland, F Marseilles, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F North Atlantic Ocean, A Paris, A Portugal.

Germany: Remove F Helgoland Bight, F Kiel..Has F Baltic Sea, A Ruhr.

Italy: Build A Venice..Has F Gulf of Lyon, A Munich, F Piedmont, A Trieste, A Tyrolia, A Venice, F Western Mediterranean.

Russia: Remove A Warsaw..Has F Aegean Sea, A Budapest, F Gulf of Bothnia, A Prussia, A Silesia, F St Petersburg(sc).

Turkey: Has F Constantinople, A Greece, F Ionian Sea, A Smyrna, F Tyrrhenian Sea.

PRESS

CARSON, CALIFORNIA: Merlin and Brooklyn approached the pile of rocks and looked down at the skeleton. It was clearly very old, with only a few scraps of clothing clinging to the bones and several ribs already crumbled to dust. The young boy gasped as he stared at it. "Merlin," he said, "it seems such a strange shape. So short and stocky. Is it human?"

The old magician shook his head. "No Brooklyn," he muttered, "this is the remains of a dwarf." Then he pointed with his wooden staff. "And see those arrow heads in the chest? I recognize their design. This dwarf was killed by goblins."

Brooklyn gasped again. "Dwarves, goblins? But....but Merlin, I thought they were only in fairy tales." He looked around nervously as he spoke.

The old man chuckled. "And what of magicians Brooklyn, are they only the stuff of fairy tales too?"

The young boy paused. "Oh, well, yes, I see what you mean." He continued looking around nervously at every shadow. "So...well...do you think we might get attacked down here?"

Merlin patted him on the shoulder. "Do not be alarmed boy. The dwarves, goblins and indeed the elves departed this world a very long time ago. We are in no danger. Here, let me put your mind at rest."

The old magician reached into his robe and took out a small tin. He opened it and sprinkled a little grey powder onto the skeleton. There was a little hissing sound and the powder glowed a dark green color for a few seconds. He smiled. "As I thought Brooklyn, this skeleton has been here for more than a thousand years. As I said we are in no danger."

Brooklyn sighed with relief. "Gee, thanks Merlin, that's good to know." Then he looked up at the old man with curiosity written all over his face. "So what was that powder you used? Another spell?"

The magician laughed. "Still full of questions? I like that. No Brooklyn, not exactly a spell. It is a mixture of my own devising. Mostly Mandrake root with a few other additions. It glows a different color depending on the age of the object. Very useful at times."

The eleven year old thought for a while. "Oh, right, I see." Then he looked up at Merlin again. "So what exactly is Mandrake?"

The old man sighed as he reached into his robe again, though Brooklyn could see he was smiling. "Here," he said as he pulled out a small plant, "this is Mandrake, difficult to find but very useful in the magical arts."



"Oh, right, thanks Merlin."

"You are welcome," replied the magician. "Now, let us continue our quest." He pointed with his staff. "That way."

The two companions continued their journey across the huge cavern.

England - Germany: What would I be doing in Livonia?

England - Germany: Take 'em off. Take 'em all off.

Autumn/Winter 1903 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

Faz's press during the retreat phase is pretty unambiguous. As are his disbands. He looks like he's throwing his SCs to England - and France if he can get at them.

Interesting turn of events here. After Faz went after England, he now lets England go for his centers, maybe. There is a lot of depth in the psychology of this game under the surface that we cannot see, it will be interesting to see what they all say in their endgame statements about that. England also seems to signal that the German support could even be a convoy to Livonia? Maybe that's why he's

building the fleet in the "other Liv". But to the facts of Rick's comment, Russia actually has the best shot at Berlin, but ONLY if Don lets England convoy into Livonia. Fascinating. Did the press try the double switch? We shall see.

England has built a fleet in Liverpool, which is a bit odd. I guess he's worried about David Hood coming after him, in spite of all the Italians on the French border.

Possibly, I like the Liv/Liv reason.

Don keeps F Aeg, which is just plain weird. I guess the

purpose of that fleet is to keep Turkey in line.

No, I think there is the agreement to put the fleets through and Don is keeping the fleet to move west ahead of the Turks. I know, it doesn't make sense, but I think that's what the deal is.

Melinda needs to do something other than bang her head against the French defenses. (I agree with Faz here - there's very little for Italy to gain by sabotaging Germany while letting France off the hook - especially if that means having Turkish fleets in the Ionian and Tyrrhenian Seas!

Again, maybe not, but that's what's going to happen in Spring. Melinda will slide into Naf and all the fleets will move up.

Hmm...maybe the purpose of F Lvp is to support the French control of MAO. Yeah, that makes more sense. MAO - Spa, NAO - MAO and then Lvp - Iri to either support F MAO or F NAO - MAO if Italy has bounced France in the Spring.

Agreed, and that's what's happening between Hood and Quinn. This is going to lock up REALLY fast if this is just a tactical exercise.

I have a perverse hope that IRT pop A Alb but leave Serbia in Austrian hands.

Again, no, they all just keep bouncing over Serbia.

WINTER 1903

by Richard Walkerdine

General U'til, with all his experience, knew perfectly well that shields at ten percent were no defense at all against anything but a few small meteors. He turned to the crew on the bridge, preparing his thoughts before speaking his final words.

But then Lieutenant B'des cried out again. "Sir, they've stopped! I don't understand it! Their shields are gone and I am detecting no power sources at all! I don't even detect any signs of life!"

"WHAT?" shouted the General as he rushed across to his Science Officer's console. "But this is impossible!" He looked across at his Weapons Officer. "Lieutenant R'lok, could that second wave of mines account for this?"

"Absolutely not Sir," replied the young Lieutenant. "Based on what we achieved earlier, and the fact we are now using that spiral pattern, I would estimate

their shields to be down to no lower than seventy percent."

The old General paused for a moment while he collected his thoughts. Even in his long career he had never encountered anything like this. Then he shook himself as his training and experience took over. "We must know more about this gentlemen," he said quietly. "I am sure you all realize that ship had the beating of us. For the safety of the Empire we must seek out every detail of the ship and what happened. Sub Lieutenant C'mol, set a slow and evasive course to the ship and let it take as long as you wish. Lieutenant R'lok, keep all weapons on full alert and ensure the Irillium mine dispensers are fully reloaded. Lieutenant B'des, a full analysis of everything as we approach. By the Goddess, this is a strange one."

"Sir!" they shouted in unison, clearly relieved that the immediate danger seemed to be over, and started tapping at their keyboards.

General U'til felt equally relieved, perhaps more so given his long years of service. "It will take an hour or more for C'mol to get us close - and C'mol, see that it does, I want to take no chances with this. So I will conduct the next briefing as we make our approach."

He signaled for the trainees to assemble and hurried to the briefing room. They soon arrived, but with many worried looks and a few twitching tentacles. He realized he had to put them at ease as quickly as possible. He crossed his tentacles. "Hail Fndili!"

"Hail Fndili," came the response, although more muted than on earlier occasions.

He smiled. "Gentlemen, I have good news." As soon as he said it he noted their eye stalks twitching and the atmosphere in the briefing room becoming less tense. "You will have felt the munitions discharge and the extreme maneuvers, and indeed the explosions. But I am pleased to tell you that the alien ship appears to have been defeated."

"HAIL FNDILI!!" shouted the trainees, every one of them raising their eye stalks in relief and waving three tentacles in the sign of honour to the Empire.

The old soldier waited a moment until the excitement subsided before he continued. "It is indeed a great victory and I am sure we will be honoured when we return to Homeworld. But we still have questions to answer. Our weapons, in particular the Irillium mines, did them damage but seemingly not enough to account for what has transpired. We are now approaching the unknown ship, with extreme caution, to investigate further. I will of course keep you fully informed of the results. But we are still on a training mission and that training will continue. So let us look at developments in Europe."

"England seems to have built an alliance with France and is now able to continue its attack on Germany and, perhaps, continue to gain territory from Russia."

"France is now in a much stronger position against Italy and, with perhaps Turkish and even Russian help, could well continue expanding in the Mediterranean."

"Germany has of course fallen from the strongest Power to almost the weakest - note, gentlemen, how quickly this can happen if the diplomatic efforts are not kept at the most intense level."

"Italy, which started so well, now seems to have many problems. France is clearly moving against it and Turkey could have forces on the Italian mainland within six months. It is even possible that there could be some Russian involvement - a long convoy of the Turkish army in Smyrna to Italy with Russian assistance would be most interesting."

"Russia's position is fascinating. Is it still allied with England or has that now broken down? We will know soon enough. But there appears to be a strong alliance with Turkey and that should be enough for a successful southern campaign."

"And so to Turkey, now in a position to inflict major damage on Italy and, particularly if France and Russia are allies, to virtually take control of the Mediterranean."

Another example of how quickly things can change."

"In summary therefore I would say it is now England, France and Turkey who have the advantage, Italy has potentially very major problems, Austria and Germany can more or less be ignored, but what of Russia? The Russian position is fascinating, with England, Italy and Turkey all as potential allies or foes. There will be a lot of diplomacy in the coming months! As usual gentlemen, your views by midday tomorrow, ships time."

General U'til returned to the bridge and went immediately to Lieutenant B'des. "So, B'des, what have you found?"

The lieutenant looked at him. "It's dead Sir, totally dead. No power, no life, nothing."

The General sighed with relief. "Well that is good news indeed. So it must have been the Irillium mines?"

The Science Officer looked a little confused. "Well, no Sir, that's the strange thing. We are close enough now to see the damage clearly and it's like nothing I've ever seen. And Lieutenant R'lok confirms that it is definitely not the sort of damage inflicted by our mines."

It was the General's turn to look confused. "But how can that be? That's all we hit them with. Show me the damage Lieutenant."

Science Officer B'des brought up a picture of the dead ship on his console. The whole of the central hull was ripped open, as if taken apart by some giant can opener. The old general gasped.

"Sir?" said the young Lieutenant.

"It is him," gasped General U'til. "I never thought we would meet again."

"I'm sorry Sir, I don't understand."

The General laid a tentacle on the shoulder of his Science Officer and let out another sigh. "I met him many decades ago and, with retirement close, never expected our paths would cross again."

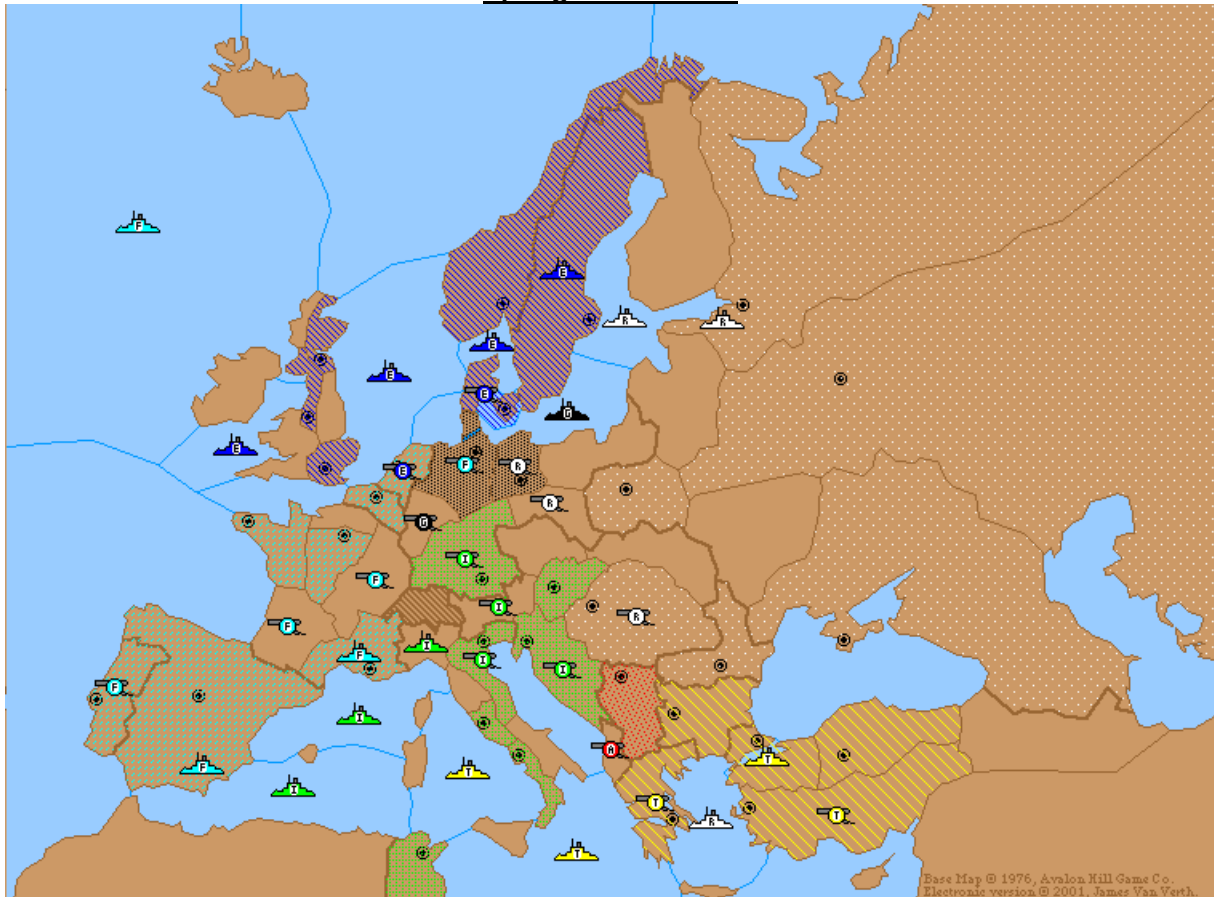
"Sir, I'm sorry, I still don't understand."

"Sir?"

General U'til pointed at the viewscreen with a tentacle that was shaking slightly. "It's the nature of the damage Lieutenant. There is only one device in the galaxy that causes that sort of damage, and only one creature that wields it."

The old General looked down at the young Lieutenant and smiled. "Don't worry B'des, there is no way you could know as that is one of the Fndili Empire's most closely guarded state secrets. The device is known as a sonic screwdriver, and the creature that wields it is known only as...The Doctor."

Spring 1904 Results



Happy happy Halloween, Halloween, Halloween. Happy happy Halloween, Silver Shamrock!

Austria: A Albania - Serbia (*Bounce*).

England: F Norway – Skagerrak (No Such Unit), A Denmark Supports A Holland - Kiel (*Cut*), F Liverpool - Irish Sea, F North Sea Convoys A Yorkshire – Holland, F Skagerrak Unordered, F Sweden Supports A Denmark, A Yorkshire - Holland.

France: A Gascony Supports F Marseilles, A Holland – Kiel, F Marseilles Supports F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - Spain(sc), F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - Spain(sc), F North Atlantic Ocean - Mid-Atlantic Ocean (*Bounce*), A Paris – Burgundy, A Portugal Supports F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - Spain(sc).

Germany: F Baltic Sea - Denmark (*Fails*), A Ruhr Supports A Holland - Kiel (*Cut*).

Italy: F Gulf of Lyon Convoys A Smyrna - Marseilles (*Void*), A Munich - Ruhr (*Fails*), F Piedmont Supports A Smyrna - Marseilles (*Void*), A Trieste - Serbia (*Bounce*), A Tyrolia - Munich (*Fails*), A Venice - Tyrolia (*Fails*), F Western Mediterranean - Mid-Atlantic Ocean (*Bounce*).

Russia: F Aegean Sea Unordered, F Eastern Mediterranean – Aegean Sea (No Such Unit), A Budapest - Serbia (*Bounce*), F Gulf of Bothnia - Finland (*Bounce*), A Prussia – Berlin, A Silesia Supports A Prussia – Berlin, F St Petersburg(sc) - Finland (*Bounce*).

Turkey: F Constantinople - Aegean Sea (*Fails*), A Greece - Serbia (*Bounce*), F Ionian Sea - Tyrrhenian Sea (*Fails*), A Smyrna Hold, F Tyrrhenian Sea - Western Mediterranean (*Fails*).

PRESS

CARSON, CALIFORNIA: Merlin and Brooklyn walked on for another hour across the huge cavern, Brooklyn skipping over piles of rocks and kicking at the occasional stalagmite, then laughing as it fell into shards of solidified calcium carbonate at his feet.

The old magician walked steadily forward, looking to neither right nor left. But eventually he stopped and looked down at his young companion. "Brooklyn," he said sternly, "stop that!"

"What?" said the eleven year old. "I was only playing. I wasn't doing any harm, just kicking a few old rocks and stuff."

Merlin's features softened and he smiled down at the young boy. "I know Brooklyn, but this cavern is very old and might hold many secrets. We must be careful and it is probably best not to make too much noise. If we disturb too much of it we may be thwarted on our quest."

The young boy stopped and looked up at the old man with a look of surprise on his face. "Our quest Merlin?" he asked. "That's got to do with that destiny thing again hasn't it?"

The magician just stared at the young boy for a moment, but then his features softened and he smiled. He patted Brooklyn on the head and set off again across the cavern. "It's all connected Brooklyn," he said quietly. "Destiny and a quest, it is always connected."

They walked on for another half hour, although Brooklyn was careful to avoid the stalagmites.

Then Merlin stopped, and let out a sigh.

Brooklyn stopped too and looked around. "Merlin," he asked, "why did you stop?"

The old man pointed with his staff. "There boy, up ahead," he said. "Do you see what confronts us?"

The young boy looked to where the old magician's staff was pointing and saw a wide chasm, more than fifty feet across and seeming to stretch across the entire cavern. "Oh Merlin," he gasped, "we'll never get across that."

Collective Republic of Albanian Partisans - Constantinople: Fancy a meeting in Serbia? I understand it's where all the princes meet.

Messenger to GFL Lutterbie: Sir, don't you think you should be in touch with SOMEBODY?

GFL Lutterbie: I've been buzz sawed, and Hoodwinked. Leave me alone. I have a new job at the moment, and it is taking a lot of my time.

Messenger: Yes sir. Should we let Fassio out of the dungeon?

GFL Lutterbie: Wait till he Kiels over.

Ralph Cramden - Germany: One of these days . . . to the moon!

Spring 1904 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

Well, I would say this line is locking up, but that's not quite exactly right. We're looking at East v. West fighting, and the line at the MAO has locked up, but Germany is still rather fluid.

That's correct, but it DOES matter a great deal HOW Germany chooses to go out. This season's moves by Germany were a bit schizophrenic as F Baltic did NOT convoy the English army to Livonia as I suggested it might. This would have been devastating as then it could have walked into Moscow. But instead F Baltic tried to move to Denmark and cut that support. BUT, A Ruh tried to support the French move into Kiel (though it was cut) which was part of the coordinated EF march. A key in the game this Fall is what those two German units do, though it is likely that Faz is choosing

extinction. If Germany supports the IRT alliance, then Kiel falls to them. If Germany supports A Kie-Mun, that likely will be successful (cutting Berlin support as well). And it is even possible that supporting A Kie-Ber could work. If the Germans remain schizophrenic, it is likely the Spring status quo will prevail.

After that, it is not clear much of anything will happen. Though Russia can clear St. Pete by moving to Livonia and then build F Stp(NC). This will make things a bit exciting in the north. But England may move to Norway now, and may keep the build for a F Edi. So Russia eventually can be beaten back.

IRT are really wasting a lot of forces keeping Steve

alive. And because of that, they have a weak line in Germany, not to mention a vulnerability in Livonia and Prussia. Army Silesia has three things it needs to do: support A Munich (given that support from Berlin is useless), support A Berlin (given that support from Munich is useless) and protect Prussia against a convoy.

Agreed. This is a problem as I noted above. It all depends on what Germany does as it leaves the stage though. Once Germany is gone, there may be ways to put it back together with the build.

Melinda's orders are particularly dreary here. Every order was either a bounce or a void convoy/support.

And she missed the obvious sliding move into North Africa, which at least would have given her a shot at things. But the naked move to Mid was destined for failure.

There is a lot of potential for the alliance structure to shake up in the Fall. If not, look for Faz and perhaps Steve to leave the stage.

Agreed, as I noted above. But see that Merlin and Brooklyn are treading water as well. It seems that this likely is press from Don now, not Faz as the "mission" remains the focus.

I have to say that I don't see any reason for Turkey to not stab Italy. He can take Naples and even if Melinda bounces an attack on Rome, he would probably take it in the Spring. There's not much purpose of playing Turkey if you don't take this stab. If not Naples, what is his next dot? Well, I guess he could take Tunis instead.

But, don't expect to see it either. I think this could just lock up. This is the classic thing that tended to happen in the big press war games of the 1980's big six or seven way draws where not much happened except in the press. And remember that we've had the merest fraction of press that would have happened in those great press games.

Postscript: I see that Don "misordered" F Aeg so now he's still in the better position of Aeg as opposed to the ludicrous position of Eas. This is clearly a suspicious misorder, and it's clearly to Russia's advantage to be in Aeg. This fleet position makes it a little less likely that Vince would "go rogue".

I suspect that there is strong diplomatic pressure from Don on Vince to not stab Melinda. But really, what's the point of sticking with IRT?

In such situations, one must always ask "who turned in the misorder adjudication to the GM"? In this case, the only one who could have done so is Don himself. So Don is showing us how the strategic misorder can work, or not work, since Vince should

be able to figure out that it WAS in fact a strategic misorder. Let me also "little grasshoppers" impart some Zen wisdom to you. When one WANTS to misorder intentionally, the prudent player always calls ** attention to the misorder. In my particular house rules, I have a clause that tells you that you must do this. I myself would have denied Don's request to readjudicate under those house rules, since it directly states that if the GM interprets the will of the order incorrectly, the order stands. You open yourself to this UNLESS you call attention to the intentional misorder. Thus, if you want to be sure, tell the GM. Of course, with that rule, if people see a silly intentional misorder, then they know that the player did it intentionally. This just ratchets the whole game up another level. You have to interpret how the other players are going to see your misorder. The rule that Doug played under here, where he allowed Don to call the misorder on himself (and by the way where the GM never has shown us -- not sure if the other players -- what precisely Don actually WROTE -- I'm a bit unclear about what that exactly was and if I were in the game I would ask for said clarification so I could try to verify my suspicion that it was in fact an intentional misorder and that Don called it on himself) to my mind leads to more confusion. This does, by the way, make it more likely that Don is in fact the Carson author of the Brooklyn story and our patience is going to be tried until Don actually stabs.**

I don't think I want to say any more than that, I don't want to make my request to "see what Don actually submitted" an official one as I do not want to see anything that the players don't see.

SPRING 1904

by Richard Walkerdine

The young Lieutenant looked a bit confused. "But Sir," he said, "I can find no sign of another ship and the damage to the unknown craft was immense. It would surely need a large and powerful ship to use a weapon capable of that much destruction and it would show up on the scanners."

General U'til smiled at his Science Officer. "I doubt it Lieutenant. The device is no larger than a real screwdriver and as for The Doctor's ship that is nothing more than a small blue box, although it is much bigger inside. I doubt our scanners would detect it at this range."

Lieutenant B'des looked even more confused. "But Sir," he said quietly, "this just doesn't make sense. A device that powerful being wielded by a creature in a

small box that is larger on the inside? How can this be? And if the creature is that powerful should we not ask Lieutenant R'lok to keep our weapons on full alert?"

The old soldier laughed. "I don't think we need fear The Doctor Lieutenant. He assisted me greatly all those years ago and he has just saved us from almost certain destruction. I think we can count on him as a friend."

The young Science Officer still looked rather unsure but had no doubt about the General's experience and wisdom. "Very well Sir," he replied, "if you are sure. But what kind of creature is this Doctor?"

"He looks much like a human from Earth, although he has two hearts," replied his commanding officer. "But in fact he is a Timelord, and the last of his race. He travels the timestreams, fighting evil and giving assistance to those who need it."

Lieutenant B'des let out a sigh and looked visibly more relaxed. "Well Sir," he said, "he certainly sounds like a strong ally."

The General smiled. "That he is Lieutenant, a very strong one. But now I must conduct the next trainee briefing."

He went to the meeting hall and took his place at the lectern. "Hail Fndili," he cried.
"Hail Fndili," came the reply.

He paused for a moment as he collected his thoughts. "Gentlemen," he began, "I can now confirm that the unknown ship has been destroyed and the threat to this vessel and ourselves appears to be at an end."

There was an audible sigh of relief throughout the hall.

"However," he continued, "as I suggested earlier the ship was not destroyed by our weapons alone. We seem to have had assistance from a third party and that matter is under investigation." He deliberately kept the remark vague as he was not about to reveal state secrets unless absolutely necessary.

There was an excited buzz throughout the hall as the trainees digested this surprising news. The General waited a few moments for the noise to reduce before continuing. "But we are here for the latest briefing, so let us proceed."

"England is now looking to be in a far stronger position. An alliance with France is clearly in place and, possibly, Russia also. If that is the case then the demise of Germany could be very swift indeed."

"And France also is now looking much stronger. Apparently now secure in the north with an English alliance and with sufficient forces to defend in the south against Italy, with the possibility of a Turkish alliance meaning the prospects of making gains against Italy is now very much more promising."

"As for Germany, little can be said. Certainly the most successful Power at the start of this conflict but now, suddenly, reduced to almost nothing." He grasped the lectern and stared at the trainees for a moment. "Remember, Gentlemen, in a war situation the position can change very quickly."

"And so to Italy. Clearly about to enter into conflict with France but with Turkey almost perfectly positioned for an attack. I think we could soon see Italy going the same way as Austria and Germany."

"And what of Russia? Another country in a much improved position. There seems to be some sort of understanding with England and Germany is all but eliminated. In the south there is an alliance with Turkey and, perhaps, Russia too could benefit from an attack on Italy."

"So finally we come to Turkey, another Power in a much improved position. Perfectly positioned for an attack on Italy, most certainly with French (and possibly Russian) help and potentially soon to be in command of the Mediterranean."

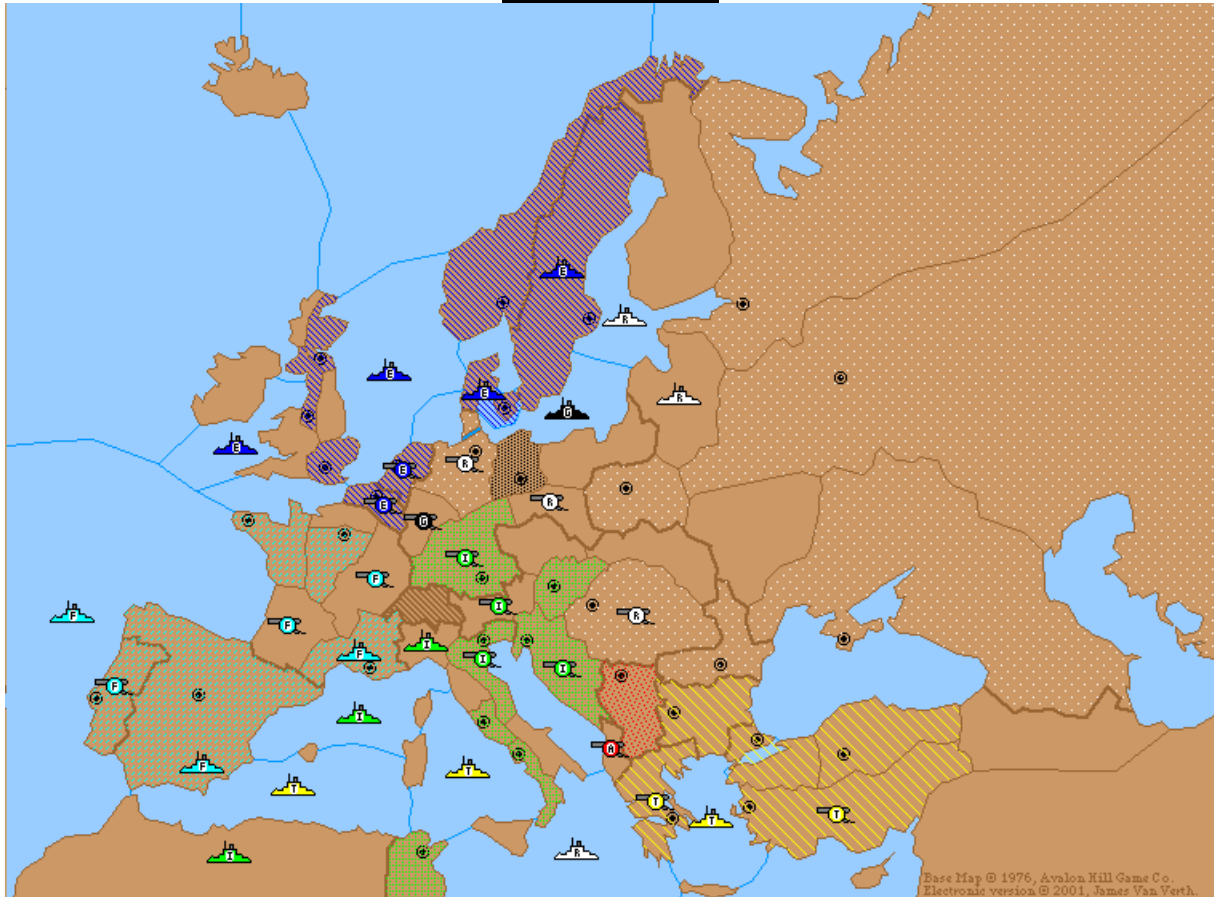
"In summary therefore I would say that Italy has a huge amount of diplomatic activity ahead of it if it is not to follow the path of Austria and Germany. As usual, Gentlemen, I require your analyses by midday tomorrow. Hail Fndili."

He returned to the bridge to consult further with his Science Officer. But as he entered an alarm sounded and Lieutenant B'des rushed to his console and began punching the keys. "General," he shouted, "there is a strange screeching sound and an unknown intruder

has somehow materialized in cargo bay 4! Shall I send a security team?"

General U'til paused for a moment and then smiled. "No B'des," he said. "That won't be needed. Come and meet The Doctor."

Fall 1904 Results



Despite the initial exit poll results, both Austria and Germany live to fight on in 1905.

Austria: A Albania - Greece (*Fails*).

England: A Denmark – Belgium, A Holland Supports A Berlin – Kiel, F Irish Sea Supports F North Atlantic Ocean - Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F North Sea Convoys A Denmark – Belgium, F Skagerrak – Denmark, F Sweden Supports F Skagerrak - Denmark.

France: A Burgundy - Munich (*Bounce*), A Gascony Supports F Marseilles, A Kiel Supports A Burgundy – Munich (*Disbanded*), F Marseilles Supports F Spain(sc), F North Atlantic Ocean - Mid-Atlantic Ocean, A Portugal Supports F Spain(sc), F Spain(sc) Supports F North Atlantic Ocean - Mid-Atlantic Ocean.

Germany: F Baltic Sea - Berlin (*Bounce*), A Ruhr - Munich (*Bounce*).

Italy: F Gulf of Lyon Supports F Tyrrhenian Sea - Western Mediterranean, A Munich Supports A Berlin - Kiel (*Cut*), F Piedmont Supports F Gulf of Lyon, A Trieste - Serbia (*Bounce*), A Tyrolia Supports A Munich, A Venice Supports F Piedmont, F Western Mediterranean - North Africa.

Russia: F Aegean Sea - Ionian Sea, A Berlin – Kiel, A Budapest - Serbia (*Bounce*), F Gulf of Bothnia - Baltic Sea (*Fails*), A Silesia - Berlin (*Bounce*), F St Petersburg(sc) - Livonia.

Turkey: F Constantinople - Aegean Sea, A Greece Supports A Trieste - Serbia (*Cut*), F Ionian Sea - Tyrrhenian Sea, A Smyrna Hold, F Tyrrhenian Sea - Western Mediterranean.

Supply Center Chart

Austria:	Serbia=1, Even
England:	Belgium, Denmark, Edinburgh, Holland, Liverpool, London, Norway, Sweden=8, Build 2
France:	Brest, Marseilles, Paris, Portugal, Spain=5, Remove 1
Germany:	Berlin=1, Remove 1
Italy:	Munich, Naples, Rome, Trieste, Tunis, Venice, Vienna=7, Even
Russia:	Budapest, Kiel, Moscow, Rumania, Sevastopol, St Petersburg, Warsaw=7, Build 1
Turkey:	Ankara, Bulgaria, Constantinople, Greece, Smyrna=5, Even

PRESS

CARSON, CALIFORNIA: Merlin looked again at the wide chasm across the cavern. Then he looked down at Brooklyn and gave him a wry smile. "You think we'll never get across it, boy? Remember this is a quest and this is your destiny – and I am a great magician. There is always a way. Now step back and let me prepare."

The eleven year old looked a bit startled and stepped back several paces, realizing that there must be more magic on the way. Merlin marked a circle in the soil with his staff and then traced out some strange symbols inside it which Brooklyn didn't recognize. He turned to his young companion with a stern expression on his face. "Keep well clear Brooklyn," he said, "the spell of Making is the most powerful spell of all."

The young boy gasped and his heart started beating faster. He stepped back a few more paces, frightened now but determined to see this adventure through to whatever the result would be.

The old magician stepped into the circle and raised his staff. He pointed it at the chasm and began to chant. "Anál nathrach, orth'bháis's bethad, do chel denmha." Brooklyn watched with eyes wide, but nothing seemed to happen. Then Merlin repeated the incantation. "Anál nathrach, orth'bháis's bethad, do chel denmha."

As he watched he saw a faint mist emerge from Merlin's staff and slowly spread across the chasm. With his eyes wide in wonder he took another step back as Merlin repeated his chant. "Anál nathrach, orth'bháis's bethad, do chel denmha."

The mist thickened and was now a black fog stretching across the chasm. The magician took a deep breath and repeated the spell in an even louder voice. "Anál nathrach, orth'bháis's bethad, do chel denmha."

As Brooklyn watched in wonder the fog slowly dispersed and revealed a crystal bridge crossing the chasm. He looked up at his old companion. "Wow Merlin," he gasped, "that was brilliant. That was the best ever."

Merlin smiled and rested an arm on Brooklyn's shoulder. "Yes," he replied, "but also the most demanding. I will

need to rest soon, and you will need to help me over the bridge."

"Oh sure Merlin," said Brooklyn, more than happy to help his wonderful new friend. "Just lean on me and we'll get across in no time."

The two companions made their way slowly across the crystal bridge, Merlin, totally exhausted, breathing deeply and leaning heavily on young Brooklyn's shoulder. The youngster looked up at him with a smile. "This sure is some adventure Merlin," he said.

The old magician just smiled, and then held his shoulder more firmly. "An adventure yes boy, but there is still a long way to go."

Brooklyn looked up at him. "Oh crikey, still that destiny thing?"

Bitter Austrian Ex-Pat to Chastened German Ex-Pat:
I was sort of hoping to outlast you, but no hard feelings.

Albania to Audience: Kids, Germany attacking Austria early on is something that should only be tried by professionals in a controlled environment. Don't try this at home!

(Somewhere on a foggy mountaintop) - There was a deep groan from deep in the locked cell. "Good grief...what happened?"

"Not so loud. Have pity on the dying."

The woman slowly sat up on the bunk. "Otis? Otis Campbell? 'Zat you?"

"Yeah."

"What happened? The last thing I remembered was setting up shots."

"That was about 6am."

"What time is it now?"

"Nigh onto 11:30."

The woman used the bars to pull herself to her feet.
"Crap! I'm gonna be late to church!"

"You can't go. You're barred from the church...and the bar."

"What! I can't go to the First Baptist Bar & Grille anymore? How come?"

Otis rolled over and groaned. "You don't want to know what you did to the preacher." He winced when the woman in the cell next to him loudly moaned.

Fall 1904 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

Well, this is an interesting development. The big news is that England thinks he's made a deal with somebody, and that France is the next target. France is kicked out of Belgium and Kiel and faces a disband.

So, the key here is that one way this game COULD have played out is to see everyone line up along the stalemate lines and hold. That would have been pretty boring, and I wouldn't have expected it from these players. So, people were probably talking about "shakeups". Did England do this on his own, or was he expecting some reciprocity? And was that reciprocity coming now or later? Some of this is to be seen, but Mr. Hood comes on the scene late, and maybe he wasn't up on the rest of the Diplomacy and got targeted. Even for good players this is a big risk when you jump into a game. The next question is: who is England's deal with? We're not sure, are we?

I doubt that this will work out in a way that England expects.

We need to parse Rick's statements into two pieces, what does England expect, and will it happen? My guess is that the deal is with Don and Russia. And was Don supposed to do something different this season? He moved to Kiel AND he moved out of St.Pete. And Bill supported Don to Kiel. Sounds like a deal to me, AND a perfect opportunity to see what is up with the deal from the Winter builds. England builds two and Russia builds one. We keep an eye on Edinburgh and St.Pete. Are the empty after Winter? I say yes.

I have a lot of questions. I'll sort them by power.

Austria: Why is Austria still alive? Are the other powers keeping him alive to torture him, or as a reward for something? It seems like a lot of effort. Or is it some kind of weird deal being done with regard to some third power.

So, remember, this is a game amongst luminaries of the 1980's hobby. This was the time of some of the greatest HOBBYness (Melinda's nickname in fact was "Hobby Holley") for the Diplomacy hobby in its

history. What this meant, reflected in both the press and the play, was higher order gaming, levels of play, and multiple goals. I think this four way deal, everyone bounces, is perfectly emblematic of play in that period. Will it last forever? No, but when it breaks it likely will break in some interesting way. Don may be breaking it shortly.

England: yeah, so you've stabbed and taken a dot or two. What next? England seems to think that he's made a deal with Russia, but how can he grow at this point? Surely he doesn't have the position to move on Iberia before Italy & Turkey can. What will England do if Russia puts a new force in St. Petersburg? Personally, I don't like burning an ally in favor of a strategic disadvantage. At this point in the game, I don't think England has any allies. Of course, I could be wrong.

The danger here is that Don has his sights on soloing, what does Bill have his sights on? Rick is correct about the dangers; however, there is a VERY pro-English way this could fall. See Don's build, see Don's build, see how they run, see how they run? If it is the army Warsaw, and if Vince is in on the deal, then Hobby Holley's hobby may be all over. And then Bill does have centers to take as we move toward the ending TRE.

France: David faces the disadvantage of being a late joiner. So far his play has been sensible, but a lot of the other players are doing weird things. This should be an interesting challenge. We'll see what David has up his sleeve next.

Right, so if I am right, then David and Melinda need to work together and see what they can do. But look at the tactics? The answer is NOT very much!

Germany. Does Faz keep the army or the fleet? The bounce in Berlin was a nice touch. It seems to me that Faz hasn't coordinated with anybody this past year. Will that change? If he keeps the army, it could get interesting.

So, where does Faz fit on the TREe, and for that matter what of Steve, is it a GREAT alliance? I say yes indeedly do, it is. So, yes, Faz keeps the army.....

Italy. Well, Melinda has a dot here, a dot there, but I still strongly dislike the passage of fleets through the Ionian. There's some chance that the English move will lead to a massive anti-English alliance. But another possibility is that RT will decide that Italy is no longer necessary. If they got a sweet offer from France, that might be appealing.

**Does Melinda know what is about to hit her?
Possibly not....**

Russia. Somehow Don is all over this game. He is dominating the negotiations and the alliances are working well for him. Everybody is running away! Well, except for Faz, but signs point to a short game for Faz at this point.

If Faz does keep the fleet, Don has his fleets set to enforce submission. I've said before in this that Faz in his suicidalness is in cahoots with Don and been wrong before, but again, the Winter moves will tell all.

Turkey. This position leaves me feeling 'meh'. Even if Turkey breaks into the MAO, so what? An optimistic medium term outlook here would result in two French/Iberian SCs completely disconnected from the five he has in the East. And if Russia were to build a fleet in Sev, either now or at some point later, Turkey would be screwed.

Not if Turkey is sitting in Italy? Then this really IS a Juggernaut. Maybe that's bad for England too, but I think Don has designs on the solo in ways that our Dentist Author (Vince is a dentist and writes novels on the side) has not. So, the main worry IS for Vince.

So England gets two builds, but continues to pursue a dangerous strategy.

Russia's build is fascinating. I suspect it'll be an army in the middle. I expect he'll gather in Berlin next year and by then we'll see the most likely candidates for the end game.

Ah, and the press, Rick, the press....

We must assist the readers in deciphering Don's press. I am now even more sure that Don must be Brooklyn and Merlin. "Nathrach" means snake in Scottish or Gaelic, I believe. Let me see what else happens next, let me leave the reader in a bit of suspense. There also is a relevant MySpace video that one might want to view....

And as Faz is dying on his mountaintop, Otis Campbell of course is the drunk from Mayberry.

FALL 1904

by Richard Walkerdine

General U'til and Lieutenant B'des entered cargo bay 4. Before them stood a small blue box with a flashing light on top. The young Science Officer looked at his commander in some confusion. "But Sir," he said, "surely this can't be a spacecraft? It's so small. And how could the creature inside have destroyed an alien ship that our weapons could only damage?"

The old soldier looked at his Lieutenant and smiled. "You are still young B'des," he replied, "and have much to learn. The galaxy is full of strange craft, strange creatures and strange happenings. Come and meet one of the strangest of all."

They walked into the cargo bay, B'des keeping a few steps behind his General, and then stopped a few yards before the blue box. General U'til looked at his Science Officer and smiled. "It is called the Tardis, which means Time And Relative Dimensions In Space, and it is a very strange and very powerful device, and the creature that controls it is more powerful than you could ever imagine."

The young Officer looked concerned. "Sir?" he asked. "Are you sure this is safe?"

The General smiled. "As safe as anything in this strange galaxy of ours," he replied as the door of the Tardis opened and The Doctor stepped out.

He looked human, with a rather rugged face, quite long wavy hair and dressed in an open necked shirt, ill fitting pants and a long trenchcoat. He looked at the two Fndili and smiled. "General U'til," he said, "is it really you?"

The General waved two upper tentacles in greeting. "It is Doctor," he replied, "and by the Goddess it's good to see you again. I never thought I would." He stepped forward and the two very different creatures embraced, clearly delighted to be meeting again. Lieutenant B'des began to feel a bit more relaxed.

They broke apart and the General looked over at B'des. "This is my Science Officer Doctor, Lieutenant

B'des. He has done some excellent work in our battle against that strange ship. But I think we need to thank you for its ultimate destruction. This is no more than a training mission with a very inexperienced crew."

The Doctor smiled at B'des and nodded to him. B'des, still a little nervous, smiled back. Then The Doctor's expression became more serious. "General," he said, "we have a huge problem here, which could affect the whole galaxy. And your ship is the only one nearby. With your permission I would like to address the entire crew."

The old soldier gasped. "The whole galaxy? Are you sure? No, never mind, of course you are sure. Come old friend, I need to conduct the next briefing and then you can tell us what is happening."

They made their way to the meeting hall, with Lieutenant B'des following a few yards behind. The trainees were already assembled, but the room fell silent when The Doctor followed General U'til into the hall. "Hail Fndili," cried the General.

"Hail Fndili," replied the young potential officers, although the response was more muted than usual as they wondered who was this strange new creature.

General U'til looked at his trainees and smiled. "Gentlemen, this is The Doctor, a very old friend of mine and a very good friend of the Empire." He paused for a moment as he noticed the trainees visibly relaxing as they heard his words. Then he continued. "And it is he who we must thank for destroying the alien ship which attacked us. He will be giving us an account of the situation in due course. But first, the briefing."

"As you can see England has clearly been making a lot of progress in its diplomacy. France is now no longer a threat and Russia is clearly an ally. It remains to be seen of course where English eyes turn next."

"France is now free to defend against a likely attack from Italy and, probably, Turkey. Although if it can conduct some skilful diplomacy it could yet turn Turkey against Italy and keep its southern borders far more secure."

"Italy itself is clearly looking at an attack on France, almost certainly allied with Turkey, but is still very vulnerable if Turkey decides that Italy is an easier target. The Italians will have to be very careful in their negotiations although what appears to be an understanding with Russia will be to their advantage."

"And so to Turkey. Clearly allied with both Italy and Russia for the moment, but how long will this last? The temptation to turn on Italy must be enormous, especially if France can conduct some clever diplomacy. This I think is currently the most interesting area on the continent."

"Finally we come to Russia. Making very good progress in the north but the position in the south is somewhat confusing. A good understanding with Turkey of course, at least at present, but it doesn't seem to be getting them anywhere. I begin to wonder if there is some Italian planning here?"

"In summary therefore I see England as in a position of great strength and Russia only a little less so. France can now concentrate on defending its southern borders but the position of Italy and Turkey is the most interesting. I think we can expect some major sea battles in the Mediterranean."

"As usual, gentlemen, your reports by midday tomorrow. Hail Fndili!"

The old General paused. Then he motioned to the Doctor. "Doctor, I think it is time we heard what you have to say."

The Doctor grasped the lectern and stared out at the wide eyed and expectant Fndili faces. "My friends, and proud soldiers of Fndili," he began, "I have grave news. This planet, your ship, the whole Fndili Empire, and indeed the whole galaxy is in terrible danger."

There was much murmuring in the hall as his words sank in, and some looks of consternation among the trainees. The Doctor waited a moment before continuing. "There has appeared a rift in the time/space continuum, somewhere beyond the orbit of Jupiter in this system. It has opened a portal to another dimension, which is where that unknown ship

came from. But this is no ordinary dimension. It is a faerie dimension, a place of magic, which is why your weapons had little effect. Alas, there are some doors which would be better never opened."

Lieutenant B'des, watching from the viewscreen on the bridge, smiled when he heard those words, remembering what he had said to the General about his childhood stories of goblins and witches.

General U'til interrupted. "But Doctor," he asked, "if our weapons had little effect how did you succeed?"

The Doctor smiled. "I was a bit fortunate. I took the Tardis back in a mini time slip, just a few nanoseconds, and used the sonic screwdriver. By the time the alien ship appeared my beam was beyond its

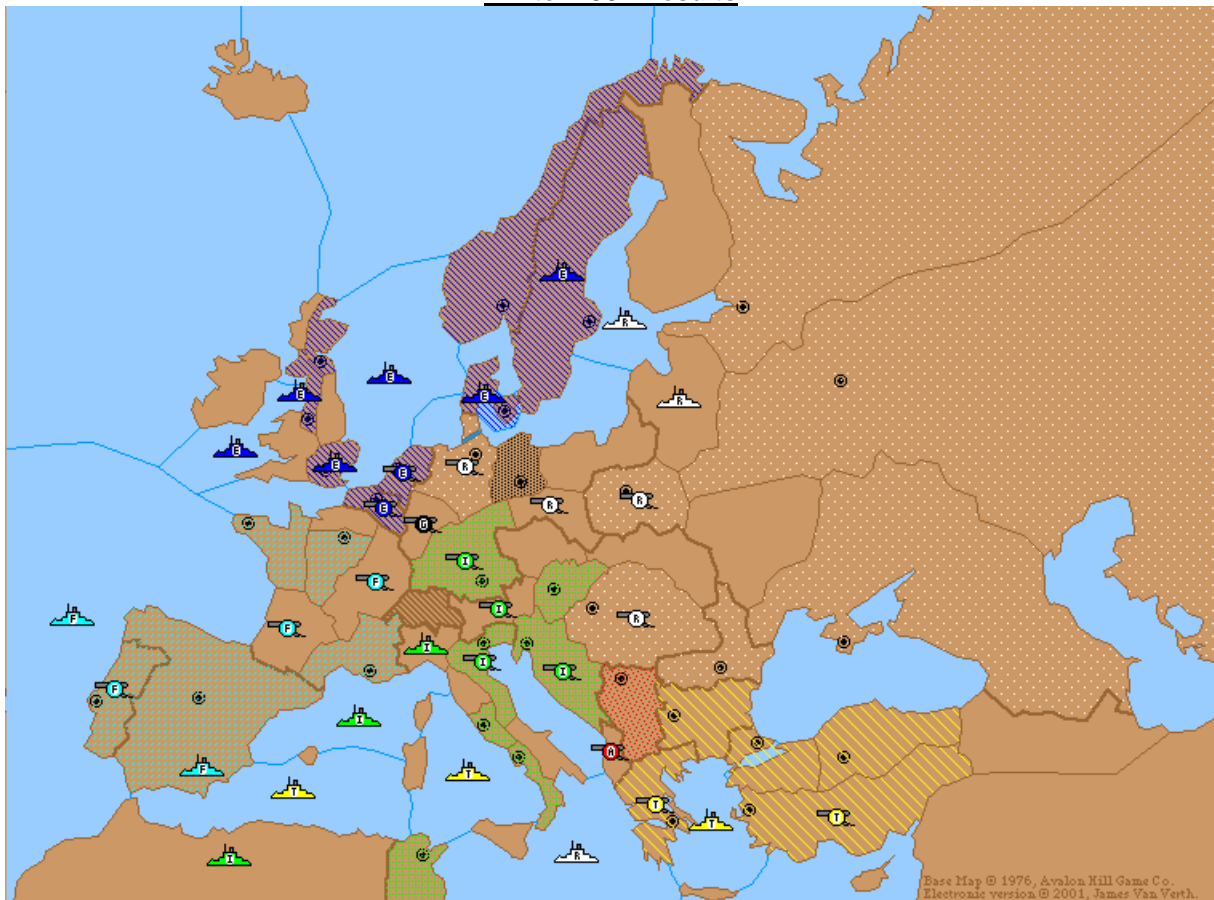
shields and could do its work." He paused for a moment. "But I was lucky and there was only one ship. If they send through a fleet there will be little I can do, and the whole galaxy will be in mortal peril."

There was more murmuring from the trainees. General U'til interrupted again. "Doctor, I am sorry but we need to make our next time jump to continue the mission. But what can we do about this threat?"

The Doctor smiled again. "My apologies General. Please conduct your next time jump. I do have a plan which I will explain when the jump is completed."

Both the General and the trainees looked visibly relieved at news of a plan.

Winter 1904 Results



The chill of winter covers the continent, while conflict hibernates.

Austria: Has A Albania.

England: Build F London, Build F Liverpool..Has A Belgium, F Denmark, A Holland, F Irish Sea, F Liverpool, F London, F North Sea, F Sweden.

France: Remove F Marseilles..Has A Burgundy, A Gascony, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, A Portugal, F Spain(sc).

Germany: Remove F Baltic Sea..Has A Ruhr.

Italy: Has F Gulf of Lyon, A Munich, F North Africa, F Piedmont, A Trieste, A Tyrolia, A Venice.

Russia: Build A Warsaw..Has A Budapest, F Gulf of Bothnia, F Ionian Sea, A Kiel, F Livonia, A Silesia, A Warsaw.
Turkey: Has F Aegean Sea, A Greece, A Smyrna, F Tyrrhenian Sea, F Western Mediterranean.

PRESS

CARSON, CALIFORNIA: Merlin looked down at his young companion as he rested on his shoulder. He drew in a deep breath as they made their way across the crystal bridge. "Yes Brooklyn," he replied, "it is that destiny thing as you so charmingly describe it. Help me across this bridge, for I feel so weak from casting that Spell of Making, and then I can perhaps tell you a little more."

"Sure Merlin," replied the eleven year old, "just rest on me." He staggered slightly as the old magician sighed and leaned more heavily on him, but he was determined to help his new friend all he could, and he so much wanted to find out about what that destiny thing meant.

They crossed the chasm, although Merlin staggered a few times and groaned. But Brooklyn held him tight and guided him to the far side. Eventually they reached the end of the bridge and then just collapsed onto the ground, Merlin still exhausted from his spell making and Brooklyn equally exhausted from helping the old man across.

It was several minutes before they got their breath back. Brooklyn was the first to recover and looked around at what was on the far side of the chasm. "Merlin," he gasped, "these look like more bones!"

The old magician groaned again and sat up, looking around him. "They are bones Brooklyn," he replied. "I think there was once a great battle here, and from the look of the bones I would say it was mostly Dwarves and Goblins, although I think there might have been other creatures too." He sprinkled some more of his powder

and watched the results. "But it was a very long time ago. I don't think it concerns us now."

"Oh wow," said the young boy as they slowly walked across the ancient battlefield, their shoes crunching the ancient bones into dust. Then Brooklyn looked up at Merlin with a slightly puzzled expression. "So Merlin," he asked, "does this mean all those old fairy tales are actually true?"

The old magician smiled and patted the young boy's head. "Not all Brooklyn," he replied, "but many of them are. Very many of them."

Brooklyn looked up at him again. "Geez, that is so wild. But what about that destiny thing Merlin? You promised you would tell me."

Merlin stopped and smiled at the young boy. "I did and I will," he replied. He kneeled down, groaning slightly with the effort. He held Brooklyn by the shoulders and looked into his eyes. "Your destiny, young man," he said quietly, "is to save your planet and your race, and indeed the whole of this galaxy. You have a heavy task upon your young shoulders but I promise I will give you all the help I can."

Brooklyn looked confused. "But Merlin, I'm just a kid?"

His old companion held him tighter and smiled. "I know, but a very special kid."

London to the board: I just don't have anything you would want to hear.

Winter 1904 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

So, as Rick and I differed a bit in our comments on Fall, the builds fell just about precisely as I had suspected. So there are at least three general possibilities to consider before we discuss the situation that each power faces after these adjustments.

1) There is indeed a GREAT alliance against IF, in which case we pretty quickly should see Italy get crunched.

2) Don fooled Bill into that stab, and the RIT charges forward (likely getting into the Mid-Atlantic and Marseilles now) and probably takes out the remaining AG failed Anschluss remnants.

3) Something more complicated where ER is the primary alliance, but Don keeps stringing one or both of IT along.

The uncertainty is something that can and should be played up in the negotiations that are going on right now. Let's see what faces each power and then we'll discuss the latest press.

Austria: There's only so long everyone is going to allow Steve to string along. The only useful thing I can see is if Italy is to be stabbed now that Steve will be helpful joining in. But we should be surprised if the status quo is maintained another game year.

England: Bill took a big risk in stabbing David. Unless Don is really strongly on board with Bill, the long term outcomes look difficult for England here and as I've said even there it is just Don really going for the solo and working with Bill along the way to getting there. It is hard to see how England picks up another center this year, unless Germany's army is helping.

France: David gets whipsawed as he joins this game. France could lose both Marseilles and the Mid-Atlantic this turn. It is not clear who his allies can be. If there is a GREAT alliance, then Melinda should be willing to help, but that's not going to work in anything except the short run. I suppose one could try to make up with England and hold the Mid-Atlantic, but Bill was pretty definitive in the fall. I would probably triple Marseilles to try to keep that and let them get into the Mid-Atlantic to see if that changes the dynamic.

Germany: I think Faz really wants "out", but he might be on board to helping ER? Obviously, Berlin is Don's if he wants it.

Italy: As we've been seeing, Melinda is trusting RT, probably she has to keep trusting them and see if the Mid-Atlantic can be cracked. I think Melinda has the fewest choices here, not good for Italy!

Russia: Don continues to keep all the balls in the air. He determines which of the three options above we play for this game year. I would probably play (1) myself, but Don may not want to help Turkey that much.

Turkey: Vince seems not to be very diplomatically engaged, just following Don's lead. The position right now is such that Don can't stab him, so that's not bad.

PRESS: Someone seems to be asking Bill why he's not writing any press, you see his one line answer. Don, on the other hand, continues to play out Merlin's story with Brooklyn. There are the lines about "all the old myths", so in addition to a King Arthur aspect to Brooklyn's learning from Merlin, Don seems about to break out other mythical creatures or thoughts. The Dwarves and Elves suggest hobbits and such or other magical creatures may be in Brooklyn's future. Does this have anything to do with the game yet? Not especially, but it might, soon.

I'm a little reluctant to say too much, because it seems clear to me that one player is doing much better than the others, and I don't know if it's fair to draw a target on his back.

Is that what observers are for?

Jim had some good insights with his post-build commentary. For me, the question is what Russia will take after taking Berlin.

I think either the IRT will stick together, and England is being led down the primrose path, or Russia is going to turn on one of his Southern partners soon.

The press from England saying that he doesn't have time to talk to anybody seems odd. I don't see how that can end well for him. But then again, so many people are pursuing so many strategies that would, um, diverge from my normal strategy, that there is no shortage of disapproval to go around.

I wonder if there is some deal with Steve to make sure he outlives Faz. It's the kind of thing that this crowd would do.

I want to see Steve's army convoyed to Liverpool. MAKE IT HAPPEN, PEOPLE!

I suspect we'll see a season or so of everybody jumping on France, though if RT want to cut out their Italian partner, they might do that now. I don't think they will. I mean, the kind of trust that Melinda has shown would never be brutally abused, would it? (*cackle*)

Do we need another country-by-country summary?

Austria - in freefall like the Broncos
Germany - can still cause problems for people, like the Bills
England - doing well, but I have my doubts, like the Falcons
France - mid-season replacement can't save the position, like the Cowboys
Italy - early leader but strategy may be past its peak, like the Jets
Turkey - waiting too long to make a push, like the Chargers
Russia - clicking on all gears at the right time, like the Patriots

WINTER 1904

by Richard Walkerdine

The time jump was completed and the trainees were once again assembled in the meeting hall. General U'til looked out at the expectant faces; so young, so inexperienced in the arts of war. He sighed.

"Gentlemen," he began, "I know you want to hear what plan The Doctor has in mind, as do I, but this is still a training mission and the training will continue. Hail Fndili."

"Hail Fndili," came the response, and the general felt more relaxed. They might be raw recruits but they had the devotion to the Empire about them and the old soldier just knew they would be the best group he had ever had. May the Goddess see fit to preserve them, he thought. He grasped the lectern and looked out at the expectant faces.

"You will see that England has raised two new fleets and with Germany virtually demolished that can surely only mean an imminent attack on France. But France has removed its fleet from Marseilles, so is there some agreement with Italy? If so France may yet be able to defend against England - at least for a while. And Russia has raised a new army in Warsaw, so the progress of its forces through German territory is clearly going to continue. But I still wonder about Turkey, which I am convinced holds the key to control of the Mediterranean. England is clearly in the ascendency, Russia only slightly less so, but the situation between France, Italy and Turkey is by far the most fascinating. I expect Turkish aggression very soon. But as usual I require your reports by midday ships time tomorrow. Hail Fndili!"

The old General looked across to The Doctor, who had been waiting patiently at the side of the hall. "Doctor," he said, "I think we are all keen to hear of your plan, and the viewscreens are now on throughout the ship. Every Fndili on board will see and hear you."

The Doctor smiled and walked slowly to the lectern, his trenchcoat flapping around his legs as he moved. He took his place and waited for a few moments as he looked at the assembled trainees, noticing a few tentacles twitching and eye stalks quivering as they displayed their nervousness. "Brave soldiers of Fndili," he began, "you already know that the whole galaxy faces a terrible threat from the faerie creatures of this magical dimension, and yours is the only ship anywhere near the rift."

He paused as the young Fndili looked at each other, defiance and determination written all over their eye stalks. As one they shook their tentacles and cried, "HAIL FNDILI!"

General U'til, standing to the side, felt another surge of pride. By the Goddess, he thought, this is a magnificent group, the best I have ever trained. I just hope The Doctor's plan will allow them to serve the Empire.

The Doctor continued. "In order to save the galaxy we must of course seal the rift and keep these creatures out of our dimension. But theirs is a magical dimension and the rift can only be sealed with a magical device." He looked at them and smiled a rueful smile. "And magic has long since gone from Earth and indeed from the entire galaxy."

There was more twitching of tentacles and quivering of eye stalks as the trainees, and indeed the whole crew, began to fear the worst.

The Doctor smiled. "But do not be too fearful for there is still a good chance that we can save ourselves." He looked out at a sea of expectant faces, even General U'til was holding his breath.

His expression became more serious. "There is still one magical device remaining on planet Earth," he said. "It is known as Excalibur and is the ancient sword of the kings of England. Even as I speak my old friend Merlin the magician and a young boy called Brooklyn are searching for it. If they find it, and if Brooklyn can retrieve it, we will yet have a means to seal the rift and save the entire galaxy."

There was silence in the hall as his words sank in and the twitching of tentacles grew even more pronounced. The General coughed and finally spoke. "Doctor," he said, "it is indeed good news that you have a plan. But this seems like a plan of desperation. Do you really think it can succeed?"

The Doctor smiled again. "Yes I do General," he replied. "There is none better than Merlin for seeking out magical devices, and young Brooklyn is among the best qualified on the planet to retrieve the sword."

"Well," said the General, clearly not convinced, "let us hope you are right."