

Diplomacy *World*



Summer 2011 - #114
www.diplomacyworld.net



Notes from the Editor

Welcome to the latest issue of Diplomacy World. Here in Texas I just walked our dog in scorching heat, so hopefully you readers are doing most of your backstabbing and strategizing indoors, or in a more pleasant climate. Maybe that's a way to win a face-to-face game: I can heavily hydrate, invite over 6 other players, and set the table up in the backyard with no access to refreshments. One by one they'd pass out in the heat, NMRing from that point forward until I was the only conscious player. Pretty soon even a goofball player like me could get to 18 centers!

But back to reality. This issue of Diplomacy World has a nice cross-section of articles, if I do say so myself (and I just did). I wish that we had a bit more on tournaments or conventions, both on-line and face-to-face. Those can be the most interesting reading (to me at least), especially when the writer reports on the people and personalities involved, and not the stale results. David Hood does bring us a nice piece on the 25th DixieCon, but there simply should be more. I don't know how else to say it:

EVENT ORGANIZERS: PUBLICIZE YOUR EVENT IN ADVANCE HERE IN DIPLOMACY WORLD WITH A FLYER OR ARTICLE...RECRUIT ONE OR TWO PARTICIPANTS, IN ADVANCE, TO COMMIT TO WRITING ARTICLES ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE ITSELF AFTER THE FACT...AND THEN PERHAPS ANOTHER ARTICLE CAN FOLLOW BY YOURSELF

DETAILING WHAT YOU LEARNED AND WHAT YOU WANT TO CHANGE FOR THE NEXT ONE. USING THIS PROCESS, YOU GET SOME GREAT READING FOR OUR AUDIENCE, AND YOU CAN HELP BUILD UP PUBLICITY AND A LARGER FOLLOWING FOR YOUR EVENT.

I'd also love to see more response to our new letter column "Topic for Next Issue" section, but I think what we got was good for a start. Life is busy; I understand that as well as anybody. Fitting in time to work on Diplomacy World is hard for me, so I am sure it can be hard for you too. But, as has been said many times in these pages, each issue is only as good as the material submitted for it.

Among the highlights this issue are some comments on the Diplomatic Pouch, in response to my article last issue; two pieces on the new diplomacycastle.com website; and a nice-sized letter column. But that's THIS issue...what about the next one? YOU can help make that one as good, or better....submit something!

I'll close by reminding you the next deadline for Diplomacy World submissions is October 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 fall, and happy stabbing!

Diplomacy World Staff:

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Managing Lead Editor: | Douglas Kent, Email: diplomacyworld@yahoo.com |
| Co-Editor: | Jim Burgess, Email: burgessofworldstd.com |
| Strategy & Tactics Editor: | Joshua Danker-Dake, Email: jadddiplomacy@gmail.com |
| Variant Editor: | Jack McHugh, Email: jwmchughjr@gmail.com |
| Interview Editor: | Jim Burgess, Email: burgessofworldstd.com |
| Club and Tournament Editor: | Matthew Shields, Email: mchirchill@gmail.com |
| Demo Game Editor: | Rick Desper, Email: rick_desper@yahoo.com |
| Technology Editor: | Chris Babcock, Email cbabcock of asciiking.com |
| Original Artwork | Nemanja Simic, Email: nemanja.painter@gmail.com |

Contributors in 2011: Michael Boutot, Jim Burgess, Joshua Danker-Dake, Sean Danker-Smith, Rick Desper, Chris Dziedzic, Tim Haffey, Thomas Haver, David Hood, Zachary Jarvie, Jack McHugh, Alex Maslow, The Game Master, Kevin O'Kelley, Larry Peery, Matthew Shields, Nemanja Simic, Richard Walkerdine, Conrad Woodring, Chris Young. Add your name to the 2011 list by submitting something for the next issue!

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.

In This Issue:

| | |
|--|---------|
| Editorial: <i>Notes from the Editor</i> by Douglas Kent | Page 2 |
| Feature: <i>For the Novices Among Us</i> by Chris Young | Page 4 |
| Hobby History: <i>My Life With Ulrika: Part 3 (The Inquest and the Aftermath)</i> by Richard Walkerdine | Page 6 |
| Strategy & Tactics: <i>The Anschluss – Can Italy Have Some?</i> by Joshua Danker-Dake | Page 8 |
| Variants: <i>Balkan Wars VI: The Shark Tank</i> by Jack McHugh | Page 10 |
| Feature: <i>Well, it Finally Happened...</i> by Matthew Shields | Page 11 |
| Face to Face: <i>DixieCon XXV</i> by David Hood | Page 11 |
| Feature: <i>Fixing a Hole</i> by Chris Dziedzic | Page 15 |
| Feedback: Knives and Daggers – the Diplomacy World Letter Column | Page 17 |
| Face to Face: <i>Face-to-Face Quarterly</i> by Matthew Shields | Page 20 |
| Variants: <i>Shift Left: If You Want to Run Home Then Play Standard</i> by Michael Boutot | Page 22 |
| Feature: <i>Lords of the Earth</i> by Tim Haffey | Page 23 |
| Convention Ad: Weasel Moot V Ad | Page 24 |
| Feature: <i>Diplomacycast.com: A Website Review or Diplomacy's Morning Zoo</i> by Jack McHugh | Page 25 |
| Contest: <i>NADF T-Shirt Design Contest</i> by Conrad Woodring | Page 26 |
| Feature: <i>Xenogogic</i> by Larry Peery | Page 27 |
| Humor: <i>Above Board</i> by Zachary Jarvie | Page 28 |
| Convention News: Selected Upcoming Conventions | Page 28 |
| Feature: <i>Haters Gonna Hate</i> by Sean Danker-Smith | Page 29 |
| Demo Game: <u>Diplomacy World</u> Demo Game – “Rotary Phones & 8-Track Tapes” 1907 Results | Page 31 |
| Hobby Service: <i>Ask the GM – An Advice Column for <u>Diplomacy World</u></i> by “Game Master” | Page 44 |

For the Novices Among Us

By Chris Young

I've been playing Dip off and on for almost 10 years now. It seems that no matter how many games I've played, I still consider myself a novice player...not a "newbie" but rather a novice. I want to make the distinction clear: a newbie may or may not have the rules under his belt. He may know how to write orders have read a little about openings or other game theory, but has had limited actual practice. A novice has played a number of games, sometimes achieving fairly good midgame results, and may have topped a board or two or even soloed. But he still lacks the skills to manipulate, and even predict the moves of his opponents when faced with seasoned veterans.



I'd like to talk about the habits and or skills that the novice lacks, and some things to do to hopefully improve their understanding of the game, and in the process improve the consistency of their play. Most of my comments will deal with face-to-face games, but they do have some application to online play as well. This list is more about the things you should be doing if you want to get better. I've compiled this list based on my observations of some truly great players, and I am striving to improve on them myself. The principles are all important, and are in no particular order.

1) The novice sees his elimination as the end of the game. However, the player looking to get better should take this time to look at the board not from his old position but from each of the other players'. Watch how things develop. Can you see what the right thing to be doing from each country's perspective is? Observe as much as you can. (in some cases this isn't possible as tournament rules may prevent it) Try to interview the other players about what they felt went right and wrong with their strategy as the game develops.

2) Learn the stalemate lines inside and out. (Don't publicize that you know them but learn them) I find that most novice players know they exist, know what provinces make up most of them but often do not realize that a stalemate line is not simply holding the provinces. You must also know the orders (and units) needed to hold the line. By knowing them intimately you can use this knowledge to your advantage, even by simply probing others as to their knowledge about them.



3) Take a page from the book 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. Seek first to understand, then to be understood. Your early negotiations should be about finding out how others are viewing things, their motivations and skill levels. The more you know about what motivates your opponents the more effective you can be at negotiating with them.

#4 and #5 go hand in hand

4) Don't practice lying. Practice avoiding telling the truth. Many players in this game think they have to lie to get ahead, and that they must stab an ally to climb to the top. While to some extent this is true, in the long run inconsistencies between your moves and your negotiations breed distrust. This is something you must avoid in order to get others to do what you want them to do. This is the single biggest area of the game one must learn to master.

We all press and get pressed for commitments. How we handle these situations is what separates novice players from our betters. To the novice we often think that the commitment will prove invaluable. However, often times we are devastated when the stab comes, because our trusted ally "told us a bold faced lie". If we later examine our negotiations we may find that the lie was one we ourselves encouraged. Remember every one of us has our own agenda in the game, and keeping that agenda a secret is your most powerful weapon. Rather than answering the difficult questions, pose intriguing ones of your own. If you have studied your opponent well you can often derail them by pointing them towards something more interesting. And don't ask for commitments from an 'ally' that you yourself would be hard pressed to keep.

5) Do what you say but keep the why to yourself. It is sage advice I have received on many occasions "never lie about the moves, lie about the motivation." "Sometimes you have to do what they want in order to set them up for that fall." However it's said, it boils down to being able to foster trust because, this game is really about making others help you get what you want.

6) Realize the game is most often lost not on the board but in the negotiations you failed to make (or made poorly)

7) Play to the end. You will learn the most, more often, from losing positions than from winning ones.

8) Understand the law of unintended consequences. Every move everyone makes on the board affects the future negotiations. Be sure what you plan can be carried out. For example, a recent game had a growing Italy about to take Mar from the French. France seized the opportunity to convoy in Spring to Tuscany. However, to everyone's surprise, Turkey dislodged the Italian F Ion, leaving the retreat of the fleet able to cover Ven. Oddly it was the French cut of support to the Ion that allowed the dislodge. The move which seemed brilliant at the time turned to despair as the French realized his cunning plan was thwarted. The Turk was only looking inward and didn't realize the possibilities that had now developed. Both the Turk and the French failed to take advantage of a new situation and Italy nearly broke through the stalemate line a year later. It illustrates that you can't ignore the larger board for your own issues. The dislodge also opened up Turkish home centers to fall. The more you begin to try and observe the law of unintended consequences, the more your understanding of the entire board changes.

9) Probably the most important lesson of all: try to take a detached view of the board at every move. Use this as a way to determine the truth of your negotiations. Take what you learn of the player, the board position, and move history to assess your own conclusions. And be ready to accept that sometimes you are simply going to be wrong. Being able to let go of the emotional attachment to being right or wrong will allow you to see the way clear to what the best opportunities are in front of you. Try not to let being right influence your future analysis either. As they say in the investment world "past performance is no guarantee of future results"

10) Take a class in communications (I know I've said that other things on the list are most important but this one really is). Learn what kind of speaker and listener you are. Learn what other types there are and how to recognize what types others are. Most importantly, learn to read how effective you are being as a communicator. Be aware of non-verbal communication you may be giving off. This skill above all others has the most benefit in real life, where negotiations can be for the highest stakes of all, and the knives very very real.



Hopefully some of the things on this list give you insight in to what may make your game better. I know that I have improved in some areas and when I have abandoned them I usually end up with dismal results. I've approached my Diplomacy play as a chance to better educate myself in my ability to think critically, make decisions decisively, and evaluate accurately what people tell me...because these skills are invaluable in life.

Chris Young says he is a novice, but he has knowledge beyond his gaming years.

My Life with Ulrika: Part 3 (The Inquest and its Aftermath)

by Richard Walkerdine

THE STORY SO FAR. Walkerdine is now in even deeper trouble. Thanks to the evil machinations of Piggott we now have two Walkerdines, at least one of which is a simulacrum. The Doctor (disguised as Melinda Holley) has organised a formal inquest in order that Ulrika Meinhof can decide which (if either) is the real one. Now read on...

Some signs of weariness had appeared around Ulrika's lovely eyes by the third day of the inquest. She had listened to a staggering array of hobby personalities, rogues and other miscreants all beamed to the control room to question Walkerdine (if indeed it was him) and the simulacrum. Her discomfort however was as nothing compared to the feelings of the two Walkerdines. They had been forced to confront people they thought were long ago vanished from Diplomacy fandom, now returned to explain how the evil Walkerdine had corrupted them and then engineered their disappearance. So far, however, neither Walkerdine had cracked...

By the fifth day she was looking really exhausted. The seemingly endless array of hobby personalities continued to question the two Walkerdines on their long list of evil schemes that had been his hallmark throughout his infamous career. Lined up around the room there now stood such famous hobby persona as Mick Bullock, Richard Sharp, Larry Peery and Walt Buchanan, their reputations at long last repaired after they had been able to tell the truth about their shady disappearances (Edi Birsan had left earlier, still trying to get a cup of coffee).

The Doctor was clearly enjoying things. She (he) had just finished a lengthy discussion with Mick Bullock about ballot-rigging in the Zine Poll and was now questioning Lew Pulsipher on Walkerdine's suppression of IDA/UK votes. Both Walkerdines were looking more and more desperate, but there was still no sign of either of them cracking...

But Ulrika had finally had enough. She rose to her feet. "Okay sweetie," she shouted, "this has gone on too long!" She unleashed the full force of her blaster at The Doctor, who screamed and fell lifeless to the floor. Walt Buchanan raised his eyes to the ceiling. "Women," he murmured.

"Darling?" queried a sleepy voice from the direction of the sleeping quarters. "What was that noise? I feel like I've been asleep for weeks." Diana Ross's face appeared around the door-post.



"Richard! That woman again! How could you?" She moved into the room and then saw the other Walkerdine as well. She stopped, looked from one to the other, opened her mouth, closed it again...and fainted.

Taking advantage of the diversion I dashed to an escape pod. Ulrika fired her blaster again, but just missed me.

Running towards the escape pods with a snarl on her face Ulrika tripped over The Doctor's body and fell. Putting out a hand to steady herself she found it covered in a sticky green slime. She screamed. "Oh god, this isn't blood!"

I gazed in horror as I recognised the slime and realised the truth. The Doctor might have looked like Melinda Holley but it was actually a Dalek! What hope was there for any of us if Piggott was in league with them?

But there was little time to think about the implications of the green Dalek slime. Before Ulrika could recover I threw myself through the door of the escape pod – and immediately wished I'd remembered to open it first. Later, rubbing my bruised shoulder, I wished there had been time to drag Diana in with me. Instead here I was, alone in a strange escape pod. Or was I alone? Had the other Walkerdine also made it into the pod, and was he even now plotting his evil schemes on the upper deck?

Meanwhile, on the upper deck, I manipulated the controls to return to the Tardis. I realised that Ulrika would have calmed down by now and I was desperate to try to regain control of the situation – and of course Diana was still there. Within moments the pod was heading back and I sank wearily onto the couch, just in time to see the service bay door disappear in a familiar glow of blue incandescence...

"Hello Ulrika," I said as a space-suited figure stepped through the smoke, "I should have guessed you would be around somewhere."

She lowered her blaster and raised her visor but I could see tears in her eyes. "Damn you, Walkerdine!" she cried. But then her shoulders sagged. "I still don't know if you're the real one or the simulacrum, but I guess it doesn't really make much difference any more."

I smiled and led her to the couch...

Try as I might I couldn't force open the hatch to the upper deck (my bruised shoulder didn't help) and when I heard the motors fire my worst fears were realised. The other Walkerdine had clearly made it to the escape pod and was now taking us to some destination known only to himself – or should that have been 'itself'? This was getting more and more confusing. I sank to the floor, not sure what my next move should be, only to see the far wall disappear in a familiar glow of blue incandescence... "Hello Ulrika," I said as a space-suited figure stepped through the smoke, "I should have guessed you would be around somewhere."

She lowered her blaster and raised her visor but I could see her eyes sparkling in anger. "Shut up Walkerdine," she snarled, "we're in big trouble. Piggott's been even smarter than we thought – there's a Meinhof simulacrum on the loose as well now and I think it's on the upper deck! I don't care if you're the real Walkerdine or not for the moment, but I'm not having two of me!"

I gazed at her in horror as the full implications of her words sank in. Two Ulrika Meinhofs at large was almost too dreadful to even think about – and was this the real one or the simulacrum?...

The retro-rockets flared briefly as the escape pod closed on the Tardis, slowing its approach to little more than a crawl. As the gap between the two craft narrowed to a few yards tractor beams took over, guiding the pod into the docking port. Then a green light flashed on the pod's control console, indicating the docking hatch was now secure.

"We've arrived Ulrika," I said, turning from the console. "Time to go."

We checked the power cells in our blasters and then donned our space suits - we were leaving nothing to chance. Then we were ready. "Now remember what I told you Walkerdine – if that's who you are," said Ulrika as she opened the airlock door. "Keep close behind me and fire at anything that moves – there will be at least half a dozen of them and I'm in no mood to take any prisoners!"

Without a backward glance she launched herself down the connecting tube. A little more apprehensively, I followed her...

Meanwhile, on the lower deck, I realised we must have returned to the Tardis when the motors cut out after just a few minutes – no other possible destination was as close as that. We quickly donned our space suits – this was the chance we had been waiting for. But why did the suits have the NASA logo, were some of those conspiracy theories actually true? But I didn't have time

to pursue the thought as Ulrika disposed of part of the far wall with her blaster and, through the hole, we saw the familiar blue box. Pausing only to check our power cells we launched ourselves into the inky black void, using our thrusters to manoeuvre towards the control room. I still had no way of knowing if my companion was the real Ulrika or the simulacrum, but for the moment it didn't seem to make much difference. "Do we go straight through the wall or do you have a more subtle plan?" I asked as we reached our destination.

"We don't do anything," she replied. As I turned to her in surprise I felt a blow to the back of my head, followed by....darkness....

Seconds later, in the Tardis control room, a double explosion shook the whole vessel as the docking hatch and part of one wall disappeared in twin glows of blue incandescence. Three silver-suited figures shot through the gaps, their blasters filling the air with a criss-cross of death. The squad of frog-masked storm troopers that had been waiting for intruders were evaporated in seconds, and the witnesses at the inquest were nowhere to be seen. Only the three intruders were now left, firing at each other and screaming and cursing as the air was filled with the hiss of energy bolts. In less than a minute the battle was over. Just one of the three was left standing, gazing down at the remains of the other two...

Later still, somewhere in space, I groaned and looked around, my head pounding as if it had been used as an anvil. I was adrift in the darkness of the void, just a few hundred yards from a very battered looking Tardis and with no sign of Ulrika. I tried to use my thrusters but found they were inoperative and for a moment I panicked – it's lonely out there, on your own.... Then I started acting rationally again and flicked on the communicator: "Ulrika...get me back....Ulrika....help...ULRIKAAAA..."



(TO BE CONTINUED)

Get the straightjacket, folks...and the rubber sheets.

The Anschluss – Can Italy Have Some?

By Joshua Danker-Dake

The *Anschluss* – the “link-up” – was the 1938 annexation (or unification, depending on who you ask) of Austria by Nazi Germany (Austria didn’t regain full independence until 1955).

The Diplomacy strategy of the same name was, to the best of my knowledge, originally developed (or at least originally discussed) by Richard Sharp. You can read his 1977 article on it [here](#). In short, it says that Germany and Austria should be played “as much as possible like a single country,” since if one goes down, the other typically follows in short order.



The basis of this, obviously, is that Germany and Austria do not attack one another; they fight back to back. You might think would be about as big a strategy “duh” as can be found in Diplomacy, but I’ve seen more than my fair share of dumb Austrians invade Germany and get destroyed immediately, and, to a lesser extent, vice versa.

The Anschluss also features a strong element of alliance-based diplomatic legwork, at least on Germany’s part. For example, Sharp suggests that Germany make the decision on whether to cede Sweden to Russia in 1901 based on Russia’s willingness to stay out of Galicia, which can free Austria up tremendously.

On the whole, the Anschluss is generally agreeable to most Germanys and Austrians – Austria needs all the help he can get, and Germany has plenty of better things to do if he can be secure in the knowledge that Austria is a trusty meat shield at his back. But there is a third party here who may chafe at the proposal of an Anschluss: Italy.

It is worth mentioning here that, while Sharp contributed a strong foundation of strategy for the other six powers, he didn’t care for Italy, and never really seemed to figure out what to do with it. He says about as much in *The Game of Diplomacy*, in which he opines that as Italy, the best you can hope for in most cases is a stupid Austria who will let you do a Key Lepanto and then pull the usual double-cross.

The other bit of diplomatic teamwork Sharp advocates as part of the Anschluss is this: Germany tells Italy that if Italy attacks Austria (or moves to Tyrolia to attack Austria), Germany will put the Munich army under Austrian command (as Germany often doesn’t need it in 1901 to be sure of picking up two builds). In this way, Italy is encouraged to join the alliance and become a naval power, helping Austria with Turkey and Germany with France.

The Anschluss works best for Germany – it puts him in the diplomatic driver’s seat. It works well for Austria, too, as it gives him one less thing to worry about. Italy, not so much – he’s the third wheel, and nobody ever pretends otherwise. Sometimes the Anschluss works for Italy; often it turns out (as in so many things) that Italy gets the short end of the stick. If Italy turns down Germany’s terms, the extra army at Austria’s disposal keeps him in check, or worse, and Italy is then fated to piddle along at four centers or so until someone can be bothered to sail over and put him out of his misery.

Sharp was not the only one who didn’t like to play as Italy. A lot of people don’t like Italy for the simple fact that they don’t know what to do with it. At least if you pull Austria, you can hope to catch a break, stave off the invaders, capture a couple of Balkan centers, and get on your feet by 1902. But Italy? Too many Italy’s seem content to sit around, hold their units, and wait for the game to either come to them (which it never does, at least not in a positive way) or end. A lot of people don’t take Italy seriously, don’t respect Italy (I’ve been Italy in games online where Russia can’t even be bothered to talk to me), and this is a big reason why. It’s also a reason why you may be able to surprise some folks.

The Anschluss policy toward Italy seems to be predicated on Italy attacking Austria and doing a bad job of it. And rightly so. Too often, Italy will get into Trieste and no further. This results in two weak fronts: while Austria is busy trying to get his home center back (which he rarely does, as Italy typically has no other pressing agendas and is free to support himself to hold), Turkey or Russia or both sweep through the Balkans, exterminate Austria, and then cripple Italy, all with remarkable alacrity.

A bad attack on Austria by Italy helps only Russia and Turkey. Does this mean that as Italy you should never attack Austria? Certainly not. My love for the challenging but exciting Bohemian Crusher (Spring 1901: VEN-TYR, ROM-VEN; Fall 1901: TYR-BOH, VEN-TYR; build A VEN) opening is well documented. If, as Italy, you can dominate Austria, then by all means do so. But if you attack him and you can't dominate, you should stop immediately.

And I mean *immediately*. You may think to yourself, *If I keep after it until Turkey or Russia takes a couple of Austrian centers, I'll be able to grab some more*. It's a lie. If, by the end of 1902, you haven't gotten any farther than Trieste, you need to tell Austria you're sorry, you need to vacate his territory, and you need to give him Trieste back. Mend that fence and rebuild that bridge, because if Austria goes down, odds are, you're next, especially if Turkey is building fleets.

But what if you succeed in dominating Austria (for the purposes of our discussion, that means that at the end of 1902, you have at least two Austrian centers, which means that with Tunis you have at least six centers)? Why, you're well on your way. You'll have enough momentum and resources to finish Austria off while presenting the eastern powers with a front that will hold.

We've seen how having Austria at his back keeps Germany safe. Well, a strong Italy that occupies the Austrian home centers is just as good, and *maybe even better*. Why? Because where is this thriving Italy going next? Odds are, he's going to keep heading in the same direction and attack Turkey. With his unique ability to encircle Turkey with fleets, Italy can put the kibosh on Turkey like nobody else.

Or perhaps Italy will make peace in the east and spread out toward France. That works well, too – often Germany and Italy can coordinate directly in this effort. Either way, odds are that Italy isn't going to storm north with armies (as an army-heavy mid-game Austria nearly always does) – that leaves his home centers vulnerable to any navy of decent size.

There are two key points here. First, an Italy that occupies the Austrian home centers can fight back to back with Germany as well as Austria can.

Second, in such a case, Italy, even a big Italy (perhaps even bigger than Germany), is generally *less* of a threat to Germany. Why? Because Italy must balance his army production with fleets, which are of no danger to Germany whatsoever. Austria, meanwhile, is the worst

naval power in the game – he can only build one fleet per year up a dead-end alley – and it is not uncommon to play a game in which Austria never builds a second fleet (never mind that 99 out of 100 Austrians would trade F TRI for A TRI in 1901 if you let them). An Austria with two armies is no threat to anybody. An Austria with four, five, six armies makes everyone nervous.

On the contrary, in such a case, Germany is often a greater threat to Italy. While a prosperous Italy will usually commit to a large navy to deal with France and Turkey (often, to some degree, simultaneously), a Germany who is doing well will by that time have quite a few armies. It can be challenging for Italy to match the growth pace of others without stretching himself too thin and tempting Germany beyond what he can bear.

In games where I have done well with Italy, Germany has always been the biggest threat. If Italy isn't careful, Germany can rip down through Tyrolia, Bohemia, and Vienna and split the Italian forces in half.

The Anschluss's hard line on Italy, therefore, is excessive, at least in many circumstances. Italy can be a good replacement for Austria as Germany's ally, but only if he can get through Austria quickly. Otherwise, he has to give it up as a bad job before things get out of hand.

So how, as Italy, do you know if it isn't working? Well, if you get bounced on a move to Tyrolia in either Spring or Fall of 1901, it already isn't working. If you get into Trieste but are unable (or unlikely) to get another Austrian center in 1902, it isn't working. Stop, say you're sorry, and give Austria his home center back. Will he forgive you? Maybe, maybe not – an Italian attack on Austria is risky for both parties. But you have to free him up to deal with Russia and Turkey. After all, he's your meat shield too.

In any case, Germany should be open to the idea of the Italian attack on Austria. The "Italian Anschluss" isn't the type of thing one spills to Germany in Spring 1901, and Germany may initially be nervous about Italy moving to Tyrolia or Bohemia or both, but these are diplomatic issues that I'm sure you can handle. While Germany may have to step in at the end of 1902 (or even before, if Italy's really botched things) with a firm hand and say, "Enough is enough," he's got to be willing in the meantime to let Italy get some.

Joshua Danker-Dake is the Diplomacy World Strategy & Tactics Editor, and has been a very positive influence on the zine as a whole since his arrival.

Balkan Wars VI: The Shark Tank

By Jack McHugh

Balkan Wars VI is one of the several Balkan Wars variants. What is Balkan Wars? Historically as the Ottoman Empire was collapsing various ethnic and racial minorities began to agitate for their own nation state as the most successful ideology of modern times, nationalism began to rear its ugly head. Several smaller powers suddenly came into existence and began to war not only the Ottoman Empire but with each other as well creating an ideal situation for a Diplomacy variant.

Balkan Wars VI, which is one of several variants that have developed over the years. It has a crowded map with seven powers with 19 centers and 8 neutral centers so there isn't much time to hang around and "wait for the game to develop" because the players start out on top of each other. The other innovation in this game is you build in ANY owned supply centers: your home centers, neutrals or captured enemy centers so it's very easy to get units where you want them.

The map is small with 13 sea zones and 4 island centers. Here are how the land provinces break down:

- Neutral at start: 14 with 8 centers
- Serbia: 3 centers with 3 provinces
- Albania: 3 centers with 3 provinces
- Greece: 3 centers with 4 provinces
- Rumania: 3 centers with 4 provinces

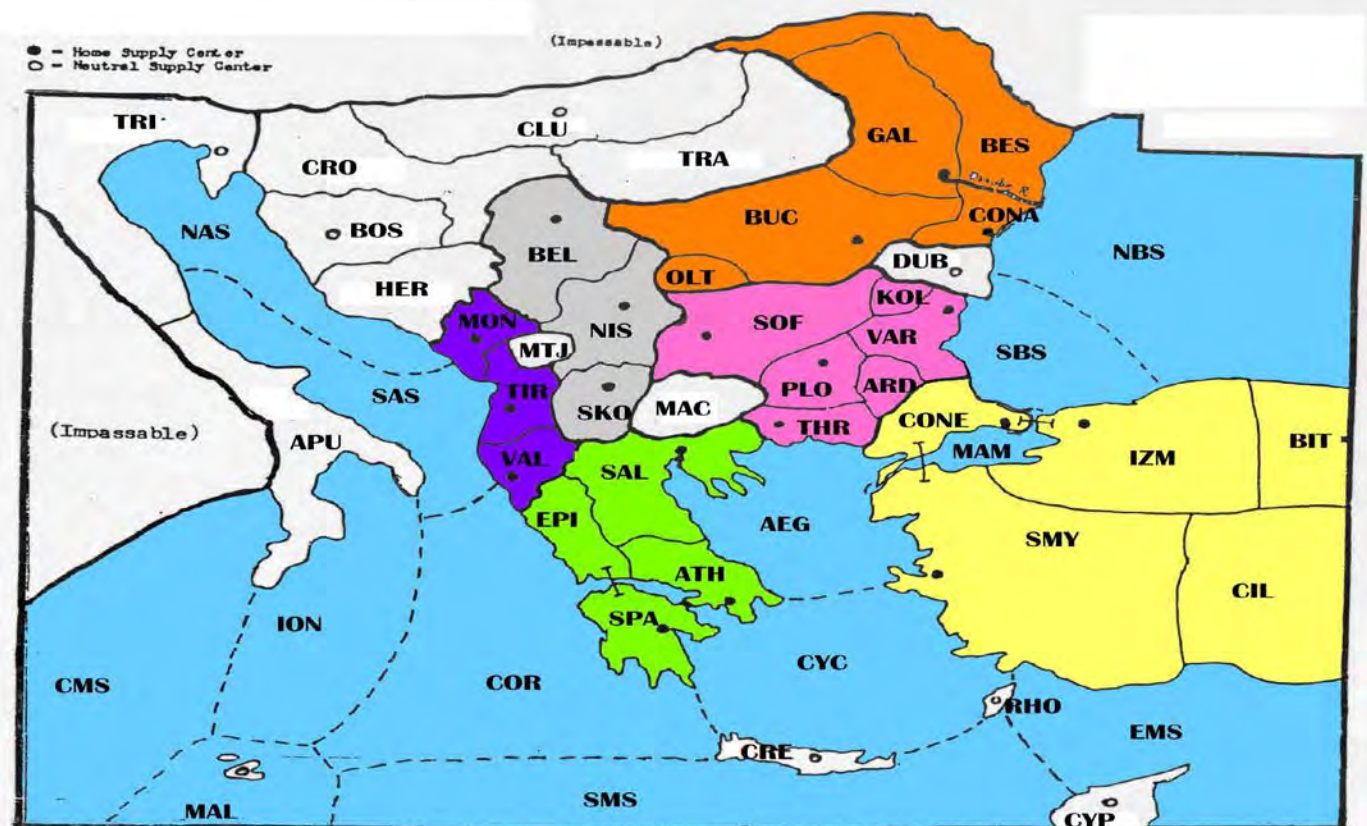
- Bulgaria: 4 centers with 6 provinces
- Turkey: 3 centers with 5 provinces

The game encourages cut throw play right from the beginning as every power has centers and units right up on top of at least one, and usually, two other powers. You can't sit on the fence very long because you will soon be attacked by your neighbors because everyone is under the gun to pick up some dots as soon as possible. There are neutral centers and every power, except for Bulgaria—which already has an extra center, can get to at least one neutral center.

This is a great game for face to face or even tournament play since it doesn't take that long since there are no stalemate lines and almost always ends with a solo win or a low number draw, say 2 or 3 way at most. The map is just designed so that all the powers are like sharks, if you stop moving you will die.

Overall I highly recommend giving this variant a try—you won't be disappointed.

Jack McHugh is the Diplomacy World Variant Editor. If you'd like to give Balkan Wars VI a try, email me at diplomacyworld@yahoo.com as we have a game opening right now in my zine Eternal Sunshine.



Well, it finally happened...

By Matthew Shields

...and truthfully, I'm not sure how it took this long. As of this spring, there is now one more media outlet to which you can go to get your Diplomacy fix. Two prominent Diplomacy players from Seattle – Eric Mead and Nathan Barnes – have started "DiplomacyCast" which is, as far as I know, the first ever Diplomacy podcast.

I expect a lot of Diplomacy World readers have stumbled across this particular phenomenon already, but I wanted to briefly announce it in case anyone hasn't. Although neither of these guys has ever put together a podcast before, they've been doing a pretty solid job of it, and have so far produced a very good product. This is starting to look like a good resource for all Diplomacy players and I hope that they are able to keep it going.

As of this issue going to print, there were 6 episodes posted to their website www.diplomacycast.com. You can download them directly from their website, or listen to them from there.

You can also get the episodes off of iTunes, although I believe there have been some technical difficulties getting the last couple posted there. I think perhaps only Episodes 1-4 are currently available on iTunes, but I'd bet this will be resolved before our next issue.

For the most part they've managed to get an episode out every two to three weeks.

The first 7 episodes are each focusing on one of the 7 powers, and get into some basic strategy tips – especially for newer players. So far they've gotten through every country except Austria. Starting with episode 8, they are going to get into some more complicated topics, which I'd guess will vary a lot from week to week.

The other fun thing they are doing is that each week they have an interview with a guest – all of which have been pretty interesting I think. So far, the guests have all been American players who play primarily face to face, but I expect that this will get a lot more diverse soon. From talking to Nathan and Eric it sounds like they are both very interested in focusing more on online play, and are hoping to get some guests involved who have more expertise in that. I believe there's been some talk of getting guests from other parts of the world as well.

Anyway, I'd recommend you check it out when you get a chance. The episodes are pretty long – I think the shortest is about an hour and a half – but I find that it usually goes pretty quickly.

Matthew Shields is the Diplomacy World Club and Tournament Editor, and tries to stay on the cutting edge of the hobby as you can tell.

DixieCon XXV

By David Hood

This was Year 25 of our Dixiecon tournament in Chapel Hill, NC - but it started in the usual way. The Thursday before the Diplomacy starts on Friday, we gather for open gaming to whet our appetites for the weekend. For 2011 the games included Campaign Trail and Here I Stand, and the gamers included David Hood, Rich O'Brien, Bruce Allen, Peter Yeargin, Dave Maletsky, Doug Moore, and Adam Meldrom. Adam was one of the original Carolina Amateur Diplomats who first appeared at Dixiecon in 1988 and was making his first appearance in many years. Doug Moore, on the other hand, is a relative Dixiecon novice who has had some, ahem, limited success in the Diplomacy tournament over the years...

The Here I Stand was to be a feature for the rest of the weekend as there were 4 games played in all, with many different players. HIS has become a Dixiecon favorite over the past two years, but this year it was a real phenomenon. The Diplomacy players enjoy the

diplomatic aspects of the game, while the non-Dippers appreciate the richness of both the rules and the historical simulation of a time period that does not get much exposure in other board games.

Friday morning saw the usual trickle of players showing up to swell the ranks, eventually leading to a downpour of arrivals right before the 6pm start time for the 3-round Diplomacy tournament. During the day on Friday a great number of games saw action, including 1826, Puerto Rico, Union Pacific, Dominion, Ingenious, Perpetual Motion Machines, 1880, Ticchu (another very popular Dixiecon game), Twilight Struggle, Small World, Ticket to Ride, AlHambra, Settlers card game, London and Furtensfurg. Yes, there were some people doing some stuff all day long.

When the Dip round finally got going we had 3 boards for Round One, which also doubled this year as the Diplomacy Team Tournament - teams of 3 players would

combine their scores from that round to determine the team champion. There were several new Dippers at Dixiecon this year (Mike Zytow, Vinal Lakhani, Scott Anthony, Roland Cooke and Christian MacDonald all played in the round) as well as people who have hung around Dixiecon far too long (like, um, Dave Maletsky.) Notable results from this round included the destruction of Mikey Hall by 1905 (coming all the way from Canada just to get creamed), the two-way daw voted in 1907 without inclusion of a 7-center Conrad Woodring's Austria, and some cat named Doug Moore who won his first round game, again, for like the third time at Dixiecon.



The non-Dippers were busy Friday night as well with a rousing game of Here I Stand on one end of the room and a host of other games played on the other side - this reporter saw more TS and Ticket to Ride, along with Washington's War, Last Call, Black Friday, Power Grid, Infinite City, Air Baron, San Juan and Donkey. And, in a reappearance of a game we once had a tournament in at Hickcon one year, there was actual Candyland played...

Saturday morning we had an event I have been looking forward to since last year when Bruce Reiff put the idea into my head - the All Time Greats tournament. Anyone who has finished in the top three spots at a past Dixiecon is considered to be in the Hall of Fame, and all those players were invited to participate in the All Time Greats. We ended up with two boards of Greats and three boards of other Diplomacy players, so the room was crowded (with the non-dippers we had 60 attendees on Saturday) but it was a lot of fun. On one Greats Board there was a two way with Chris Martin and Peter Yeargin, with a three way in the other than included Moore, Brian Ecton and Tom Kobrin. The top seven finishers by point total were to advance to the final All Time Greats board on Saturday night - more on that later. The other three boards all ended in three way draws, including an FAR which in my experience is an unusual board result.

Other games were certainly being played amidst all this Diplomacy hubbub - including 1861 from the dedicated rail gamers in attendance, and a number of the same titles as before. Games that hit the tables for the first

time on Saturday included Mountain of Inferno, Bang, LeHavre, and South African Rails. Long time Dixiecon attendee Bob Odear also made his triumphal entry to the site before the day was out - Bob is the only one still active who was present at the first Dixiecon in 1987.

Barbeque starts promptly at 5pm at Dixie whether or not the first round games are over. This year was no exception. After much eating of hush puppies and consumption of very, very healthy food in general, the gaming recommenced with Through the Ages, Age of Steam, Worlds Without End, Outpost, Manifest Destiny, Chess, Railroad Tycoon and, of course, Poker - as well as many of the games already mentioned from earlier in the weekend. The All Time Greats final board also got underway, on a very cool large wooden board with specialized pieces, all courtesy of longtime Dixiecon staff member Dan Mathias. The game had some fits and starts, but by the end a truly "Great" result was reached - Chris Martin and Tom Kobrin, two of the all time great Dip players by anybody's standards, ended up tying with 10 centers apiece. There being no way to break the logjam, the players unanimously voted the game over, with no actual winner of the Tournament!

Sunday morning was much more sedate, as many players stayed in bed rather than compete in the final Dip round. Two games were filled out, and the fun began. Unlike the past several Dixes though, no third round game finished before time was called, so both ended as 5-way draws and thus largely irrelevant to the determination of the top few places in the tournament. No one was surprised to see Doug Moore take home yet another Dixiecon championship given his German win on Friday night, but there were some other surprises as Hackenbracht, Pedone and MacDonald all finished in the top board for the first time. And Brian Lee added another fourth place, which means no plaque for him. Again.

Not to be outdone, the Iron Man event continued on Sunday with even more competitors than the earlier days of the tournament. In addition to the games mentioned previously, other titles included Flux (for God's sake!), Detroit/Cleveland Grand Prix, Princes of the Renaissance, Pitchcar, Attika, Labrynth, Defenders of the Realm, Express, Golditz Castle, 1880 and Acquire. By the time Dan Mathias announced that the winner was, again, Kevin Brown, there had been an astounding 72 total games submitted, by 60 different players! Most popular games entered into the Iron Man tournament were Dominion and Ticket to Ride.

And, of course, Doug Moore was crowned as the one and only three-time winner of Dixiecon! After the awards, many folks went home, some stayed in the tourney site to keep playing, and others went to eat Mexican and decompress from the weekend gaming. When everyone got back to Granville Towers, more games were played, more fun was had, and there was much talk about

starting yet another long Here I Stand game - but somebody finally got some sense and said no so people could actually drive home on Monday more safely...



Just a great time this year at Dixiecon 2011! It has been a true honor and pleasure to host the event and I hope to keep doing so as long as the players keep showing up in the Land of BBQ each Memorial Day Weekend. If you are interested in attending our annual Housecon in the western part of north Carolina, called Hickcon, please contact David Hood or the actual hosts now Debbie/Ken Gutermuth for more details. Hickcon 21 will indeed be held again at Gutermuth Manor in Hickory NC, exact weekend TBA but it is usually in mid-to-late October.

David Hood is also a former Lead Editor of Diplomacy World, among many other hobby functions.

DixieCon XXV Diplomacy Tournament:

1. Doug Moore 512
2. Peter Yeargin 380
3. Christian Pedone 368
4. Brian Lee 328
5. Bill Hackenbracht 294.8
6. Christian MacDonald 286.8
7. Brian Ecton 282.8
7. Conrad Woodring 282.8
9. David Maletsky 268
10. Mike Zytow 262.8
11. Chris Martin 261
12. Roland Cooke 198.8
13. Adam Sigal 180.8
14. Tom Kobrin 164
15. Hudson Defoe 148.8
16. Andy Bartalone 142.8
17. Vinal Lakhani 83
18. Chris Barfield 74
19. Tim Richardson 29
20. Claude Worrell 18
21. Adam Meldrom 0

INELIGIBLE (only one round played)

- IN Scott Anthony 0
- IN Rick Desper 23
- IN Mark Franceschini 4
- IN David Hood 170
- IN Steve Koehler 23
- IN Dan Mathias 158
- IN Ken Mathias 0
- IN Steve Mauris 36
- IN Tyler Mollenkopf 14
- IN Steve Nicewarner 38
- IN Ed Rothenheber 154
- IN Edwin Turnage 162
- IN Carl Willner 14
- IN Jim Yerkey 58

Best Countries:

Austria Christian MacDonald 3way, 8 centers
 England Christian Pedone 2way, 8
 France Chris Martin 2way, 13
 ...Germany Doug Moore Win
 Italy Peter Yeargin 3way, 11
 Russia Christian Pedone 3way, 9
 Turkey Peter Yeargin 2way, 9

Other Dip Awards:

Death With Dignity – Adam Meldrom and Christian Pedone
 I Got Hammered – Adam Meldrom
 Golden Blade Award – Jim Yerkey
 The Brick – Jim Yerkey
 Players Choice – Tom Kobrin
 Team Tournament winners – Slow Play (Kobrin, Moore, Pedone)

All Time Greats Tournament

Ended in no tournament winner as the top two finishers in the declared draw both had 10 centers (Tom Kobrin and Chris Martin)

Other top board finishers – Adam Sigal, Peter Yeargin, Brian Ecton, David Maletsky, Doug Moore

Iron Man Tournament (Non-Dip Gaming)

1. Kevin Brown 43.5
2. Lori Wheeler 41
3. Bruce Duerwer 37
4. Ken Gutermuth 26
5. Jim Yerkey 24
- 6/7. Dave Long 23
- 6/7. Dan Mathias 23

72 total games submitted, most popular titles: Dominion and Ticket to Ride

53 other players involved in Iron Man games. Those who did not play any Dip included:

Jim MacDonald, Bruce Reiff, Joe Wheeler, Craig Good, Debbie Gutermuth, Mary Prasad, Rahindra Prasad, Alison Blake, Carol Mathias, Jeremy Vipperman, Alex Mauris, Bob Odear, Amber Mathias, Nathan Turnage, Michael Lowrey, Erin and Corey, Aaron Dixon, Adam Nicewarner

Dip game results:

Game 1A ITE draw 1909

A Mike Hall 0
E Michael Zytow 10
F Bill Hackenbracht 2
G Tom Kobrin 0
I Peter Yeargin 11
R Chris Barfield 1
T Brian Lee 10

Game 1B EG draw 1907

A Conrad Woodring 7
E Christian Pedone 8
F Claude Worrell 2
G Dave Maletsky 11
I Scott Anthony 0
R Chris Martin 3
T Vinal Lakhani 3

Game 1C G win 1913

A Andy Bartalone 2
E Adam Meldrom 0
F Roland Cooke 8
G Doug Moore 17
I Adam Sigel 0
R Brian Ecton 0
T Christian McDonald 7

Game 2A FT draw 1910 (All Time Greats prelim)

A Steve Nicewarner 4
E Andy Bartalone 0
F Chris Martin 13
G Carl Willner 1
I Jim Yerkey 4
R Adam Sigel 3
T Peter Yeargin 9

Game 2B FIT draw 1907 (All Time Greats prelim)

A Rick Desper 2
E Mark Franceschini 1
F Doug Moore 11
G Steve Koehler 2
I Brian Ecton 7
R Dave Maletsky 5

T Tom Kobrin 6

Game 2C GRT draw 1905

A Steve Mauris 4
E Mike Hall 1
F Adam Meldrom 0
G David Hood 10
I Michael Zytow 5
R Edwin Turnage 8
T Ed Rothenheber 6

Game 2D EGT draw 1909

A Claude Worrell 0
E Dan Mathias 7
F Vinal Lakhani 3
G Brian Lee 7
I Tim Richardson 1
R Roland Cooke 1
T Bill Hackenbracht 15

Game 2E AFR draw 1905

A Christian McDonald 8
E Ken Mathias 0
F Conrad Woodring 9
G Chris Barfield 4
I Hudson Defoe 3
R Christian Pedone 9
T Tyler Mollenkopf 1

Game 3A AEFIR draw 1912 (time called)

A Roland Cooke 2
E Hudson Defoe 7
F Brian Ecton 9
G Christian Pedone 0
I Conrad Woodring 7
R Christian MacDonald 9
T Chris Barfield 0

Game 3B AEIRT draw 1910 (time called)

A Bill Hackenbracht 4
E Adam Sigel 15
F Tim Richardson 0
G Vinal Lakhani 0
I Andy Bartalone 3
R Peter Yeargin 11
T Michael Zytow 1

All Time Greats Final - No Winner, voted draw in 1908

A Tom Kobrin 10
E Peter Yeargin 7
F Adam Sigel 1
G Chris Martin 10
I Doug Moore 6
R Dave Maletsky 0
T Brian Ecton 0=

Fixing a Hole

By Chris Dziedzic

I read with great interest, and growing pain, Doug's article in DW 113, "The Hole in the Pouch." I've been a sporadic contributor over the years to both Diplomacy World and the Diplomatic Pouch. So with all due respects to Sir Paul McCartney, I wanted to offer my reactions and suggestions to the hobby.

A quick, thirty-second hobby autobiography. I started playing Diplomacy in the summer of 2000, and exclusively PBEM. I got involved in the ol' CAT-23 community, and cut my teeth there. As that community fell into decline, I fell into Baron Powell's circle of Diplomacy junkies, who were helping to playtest and perfect a pair of map variants he was working on: **1900** and **Ambition and Empire**.

I had always enjoyed reading the two main hobby 'zines, Diplomacy World and the Diplomatic Pouch. After one interesting game of the **1900** variant, I worked with a colleague to write up an article about an alliance pattern we experimented with. It was accepted by the editor of the Dip Pouch and published. A couple of years passed, and inspiration struck me again, and I made a second submission to the 'zine, this time under a different editor. This second time, I felt my submission and hard work were poorly treated. I wasn't given a complete byline, and the titling of the article on the table of contents was very dismissive to the subject matter. I bit my tongue, because the editor was a hobby luminary, but thought it discouraging that in an issue where the editor submitted EIGHT out of the THIRTEEN articles either under his personal name or under his title as editor, that he would treat an outside submitter so shabbily. Obviously, he was struggling to recruit writers... or was he looking to make the 'zine a personal soap box? Regardless, it soured me, and I didn't develop further articles.

A couple more years pass, and my friend, Charles Roburn, volunteered to step into the shoes as editor of the Diplomatic Pouch. I knew Charles from crossing swords with him on the field of battle. Out of friendship and conviction that he would be a respectful editor in handling any of submissions, I committed to churning out a variety of vague article ideas into finished products. Reviewing those issues of the Diplomatic Pouch from 2007-2009, I see that I ended up submitting twelve articles over those three calendar years. More recently, other things have taken priority in life, and I haven't had the time to commit to playing as much -- or writing as much about this game we all love.

Was that at all helpful or illuminating? Maybe not. So allow me to try and offer some more direct responses to the questions posed by Doug in his article in the last issue.



1. Does the Diplomatic Pouch need to be saved? Or has it outlived its usefulness? Would a few new issues make potential contributors feel like it's "safe" to submit an article?

No, the Diplomatic Pouch doesn't need to be saved. But it would still be an incredible shame to see one of the two flagship publications of the hobby go out with a whimper like this.

However, we do have to realize that some things wax and wane in the Diplomacy hobby. Over the years I've been involved, I've seen the AOL Dip Club and CAT23 PBEM community wax, wane, and then eventually cease. Maybe we'll find that the Dip Pouch won't recover, but that something new and different may take its place.

No, I don't think the Dip Pouch has outlived its usefulness. I would think the hobby is large and diverse enough to handle two high profile publications. This is especially true if they have different publishing schedules and different formats, and can appeal to different subsets of contributing authors and readers.

At one point Doug wrote, "It had always been my belief that as long as the issues came out on a regular schedule that the hobby could depend on, the material would follow." As a contributor, I believe that to be true. When there are times when publishing is more sporadic, I have often felt less compelled to polish off that most recent idea percolating in my head. I even remember one poor experience when I submitted an article to an editor who went MIA, and my submission disappeared into the ether that is the internet. When the editor returned from his alien abduction, the next issue of the 'zine came out without my submission and I got a less than interested, "What submission?" reaction to my queries. That also dampened my interest in cranking out a future article in the near future. I guess this is my long winded answer saying that, yes, a few new issues may make some potential contributors feel like it's "safe" to submit an article.



But as I alluded to earlier, the regularity of publishing isn't the ONLY factor. I think the nature of the editor, his or her personality in dealing with authors, and how submissions are handled also encourages or discourages potential authors. No author would want his submission to be treated poorly as I felt in 2006. That can turn off potential authors as much as holes in a publication schedule.

But another factor is our of the editor's hands. And that's the time and inspiration of the submitters. When I go through a time without inspiration or without time, I'm not going to be able to create the content. And that's hard to predict. The best times for a 'zine is when lots of people of are contributing, so that if a few people have constraints, there's still a deep enough talent pool to draw upon.

2. If the Pouch is to survive, should it do so in its current form? I have long contended that if you are going to have an html-style zine like The Diplomatic Pouch, it might work better in the form of a blog. Every time a new article arrives and is ready for release, you post it. Maybe add a tweet to let fans know there has been an update, if they don't already subscribe via a newsfeed. If you're not producing a true zine, why limit yourself to specific deadlines and release dates?

That certainly could be a route for a revitalized Dip Pouch to take. While I'm not a blogger myself, a blog style format with frequent updates as submissions are posted could increase participation.

3. Who is willing to step forward and take over stewardship of the Pouch? None of this can happen if nobody is willing to do the work. And preparing and releasing material is only a small part of the task. Getting hobby members to write something in the first place remains the hardest part of the project.

This is totally true... and it may be the hardest part. From my interactions with Charles Roburn, and from the stories that were laid out in the article last issue, the time and energy required from an editor are significant. I can speak for myself, my time commitments basically limit me to either GMing or playing in one PBEM game at a time. I have often let Charles down by not being able to make submissions to previous issues of the Dip Pouch. Sadly, I know that I do not have the time available to step up and take stewardship over the Pouch.

Maybe one possible solution is for the main editorial position to only be for a single year at a time. That would require an active recruitment of future editors, but might also alleviate the problems that occur when one person serves as editor for a long stretch of time and suffers burn out. A new editor once a year is a fresh pair of hands with a new perspective.

Let me close on a positive note. Let me cheer our editor for bringing this topic up in Diplomacy World. In a worse parallel universe, DW would see the Dip Pouch as a rival or a competitor. That Doug and DW see the Dip Pouch as a collaborator and a colleague to be valued is a great sign for the hobby. To misquote Irving Kristol, "Two cheers for Diplomacy World and Douglas Kent!"

I'd love to hear more thoughts on this topic. You might have an article, or a letter, in YOU.

Knives and Daggers - The Diplomacy World Letter Column



Larry Peery - Nice job, although I think the issue had too much Peeriblah. Perhaps it will serve as an intellectual laxative and encourage some others to contribute to the issue.

[[I did hear that same comment from a few others. A little Peery goes a long way...]]

Speaking of contributions, is 911 Irene Dr., Mesquite, TX 75149 your correct mailing address? I want to send you something and I don't trust PayPal.

[[Yes, that is my home address.]]

Do you happen to have a spare hard copy of issue 101 laying around? I was going through my archives and I discovered that I'm missing that one. All the others I've saved faithfully. It's quite an impressive pile. I wonder what work of art Christo would make out of it?

[[Did I remember to mail it to you already?]]

I agree with you that a revived PDORA would be a good thing, provided you can come up with somekind of distribution list for the proceeds. Perhaps a committee to pass on that kind of thing? I think that's how it was done before. People submitted requests for their fav cause and the committee allocated funds as available.

[[Yes, I was one of the last PDORA Chairpersons. That's pretty much how I envision it again. The real question these days is where funding would come from...and what should be done with it]]

As for the DW/TDP ups and downs. I've noticed that happening over the years. One up, one down, both up, both down, and so it has gone. I didn't realize TDP was having problems, although I shouldn't be surprised. Either of them is a major challenge. I'm amazed you've hung on as long as you have. Bravo!

[[I am a masochist...]]

I'd like to see TDP remain as it was, with an emphasis on more high-tech stuff in a concise format. The two pubs did play off against each other, so to speak, and I found that healthy. Combining them or making them clones wouldn't be a good idea, in my view.

[[I have no interest in seeing them become one. That's why I always felt the Piuch would be better as a bloggish "one article at a time, whenever one is available" sort of thing.]]

I find it bemusing that as my physical abilities have declined over the past few years my intellectual interest

in the game and hobby has revived. Not to the point that I'm considering playing, but that's no big loss. :-) Well, actually, it would be a big loss. LOL.

[[You're always welcome to sign up for a game in Eternal Sunshine. Postal speed, and all that.]]

I am looking at a stack of books (Thank God for Amazon.com) in prep for my next project. As usual I've bit off more than I can chew, but what the hell. It should be an interesting challenge. I'll be curious to see what responses I get to the Aussie contest and my request for input on the secretaries of state.

[[I think you're getting about the same response as I do whenever I publish a contest. The variant design contest we did went decently, but almost all the "write articles, cash prizes" I've attempted were failures.]]

But what floored me was Jim Bob actually referred to Turing and I KNEW WHO TURING WAS! Oh my God. That's scary.

Keep up the good work.



Inge Davis - Fred got the **Diplomacy World** 113, last week in the mail. He has spent several hours each day studying it with his magnifying glass, and he enjoys it a lot. It means a lot to him, and we both thank you for sending it to him. It is another beautiful issue. We can't imagine the amount of work that goes into it. Fred saves all the issues.

[[I am happy to bring extra joy into Fred's life. I know it is hard for him to read these days, but I hope the effort is worth it for him. I do miss his occasional contribution.]]



Robin Patterson - If you have no units and each of your home supply centers is owned by someone else, there is no way you can ever build a unit. Full stop. Surely?

[[True, but in the spirit of Diplomacy, a player is not eliminated until he has no more supply centers. In fact, a player may be voted as part of a draw without any units on the board, as long as he has at least one supply center still under his control.]]



Adriaan Tichler - Just a little feedback on two of your articles in your Spring edition, Social Networks and Diplomacy (p16), and The Hole in the Pouch (p14). Regarding Social Networks first:

While I feel that Alex Maslow makes several good points

about the nature of how social networks interact with PBEM diplomacy, I have to point out the rather large omission in the field of Diplomacy and Social Networks - namely the phpDiplomacy application on Facebook. The application has hosted a huge number of games (7090 as of writing this) over the course of the past few years, and hosts a vibrant discussion board with almost 3000 discussion topics alone (and who knows how many posts - a quick perusal shows several topics have >100 posts apiece!). There have also been several tournaments on the site, with significant participation.

Admittedly, you may consider this to almost be a site apart from social networking - it is an app focused on the game, not the other players social profiles, and you are not restricted to playing with those you have 'friended'. However, it is a relatively simple process for each participant to find the profile for each player in the game as well as view their game history - this application is not something that should be overlooked when discussing Social Networking and Diplomacy.

While I may tout the achievements of the application, however, allow me to provide a very quick but very critical disclaimer: *the average level of gameplay on the phpDiplomacy facebook application is terrible*. Barring unfortunately few games, most suffer from significant drop-out rates, or from people signing up once, making their opening moves, and then forgetting all about the game. I have played a few excellent games on the site, but unfortunately **only** a few. For this reason, and because of the lack of variant support, I have largely stopped participating in the Facebook Diplomacy community. If you are warned but still interested, the application can be found at

<http://apps.facebook.com/phpdiplomacy/>.

Regarding your other article, The Hole in the Pouch - I found this article to have several good ideas, and it answered a few questions for me as to what had happened to it. As for the questions posed - in my opinion, the best course of action would be to fold the Diplomacy Pouch into the Diplomacy World site as the starting point for a DW blog. While I can certainly appreciate the arguments articulated that the long-form, PDF format has its attractions, there is no need for it to be a case of one or the other - why not have both? Alternatively, one could even make it so that the blog forms the feeder articles for the quarterly pdf release - after an article is accepted by DW, it could be hosted as a blog entry for a few weeks/months, and then published (maybe even along with a few of the better comments). In many cases it would be nice for readers to be able to provide feedback on articles without a three-month lag time; I can only imagine that if the barriers to feedback are lowered, more would be provided! Furthermore, this feedback could only encourage article writers to think critically and write more. Anyways - just my two cents.

P.S. I also have to disagree with Alex on one further thing - Inception was amazing!

[[Sorry, on THAT point Alex and I do agree.]]



Dan Stormont - I just finished reading your article in issue 113, "A Hole in the Pouch." I agree with you that it would be a shame to see the Diplomatic Pouch fade into oblivion; as it appears to be on its way to doing.

Before offering a suggestion, though, I would like to give a little of my background and offer you some kudos on **Diplomacy World**. I first started boardgaming back in the "glory days" of the mid-to-late 70s. I had seen Diplomacy at the time, but as a dedicated hex-and-counter wargamer, I never had much interest in Diplomacy back then. (Besides, most of my gaming was head-to-head - getting seven people together for a game was pretty much inconceivable!) Later, family, school, other interests, and a career in the Air Force pretty much sidelined any gaming, other than the very occasional solitaire game or playing some of the computer wargames, like Panzer General, as they came out. It was only in the last year or so that I discovered (rediscovered?) Diplomacy as I was looking around at potential computer testbeds for research I have been doing in multiagent systems. As one of the world's oldest grad students, I have been doing research into swarms of autonomous robots since about 1996 and have gradually worked my way into trying to determine what would be required to make autonomous robots trusted by humans in difficult environments, like disaster areas and combat zones. This led me to doing research into topics like negotiation, coordination, coalition formation, trust, reputation management, and reasoning between autonomous agents. What do you know, Diplomacy is the perfect environment for researching issues like these!

So, I picked up some copies of the boardgame (and some variants), bought the commercial computer implementations, played some gunboat games against diplomacy bots at DAIDE and dipGame, and started reading everything I could to better understand THE GAME. That is how I discovered the archives of both the DP and DW. While I can't claim to have read every one of the 113 issues of DW from cover to cover, I have skimmed all of them and read the articles that jumped out at me (as well as reading the editor's introduction to nearly all of them, just to understand the history of the hobby and the 'zine). I can say one thing: of all the issues - even those from the peak of the postal hobby - I have enjoyed the ones you've helmed the best. They seem to be the best organized (and the most regularly published), and they are filled with a lot of articles I want to read, even about things I haven't been involved with, like tournament play. I know how thankless a job it must

seem and I just wanted to let you know how much I appreciate the work you've done. (And, if I can get my Diplomacy agent research to a point where I have something interesting to report, I would be happy to submit an article (or articles) about it.)

[[It isn't thankless, but sometimes the lack of feedback really gets to me. Plus there's always the wife reminding me that I spend more time on Diplomacy World and my monthly zine Eternal Sunshine than a normal person would, But, as my chiropractor has confirmed with x-rays, my head is NOT on straight.]]

Which brings me to the DP. I have also skimmed nearly all of the 56 issues of the Pouch that have been published to date and there is a lot of interesting stuff in there, some of it from names I recognize from DW. I would hate to see the DP go, but I know that I read it differently than I do DW. I frequently would read an article on my cell phone while out and about somewhere, instead of sitting down to read it, like I do with DW. So, I agree with your suggestion that the DP might be better served to be presented as a moderated blog, rather than as a periodical. It could still address interesting topics and timely hobby news, without the constraint of meeting deadlines. As for who the moderator should be, while I would love to be able to offer my time, I am far too busy to take on any new projects right now and I don't think I have the experience in Diplomacy to be a good moderator. Hopefully, there is someone out there with the needed experience who might be interested.

Here's a thought about the PDORA. Why not sell some of Larry Peery's Diplomacy t-shirts on eBay? I'd probably bid on an XL or two. I'm not sure about buying Diplomacy sets for schools (I donated some wargames in the past, only to not see them used at all), but to sponsor players at tournaments or as prize money for contests or even to defer some of the DW operating costs all seem legitimate to me. Wasn't Edi Birsan complaining that he'd like to see his introductory videos made more professionally? Maybe they could be converted into interactive HTML5 tutorials.

[[Well, Diplomacy World does have a good deal of merchandise for sale on Cafepress at:

<http://www.cafepress.com/helpfulkitty>

but under the Cafepress format I don't sell enough to make any money. I only mark each item up \$1 from cost, and with the \$6.95 per month storefront charge I generally break even over the course of a year (between the Diplomacy and the other items).]]



Zachary Jarvie - As an unabashed supporter of the American Tea Party movement, I must say that I did not understand the reference Mr. Maslow was

making at the start of his letter, which is found in the letter column of the previous issue of Diplomacy World. Fortunately we have the internet! Sure enough, I was able to locate pictures and video of an individual questioning the sincerity of our President's publicly professed religion with a very poorly spelled sign. The fact that deeming "news worthy" such an incident is just another sad example of our news media using the publicly displayed ignorance or bigotry of one person to broadly belittle a larger political movement, is not enough to remove from me the personal sting that I also made the same ridiculous mistake of misspelling the word Muslim. To add insult to injury Alex further pointed out that I had also replaced the word peer with pear (curse you MS Word!). At least he was good enough to remark that the coulomb was "already funny" without the misspellings. Alex, thank you very much for the compliment, it was very kind of you to do so in light of pointing out my shortcomings with the English language. Shortcomings, which I apparently have in common with those who may (or may not) have similar political beliefs to my own.

But let's get off of politics. I only brought it up to expose the full and true, if embarrassing, irony of Mr. Maslow's observations. The fact is, spelling (to say nothing of grammar) has always been my Achilles heel. Which unfortunately for me is a weakness far more obvious and damaging than having ones heel be the only vulnerable portion of ones anatomy. If you reread my first articles in DW#109 you will probably find a few good ones and there may even be a blunder in this very letter.

When I first started to play Diplomacy (no more than 3 years ago) I must admit that I greatly lamented the fact that I had missed the so called postal "heyday" of the hobby. But now I see that I may have actually dodged a bullet. My written diplomacy stinks with my internet record providing ample supportive evidence. Perhaps I could do better (probably not) at one of those fancy face to face tournaments that all of you are always going on about. If I ever do make it out to a Diplomacy tournament and find that Alex is in attendance, I would like to buy him a bear to show him there are no hard feelings. Provided of course that he doesn't mind drinking it with someone who thinks we, in fact, are "taxed enough already". Then again, I may just come under an assumed name lest I be dogged by questions about Muslims and how ripe their pears must be before they can be used to exert pressure on their followers.

P.S. - I also want to thank Jim Burgess for the encouraging email he sent me in regards to the White Magic article. I meant to reply to you and well, I just plain thoughtlessly forgot. The short story of your own tactical use of a six-pack at a tournament was an enjoyable tale worthy of its own embellished publication. Now there is an idea for you Doug! Start soliciting a series of short articles from people recalling the craziest,

craftiest, dirtiest, or most foolish thing they ever did (or had done to them) at a tournament. That should be good reading!

[[I don't have to...you just did!]]



Craig Delery: I was reading the following article on your website:

<http://www.diplomacyworld.net/old/ally2.htm>

I notice in the article that Austro- Hungarian Empire (shortened to Austria) was referred to as the "**Archduke**." I am confused to why this is the case when the Russian is referred as "**Czar**," the title of the leader of *Russian Empire*. I assume the writer was intending to refer to the top leader of each country, but the *Austro-Hungarian Empire* was ruled by **Emperor Franz Joseph I**, who was not an Archduke?

So why the reference to the "**Archduke**?" Perhaps more

importantly, which archduke? I was not able find any information who was the *Chief of Staff of the Armed Force* of the *Austro- Hungarian Empire*, believing this is the person the author is referring to in the article. Moreover, if this is a reference to the start of WWI, it was a **Count** (Conrad) not an Archduke who was *Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces*. The minister responsible for military affairs in 1900 didn't have title, so it could not be this person either. I could only guess the writer made an incorrect assumption since Archduke Ferdinand was heir to the Austrian throne (consequently heir to the Hungarian throne as well). The title, **Archduke**, was used similarly to the title of "**Prince**" in other countries. Referring to the *Emperor of Austria Hungarian Empire* as **Archduke** would of course be akin to calling the *King of Spain* "**Prince**".

[[I can't remember if the early Avalon Hill rulebooks suggested the Archduke Ferdinand, but over the years Archduke has come to represent the Austrian player, especially in press releases.]]

Discussion Question for Next Issue:

The Diplomacy hobby, as it stands now, is broken into two main factions: the Grand Prix face-to-face crowd, and the much larger group which only plays through email or on various websites. How do we generate more crossover between those groups, and facilitate building a larger single hobby? Likewise, how do we bring more crossover between the individual online communities? Are the needs, desires, and goals of the face-to-face Diplomacy hobby even compatible with the on-line hobby?

Face-to-Face Quarterly

By Matthew Shields

Summertime. This issue comes out at a great time to stop on reflect on the year in face to face Diplomacy tournament play, as we're just coming into a lull between a handful of late spring and early summer events, and the mad crush of tournaments that begin in late August. More details on some of these events are available at the NADF's web site (www.thenadf.com), but there were a few bits I wanted to point out.

This turned out to be a reasonably busy spring in the face to face Diplomacy world – even a bit more so than I anticipated. The first of the spring events was CODCon near Chicago. If you aren't familiar with it, CODCon is a smallish gaming convention in the Chicago suburbs, and at which a Diplomacy tournament was started several years ago now. This is kind of the "other" tournament in Chicago. Whereas WeaselMoot is generally bigger and perhaps taken a bit more seriously, CODCon does a great job of serving as a gateway for more casual gamers to show up and try their hand at a Diplomacy game. Christian MacDonald, who now has several top table finishes to his credit, came back to claim his first tournament win since 2008.

A big part of Memorial Day weekend for many east coast Dip players is DixieCon. I personally had been hoping to finally make it out to Dixie for this event, but it wasn't to be. This year was DixieCon's 25th Anniversary, and it saw the return of a number of players from years gone by. I'm not sure how he did it, but Mr. Hood convinced guys like Jim Yerkey and Mark Franceschini, guys we haven't seen nearly enough of in the last 5 or 10 years, to show up and remind the younger players that they still have a few things to learn! From all reports it was (once again) an excellent event with about 10 boards played over the weekend. Doug Moore came out on top, followed closely by current Grand Prix Champ Peter Yeargin. It's worth checking out David's recap of the whole tournament, which I'll make sure get's posted on the NADF site

There were 3 events in June worth mentioning, which I'll take a bit out of order. Diplomacy was once again played at the Origins game convention this year, this time run by Thomas Haver. The turnout was pretty solid with 41 players taking part in 8 different boards. Doing the math you can see that this means most of those players played just one game, but that also means that Mr.

Haver was able to expose a lot of new players to the game, which is a big goal for him. At the organizer's request, Origins was specifically not included in the Grand Prix for 2011, in large part to encourage focus on developing newer players. So this tournament was all about local players and other gamers who showed up for Origins. Chris Mazza, who's won at Origins at least a couple times before, did so once again.

The major Grand Prix event for June was the Boston Massacre, under the new TD-ship of Alex Amann. Alex will also be the tournament director for Dipcon up in Vermont this November. The tournament was a smallish affair this year, won by Phil Weissert – playing, if I'm not mistaken, in his first tournament. I haven't gotten the full story on this event yet, so I'll try to swing back past it in our next issue.

Perhaps the most interesting event though, was the one that nobody saw coming.



Also in Boston, just one week before the Massacre, about 20 players from the website www.webdiplomacy.net converged on Boston to hold their first ever face to face Diplomacy event. My understanding is that for the most part the players involved were not people who played a lot of FTF Dip, and were not folks who attended other events – at least not very often. I hope to bring you a fuller recap of this event in a coming issue, since it's probably deserving of an article of its own, but suffice it to say that this phenomenon raised a lot of interest among mainstream face to face tournament players for two reasons.

The more mundane reason of course, is that we

generally all agree that the more people sitting around game boards playing Diplomacy with little wooden pieces the better. I think most people figure that the more people out there who are playing FTF Dip, the better chance I have of finding people to come to an event I can make it to. More events, more games, more beer, more agonizing, last second, soul-crushing defeats. Wait, I'm thinking of soccer again.

Anyway, the more subtle reason was that what had transpired seemed to be the same thing that took place in the American postal diplomacy hobby 40+ years earlier.

DipCon was never created because anyone felt a burning need to create a title or some official award. It was simply that a bunch of postal Diplomacy players who had gotten to know each other through postal play decided it would be fun to all get together once every year or two and hang out for the weekend. The games were almost secondary – the point was to go hang out with your Diplomacy playing brethren. There has always been a question hanging out there about whether the same thing would or could (and for some people "should") ever happen with online Diplomacy. In one small way, that question is starting to be answered, so a lot of us are naturally interested in what that answer will be.

This actually gets into a lot of questions that have little to do with Diplomacy, regarding how we integrate people we know from our increasing online world into our physical day-to-day lives. Between social media, message boards, and other media outlets we all likely have friends we converse with regularly online who we rarely if ever see in "real life". How this plays out in a Diplomacy context will likely continue to be discussed in a variety of forums.

Anyway, it sounds like the event was quite successful. If any of our readers either attended the event or know someone who did, please drop me a note and let me know about it. (MChirchill@gmail.com) I'd love to share your experiences with the rest of the DW community.

Anyway, that's enough rambling for one issue. There are several big events coming up in the late summer and fall. HuskyCon out on Long Island is the weekend of August 19-21, and Weasel Moot 5 in Chicago will take place in September, the weekend after Labor Day. Down in DC the Tempest in a Teapot has been moved up a couple weekends from its normal Columbus Day schedule, and is now September 30 to October 2. I'm sure there will be a few stories to share about those next time.

Shift Left: If You Want to Run Home Then Play Standard

By Michael Boutot

Some variants don't fit into a cookie-cutter mold. If people can't see that such games require new thinking, there is no reason for them to play them. Shift Left is a variant I used in order to get some wargamers to play Diplomacy 35+ years ago, when we had a group who wanted a multi-player game other than Strategy I and the like. The game fit their mindset far better than regular Diplomacy where the lack of realism/tactics annoyed them greatly. Shift Left itself seems to confound those who like Dip, as their mindset does not connect with the basic thrust of the game. Let's explore this.

As soon as you look at the Shift Left map the first thing that strikes you is the poor balance if played conventionally. Why would anyone play England-In-Austria (E-I-A)? If players are just going to try and run home because they can't think of any other strategy then the game is futile. It is also a variant not enhanced by overly talkative players. Perhaps that means it is best played gunboat-style. Either way, the goal should not be to get home but interdict/cripple/destroy others before THEY get home. A Pattonesque explanation would be : "You're no hero dying trying to get to your country. Make the other b*****d die while running to his"

I have soloed as England in this variant, while never having more than 4 units on the board (with the 4th coming in last year). Impossible? It actually happened twice (a few more units the second time by the end) though really they both could have been 2-ways if other player(s) were not win-or-lose only players like myself.

The key is your play during the first few years. Losing a unit is deadly, as you can't rebuild it. The loss of even one unit puts a player in a very vulnerable situation. There is no valid reason for any player to negotiate with you at that point, and therefore doing so is a serious blunder. In a recent Diplomaticorp.com game, Turk-in-Germany lost a unit in Year 1 yet was allowed to make it home. Unthinkable! You should move point to point making sure when the music stops you have an open chair (or supply center) to sit down in. A-I-F's unit in Paris should generally go to Bur in S01. Why? Because it is surrounded by supply centers!

You have to be ready for multiple powers to come at you right off in this variant. Some think G-I-T should go up through Arm/Sev on the way home but there is risk there (which I'll cover in a moment). You should stay safe and watch for opponents who do not. There's no real reason to do much attacking unless you can cost a player a unit. Even in a Gunboat version - if played sensibly - weakness attracts a feeding frenzy. This makes it easy

to predict where to support or attack, or even just block possible retreats to supply centers.

A few more examples from that DC game: R-I-I immediately set up a convoy (F Ion & A Apu) to speed his units into the Balkans. That left him massively open. A-I-F moved Mar - Pie while B-I-A was in Tri (positioned next to Ven). As G-I-T, I was prepared to (and did) block a convoy to Gre. This, combined with T-I-G's loss of a unit, should have meant a fast start with two soon-to-be-crippled players. The negative side of this was that F-I-R was in fantastic shape. Then it happened: A-I-F refused to move to attack R-I-I as "he was heading home." Then F-I-R actually moved his fleet towards Con despite that being the one thing he was asked not to do because – again – "he wanted to get it home.". He also clearly kept negotiating, which cost him an excellent chance of winning. In postal games, once a player was moribund, I would answer letters from said player (if I bothered to answer at all) with a 5-letter message - YADTM. "You are dead to me".

Let me go back to why there is danger in moving through Russia to get home to Germany. One army can get through if not blocked by F Sev (as it SHOULD BE) but if the scenario plays out as it was in that particular game the other two armies could be lost. There should be no reason for R-I-I to be setting up that convoy while F Sev is bearing down, except to crush G-I-T. Amazingly enough it wasn't their goal, as it turns out but no other read was possible at the time. F-I-A of course then had to fight to achieve a worse scenario than he had laid in his lap. I threw up my hands as there was no Shift Left in that game.

You play the first few years to survive whole, while making others less than whole. If you empty the board sufficiently, you don't need a lot of units. Point to point movement and interdiction are the keys to Shift Left. Any player can win keeping that in mind, which is not true if everybody just tries to run home. In that case, you may as well leave Britain-In-Austria (and maybe other powers) in Civil Disorder.

You must adapt your strategy (and your mindset) to the variant you're playing, not try to force the variant to fit into typical Diplomacy play. If you've never experienced Shift Left, open your mind and give it a try.

Michael is a new contributor, and I hope he returns. Articles on variants, and variant strategy, are always welcome!

by Timothy Haffey

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

Weasel Moot V Diplomacy Tournament

September 9-10, 2011

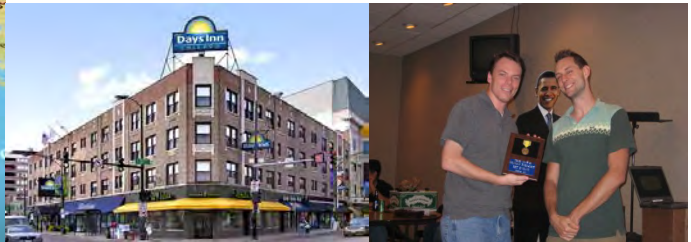
Day's Inn Chicago

644 W. Diversey Pkwy.

Chicago, Illinois 60614



*The hobby's best-named tournament is turning 5!
Play Diplomacy the way it was meant to be played in
a world-class tournament setting right in the heart of
Chicago's vibrant Lincoln Park neighborhood!*



When: September 9-10, 2011.

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

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

How much: The entry fee is \$40. Preregistration fee is \$35. (\$20 for students and kids; \$18 if they preregister.) You may preregister through September 8 by PayPaling to wcwsneak@gmail.com or at windycityweasels.org/wm5.

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

Schedule:

Friday, September 9

Round 1

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

Board Call: 7 p.m.

Saturday, September 10

Round 2

Registration: 9 to 9:30 a.m.

Board Call: 9:45 a.m.

Round 3

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

Board Call: 7 p.m.

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

Sunday, September 11

Awards Ceremony: 10 a.m. at a location to be determined.

Questions? Contact us at weaselmoot@gmail.com

Sponsored by the Windy City Weasels.



Diplomacast.com: A Review of a website Or Diplomacy's Morning Zoo

By Jack McHugh

Diplomacast.com is a new website that is a podcast about the game of *Diplomacy*. It is run by two west coast Diplomacy players: Eric Mead and Nathan Barnes. Eric is the slightly more experienced player but both have several years of experience. The podcast are quite long, at least 90 minutes and sometimes over two hours. My main beef with the length is the site doesn't tell you how long each podcast is; you have to open it up to find out. I would like to know how long each podcast is before it is opened.



The layout of each podcast is Eric and Nathan riffing on various aspects of Diplomacy and then they interview some hobby personality. Their early episodes have mostly concentrated on various tournament winners such as Chris Martin who is a past winner of World DipCon, Doug Moore, this year's winner of DixieCon, or Edi Birsan, who claims to have won more Diplomacy conventions than anyone in 45 years of playing.

The first few episodes have Eric and Nathan, who conduct the show like a morning radio program—the

hobby morning zoo, if you will—explaining a lot of basic stuff about diplomacy, e.g. what alliance is the “steam roller”, what is a stalemate line, what does DIAS mean, etc., etc. This is usually done in the “Table Talk” segment which is the first hour or so of the show. Which is a good thing since our hosts came to realize after the first episode they had to explain a lot of these terms to any novices who did not know the Diplomacy jargon.

Eric generally plays the self-deprecating Stan Laurel, to Nathan's more bombastic Oliver Hardy. Eric tends to qualify most of his statements and won't hesitate to poke fun at himself. Nathan tends to take the role of diplomatic Quick Draw McGraw, he is going to do “all the thinkin' around here.”

I enjoy the discussions the best where they have differences of opinion. I got a lot out of their discussion of Italy although I wished Edi Birsan had taken a few minutes from explaining his philosophy on Diplomacy and taking credit for inventing the concept of Italy winning (apparently before Edi's articles in the early 1970's on Italian play and the famous Lepanto opening, most players were completely unaware you could win with Italy—thanks Edi.) No mention was made of the late great Kathy Caruso whose fearless and ruthless play of Italy revolutionized how people played Italy in the late 1970's-early 1980's.

I have to admit I came down with Eric—if you're Italy or Austria—you should talk to the other one first. Nathan says that never happens in his games and I have to say you don't play A/I very much Nathan, Eric is right, A/I discussion needs to be like voters in Al Capone's Chicago—early and often.

My other complaint about the site is it face-to-face, tournament-centric. For example, they talk about no-press, gunboat like it's a thing of the past along and that hardly anyone plays by email anymore. In actual fact most players do not play face-to-face or at tournaments but by email online.

Check it out—you'll learn a lot and enjoy the personalities. I count myself a fan and a regular listener.

NADF T-Shirt Design Contest

The North American Diplomacy Federation (NADF) is a nonprofit organization. Currently the organization operates using volunteers and personal funds. In an effort to become a self-sufficient organization, we have created an online store at:

<http://www.printfection.com/nadf>

We currently do not have much up there. That is why we are hosting a T-Shirt design contest. Slogans, pictures, jokes anything Diplomacy related may be entered.

Submit your designs or ideas (don't worry about fitting it onto a t-shirt) to: info@thenadf.org

Deadline: September 1st, 2011

1st place: \$50

2nd place: Free T-Shirt with your design on it

Remember: Designs must be original. Plagiarists will be disqualified. Winners will be announced in the next issue of Diplomacy World.

Good Luck!

Conrad Woodring

NADF President



www.TheNADF.org

Xenogogic

By Larry Peery

So who is the greatest Dipper of all time? Is it one of the hobby's "Three Bs? Birsan, Beshara, or Buchanan? Or is it The Man, Calhamer, himself? Is it someone from the hobby's first golden age, or someone from its second golden age, like Hood or Behnen? Was it an American, or perhaps a foreigner, like Walkerdine or Blanchot? Perhaps it was even a woman, like Byrne-Caruso. Is it a player, writer, hobby organizer? Is it someone who was or is all of these things? And more?

Let me challenge you to think outside the box for a moment and consider my choice, Henry Kissinger.

First, a bit of background. Henry A. (He always includes the A. in his name) Kissinger was sworn in on September 22, 1973, as the fifty-sixth Secretary of State, a position he held until January 20, 1977. He also served as Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs from January 20, 1969, until November 3, 1975.

Among the awards Dr. Kissinger has received have been the Nobel Peace Prize in 1973, the Presidential Medal of Freedom (the nation's highest civilian award) in 1977, and the Medal of Liberty in 1986.

Dr. Kissinger was born in Fuerth, Germany, came to the United States in 1938 (and never lost his German accent along the way), and was naturalized a United States citizen in 1943. He served in the U.S. Army from 1943 to 1946. He graduated summa cum laude from Harvard College in 1950 and received M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Harvard University in 1952 and 1954.

From 1954 until 1969 he was a member of the faculty of Harvard University, in both of the Department of Government and the Center for International Affairs. He was Director of the Harvard International Seminar from 1952 to 1969. (He gave up his chance at a tenured professorship at Harvard to remain in Washington in pursuit of his White House career.)

At present, Dr. Kissinger is Chairman of Kissinger Associates, Inc. an international consulting firm, (a vehicle Kissinger created to make him a great deal of money and give him a bully pulpit to remain before the public).

Second, demonstrating that he does indeed have a long memory and is not likely to forget a slight, Kissinger announced this month that he was donating his private and professional papers and objects (more than a million items) to Yale University, which his two children attended.

Known for his skills as a player and negotiator, perhaps Kissinger's lasting impact on the world of diplomacy will be as a writer. He has published no less than 16 books and countless articles, papers and speeches since 1957. In addition to his three volume memoir, his most important books include: A World Restored: Castlereagh, Metternich and the Restoration of Peace (1957) (which foretold just how he would handle the negotiations to end the Vietnam conflict); Diplomacy (1994), and most recently On China (2011). These last two should be required reading for serious student of diplomacy or Diplomacy.

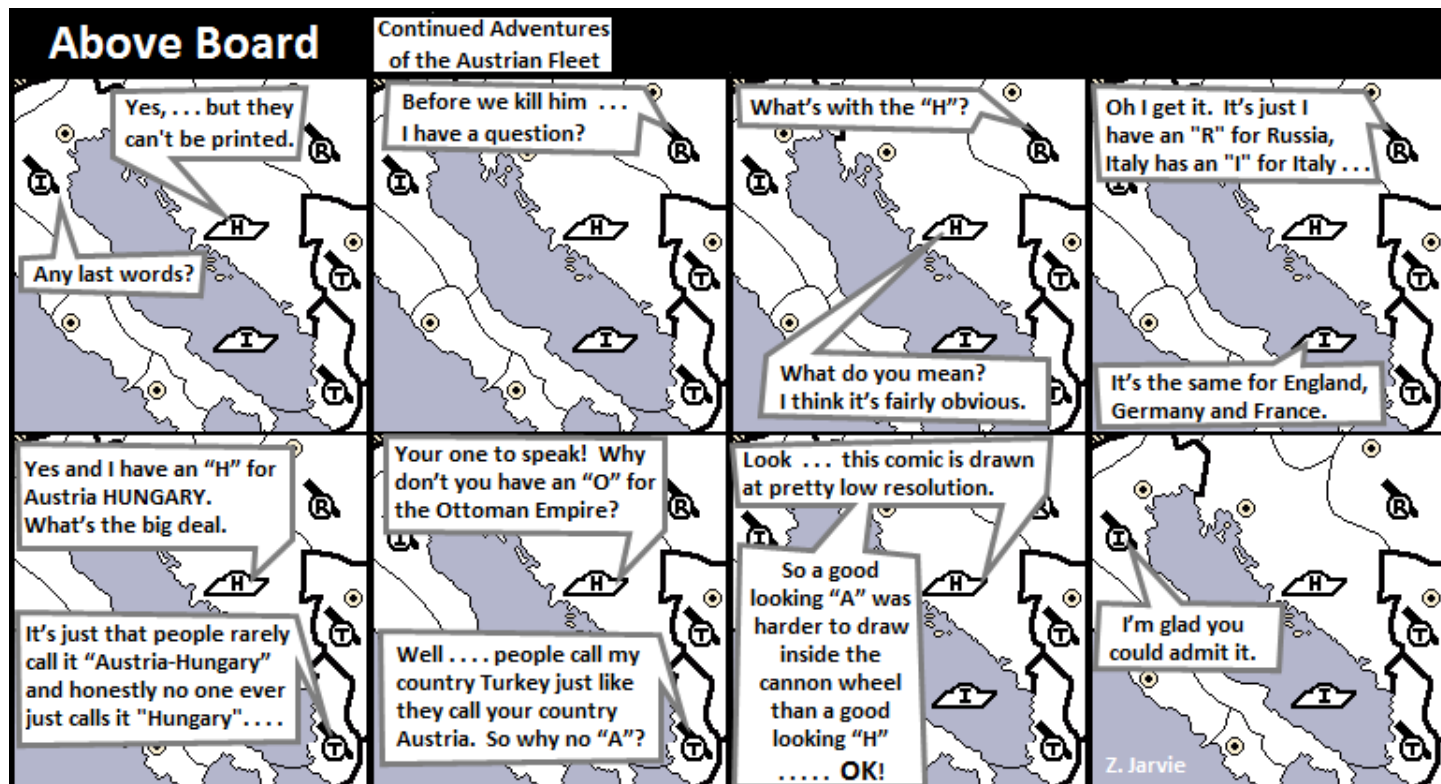
On China recounts the long history of Kissinger's interaction with generations of Chinese leaders, as well as China's evolution from the days of Mao and Deng, to today's China as super power in waiting. It's been reviewed in almost every foreign policy journal, major newspaper, and discussed on every foreign news network program. Some pundits have criticized the book's first few hundred pages for their excessive attention to Chinese history and philosophy; as well as Kissinger's pre-occupation with the game of Go as a symbol for Chinese international conduct. Personally I found both fascinating.

Third, anyone reading On China would do well to listen or watch the recent Metropolitan Opera broadcast of John Cage's opera Nixon in China. It's a pity the broadcast's half-time intermission featured an interview with former Kissinger aide Winston Lord, and not Dr. Kissinger himself.

Fourth, there is no doubt that Kissinger is a great diplomat and Dipper. How much longer that image will last, particularly after his death, only time will tell. There is also no doubt that Kissinger's record has some serious flaws and failures in it. Vietnam, Cambodia, and Central America among those overseas. His treatment (I would call it abuse) of his staff and colleagues was not only wrong, but in some cases illegal. He was and is notorious for blaming others for his leaks to the media; and for passing his own failings onto others.

In conclusion, consider this question, "Who in the history of Diplomacy most reminds you of Dr. Henry A. Kissinger? And why? And please share your thoughts with us.

Inspired? Drop us a letter, or a full article. Tying Diplomacy (or Diplomacy variants) together with real-life history is a type of article I'd like to get more of.



Selected Upcoming Conventions

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

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

GenCon - Thursday August 4th 2011 - Sunday August 7th 2011 - Indianapolis, Indiana - <http://www.gencon.com/2011/indy/default.aspx>

Weasel Moot V - Friday September 9th 2011 - Sunday September 11th 2011 - Chicago, Illinois - Website: <http://windycityweasels.org>

Roma EGP 2011 - Saturday September 10th 2011 - Sunday September 11th 2011 - Roma, Italy - <http://webdiplomacy.it/>

Auckland Diplomacy Championship - Friday September 23rd 2011 - Sunday September 25th 2011 - Auckland TBC, New Zealand - <http://www.daanz.org/dip-tournaments.htm#aki2011>

World Diplomacy Championship XXI - Saturday October 1st 2011 - Monday October 3rd 2011 - Coogee Bay Hotel, Sydney, Australia - <http://www.daanz.org.au/wdc2011/index.html>

Buckeye Game Fest XII - Thursday October 13th 2011 - Sunday October 16th 2011 - Columbus, Ohio - <http://www.buckeyegamefest.com/>

EuroDipCon XIX @ MidCon XXXIII - Friday November 11th 2011 - Sunday November 13th 2011 - Hallmark Hotel Derby, Midland Road, Derby, Derbyshire, DE1 2SQ, United Kingdom - <http://www.ukf2fdip.org>

VII Milan Con / Italian NDC - Saturday November 26th 2011 - Sunday November 27th 2011 - Milano, Italy - http://www.signoridigioco.it/index.php?option=com_seminar&Itemid=53

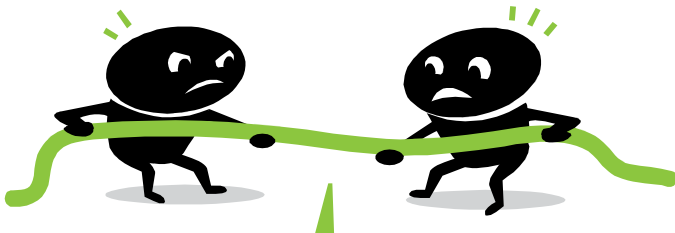
Haters Gonna Hate

By Sean Danker-Smith

My brother Sean is a veteran gamer, particularly in the online realm. He's also one of the most cool-headed people I've ever met, especially in the face of all the cheap hate and easy malice of the internet. He's been playing Diplomacy online for nearly a year now. If you've never played Diplomacy online, you should know that more often than not, things stay civil, but when they get ugly, they get very ugly indeed. Not too long ago, he and I were in a game together – an ugly game, filled with bad losers and bad winners. It wore on me, and I began to lose my cool. I, for one, usually have no trouble remembering that it's just a game, but if you're a competitive player who invests himself in the game, like I am, it can still be easy to let things said and done get to you. In the midst of this, my brother gave me some good advice on playing gracefully. Afterward, I asked him if he would do a quick write-up, because God knows the internet Diplomacy community needs lessons in winning, losing, speaking, and playing gracefully. Sean is coming at the topic out of his broad gaming experience, but I think you'll agree that these lessons are particularly applicable to Diplomacy players.

-Joshua Danker-Dake

Losing gracefully is simple: take a loss without getting angry, calling names, whining, or making excuses. Losing doesn't mean you can't get irritated, because nobody expects someone who's just lost a game to be thrilled about it – so nobody's going to hold it against you when you scowl as you hand over the controller at the end of the round. That's not ungraceful, that's normal, if you're the competitive type. A degree of salt is expected.



Diplomacy is unique because it's got a lot of interaction and trust involved; emotions can run high. Doing it online just makes it worse, because it's so easy to misconstrue someone's tone through plain text. It's easy to take or give offense inadvertently.

Once again, we know what we're getting into. You know you're online, you know you're playing Diplomacy. Everyone is out to get you, and you're going to get stabbed. Getting upset over lies and stabbing in Diplomacy is like being upset that someone shot you in a shooter game. What do you expect people to do? You know what Diplomacy entails. It's an inherently nasty

game, and if someone wants to play nastily, you just have to deal with it. You don't feel like a villain when you're in a dastardly alliance, so why get salty when other players team up for the long haul? If that's a problem for you, try Scrabble.



The obvious way to be ungraceful is to get mad and resort to loud and/or foul language. I don't have to tell you not to do that because your mother already has. But there's another kind of ungraceful loser that you've probably encountered: the explainer.

The explainer might stay calm, but he won't leave the venue until it's been made clear to somebody why he lost and why that's unjust, or how it could have gone differently. *I'd have won if only such and such* – and so on. The explainer might be right, but that doesn't make this a cool thing to do. He has lost. If he really is better than the guy who beat him, then he should prove it by coming back and winning next time – not by whining to anyone who'll listen. If you have something to prove – explainers always do – then ask yourself how important it really is to prove it to a bunch of gamers.

How easy or difficult it is for you to win or lose gracefully depends on your mindset going into a game.

There's only one game I was ever any good at – an old shooter called *The Specialists*. I was so good that it became an obligation to win, which I usually did – but that sucked all the fun out of it. I wasn't playing because I loved the game, I was playing to keep my edge so I wouldn't lose. This led me to consider my motivations, and to think about how much fun I was really having. Once in a while, everybody who plays competitive games should take a minute to think about those things.



Is it really that important to be the alpha nerd for the five minutes that people remember who won any given game? Is it the end of the world if there's someone better than you, or someone who isn't better, but wins anyway? Of course it isn't, and you know it. There's nothing wrong with playing to win – if that's your thing – but losing isn't worth getting bent out of shape over.

If temper could be switched off at will, the world would be different. What about unsavory characters? Every competitive gamer encounters them, and someone rubbing you the wrong way can really make you want to do or say something ungraceful.



If someone is being verbally problematic, shrug it off. Don't even reply to him; if you get salty, you're just playing into his hands. With a verbal attack he's just advertising his insecurities. Does a cool person waste his time trolling people online? No. You could tell him to go to hell, but chances are he's already there. Don't keep him company.

If someone's actual gaming style upsets you – the camper in the shooter, the tier whore in the fighter, the unscrupulous try-hard in the board game – what right do you have to criticize or insult the way they play? It's a

game; as long as they aren't cheating, they're entitled to play however they like. If the way they play takes the fun out of it for you, don't play with them again. But don't presume to judge, and don't make a scene. We play for fun; different people have fun in different ways. Let it be.



Graceful losers don't lose their cool, don't call names, and don't try to make excuses or give explanations. Graceful winners don't gloat or go out of their way to humiliate ungraceful losers. (I'm looking at you, Diplomacy players who pass around hissy fit correspondences after a stab, or fighting game players who make videos of rage mail.) When you win, be courteous about it. You don't like it when people rub your nose in something, so don't do it to them.

If there's a key to losing gracefully, it's perspective. Not only is it only a game, but nobody has a gun to your head to play it – you do this by choice, presumably because you enjoy it. Keep that in mind. When you win, win with class. When you lose, shake hands, thank everyone for the game, and get on with your life.

Clearly writing quality articles for Diplomacy World runs in this family...

Diplomacy World Demo Game

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

The Players:

Austria: Steve Cooley

England: Bill Quinn

France: David Hood

Germany: Mark Fassio

Italy: Melinda Holley

Russia: Don Williams

Turkey: Vince Lutterbie until after Spring 1907. Gary Behnen takes over after that.

The Commentators:

Jim Burgess (**BOLD**)

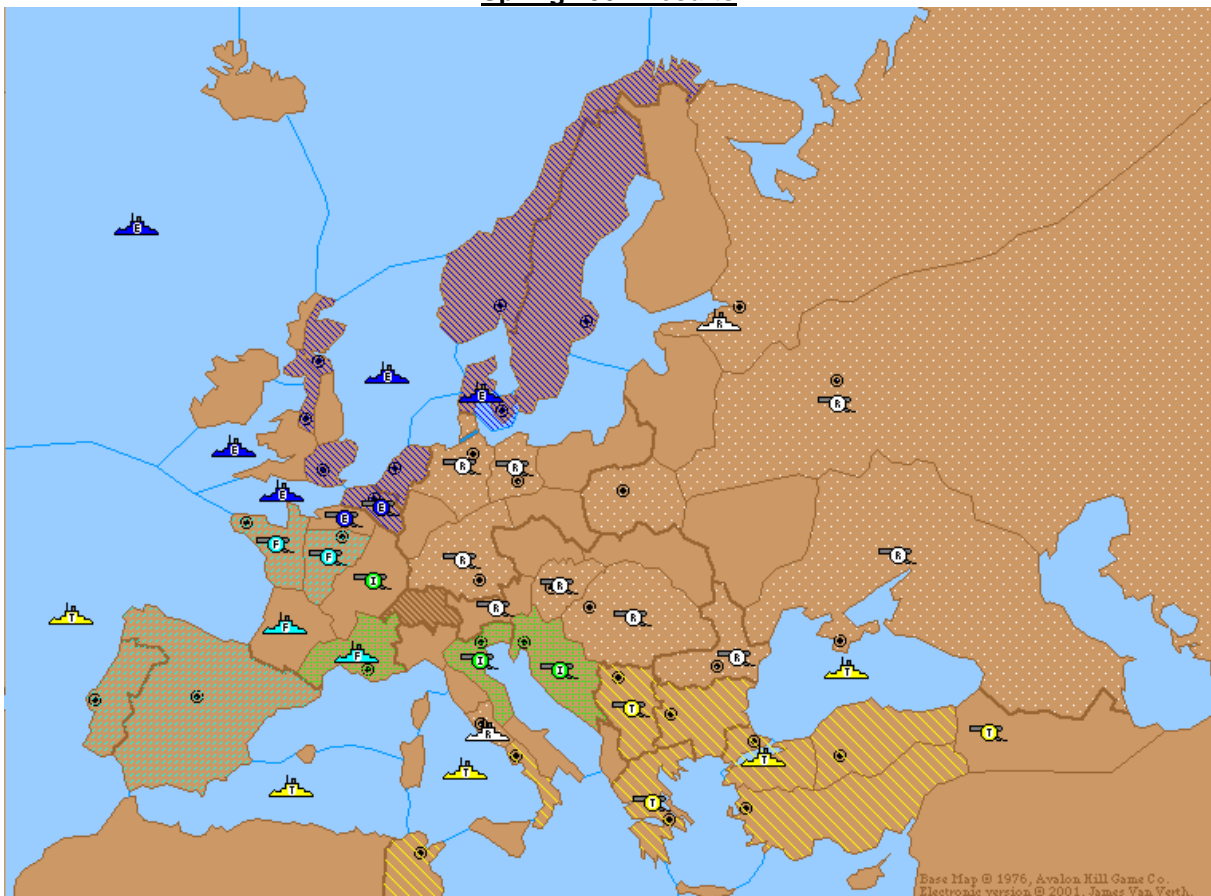
Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

The GM:

Douglas Kent

Spring 1907 Results



Are things getting interesting again? Or are these new reading glasses screwed up?

England: A Belgium Supports A Holland – Picardy, ~~A Burgundy – Paris~~ (*Disbanded*), F Denmark Hold, F English Channel Convoys A Holland – Picardy, A Holland – Picardy, F Irish Sea Supports F English Channel, F North Atlantic Ocean - Mid-Atlantic Ocean (*Fails*), F North Sea Convoys A Holland - Picardy.

France: F Brest – Gascony, ~~A Paris - Burgundy~~ (*Fails*), A Picardy – Brest, F Spain(sc) - Marseilles.

Italy: A Ruhr – Burgundy, A Trieste Supports A Venice, A Venice Supports A Trieste.

Russia: A Bohemia – Tyrolia, A Budapest Hold, A Kiel Supports A Munich, A Moscow – Sevastopol, A Munich Supports A Ruhr – Burgundy, A Rumania Supports A Budapest, A Silesia – Berlin, F St Petersburg(sc) Hold, F Tuscany – Rome, A Vienna Supports A Bohemia – Tyrolia, A Warsaw - Moscow.

Turkey: F Bulgaria(sc) – Constantinople, F Constantinople - Black Sea, A Greece Supports A Serbia, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean Hold, F Naples - Tyrrhenian Sea, A Serbia Hold, A Smyrna – Armenia, F Western Mediterranean Supports F Mid-Atlantic Ocean.

PRESS

CARSON, CALIFORNIA: "Wh...where?", stammered Brooklyn, "but Merlin said we were going to save the galaxy – you know, with Excalibur." As he said the words he waved the sword above his head and grinned, already feeling more at ease.

The Time Lord grinned back and then winked again at Merlin, realising the old magician had already prepared the eleven year old well – as he knew he would. "Yes Brooklyn," he said quietly, "we are indeed on a quest to save the galaxy. But I need to give you some...well...preparation for what is to come."

The young boy looked a bit concerned and glanced at Merlin before looking back at The Doctor. "So, will it be really horrible?" he asked quietly.

The Doctor laughed and patted the boy's shoulder. "I certainly hope not and you have nothing to fear, I promise you."

Merlin intervened. "The Doctor is right Brooklyn, there is nothing to fear."

Brooklyn looked relieved and managed a bit of a smile. "Okay, so what do I need to be prepared for?"

The Time Lord paused for a moment as he collected his thoughts. "Well," he replied, "we are going to a space ship. A very big space ship."

The boy's eyes grew wider as the words sank in. "You mean like the Space Shuttle?"

The Doctor laughed again. "No Brooklyn," he replied, "much bigger than that."

The eleven year old thought for a moment. "So you mean we've really got ships bigger than the Shuttle? I guess that must be a big secret?"

The Time Lord looked more serious. "It is indeed a big secret Brooklyn," he replied, "but this ship is not from Earth. This ship is a warship from the Fndili Empire and the crew will give us all the help they can, but the Fndili are aliens."

Brooklyn looked at The Doctor and then at Merlin, then back to The Doctor. Then he smiled. "Hey Doctor," he said excitedly, "in the last few hours I've found out that magicians are real, goblins are real and even Time Lords are real. I guess I should have expected some aliens as well!" Then he paused and frowned. "But you're sure they won't eat us or something?"

The Doctor and Merlin both laughed. "No boy," said Merlin, "we are all quite safe. The Fndili want to solve this problem just as much as we do."

Brooklyn looked greatly relieved.

The Doctor continued. "But they are aliens Brooklyn, and are very different from us. They have tentacles instead of arms and legs and their eyes are on stalks. I wanted to tell you this first so you wouldn't be too frightened when you meet them."

But the young boy just grinned. "Hey Doctor," he said, "this is getting way more exciting than the Sci Fi series on TV. Come on, I want a ride in the Tardis and then meet some real aliens."

Merlin looked at The Doctor and smiled. "I think we have indeed chosen our sword bearer wisely."



Brooklyn looked up at them and grinned again. The Time Lord opened the door of the Tardis and the three companions entered. The door closed and the cavern was filled with a screeching sound as the Tardis dematerialised.

The vast cavern was now silent and once again in total darkness. The young Brooklyn Beckham would now face his destiny aboard the 'Further Glory'.

(Somewhere on a foggy mountaintop) - "Afternoon, 'fraid I'm out of pie."

The woman shook her head. "That's okay, Mr. Drucker." She patted her stomach. "Tummy's kinda off." She glanced around. "You got any Alka Seltzer and Excedrin Migraine pills?"

"Sure." The grocer turned to the shelves to get the requested items. "By the way, Sheriff was by earlier lookin' for you."

The woman grunted. "I also need a bottle of water...and a plastic cup if you've got one."

Silently the grocer put the items on the counter and rang them up on the register. The woman slid some money across the counter then opened the boxes. The grocer watched in horrified silence as she poured water into the cup, opened two packs of Alka Seltzer, then dropped in four tablets of the Excedrin into the foaming liquid.

"Do you know what that'll do to your stomach? You need to eat something with all that!"

The woman ignored him and raised the cup. "Sheriff's lookin' for me, is he?" She raised the cup in a mocking salute. "Maybe he needs to tend to his own business." She began chugging the liquid until the cup was empty.

Mr. Drucker gasped. "You drink stuff like that and you're gonna die!"

The woman wiped her mouth with the back of her hand then glared at the grocer. "When?"

Spring 1907 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

Press: Let's start with this turn's two intriguing press items, though we lament that neither writer ACTUALLY is playing in the game, and we question how closely attuned they are in what they write TO what is happening in the game. First off, Brooklyn is the excitable young'un while the old guys (Doctor/Merlin) are playing the lame plot device role of slowing the action down. As far as I know, the Fndili will be an invention of Mr. Walkerdine, as this old hand Whovian does not remember such a race in the Time Lord canon. I am reminded of Timor and other such countries though. We will see what awaits them on the "Further Glory". Maybe the ship will be large enough to have a soccer field? On the more prosaic Hooterville side of the universe, Mr. Drucker takes center stage as we seem to be lamenting something actually related to the game, the headache/stomachaches we're all getting waiting for something interesting to happen. Now, has it? Let's actually look at this turn's moves!

FRANCE: To the extent that something exciting happens here, David makes what I think is a correct tactical decision to vacate Iberia, move into the undefendable Italian center in Marseilles (which is of course HIS home center) and evade being annihilated in Picardy while grabbing the essential Gascony. This likely is in alliance with Turkey, so Iberia is not immediately threatened. BUT, Vince doesn't have enough fleets to stop England from taking Mid-Atlantic (even if not this turn). On the other hand, if he DOES build, there isn't anywhere to build it. Mr. Hood awaits events.

ITALY: One could think, since Don supported Melinda to Burgundy (preventing France from bouncing), that Italy has forgiven Russia. I think that would be wrong, Don was just seeing an opportunity not to be threatened in Germany. He still worked to further surround Melinda's remaining two centers. And Melinda ain't savin' Marseilles. Melinda is not very important to the continuation of

the game.

Now we have the three powers who will either share an ultimate three way draw or make the endgame exciting.

RUSSIA: Does little bit convince us that he is allied with Bill Quinn and set up a southern line. One thinks stabbing Turkey earlier would have been better, this line could stalemate.

ENGLAND: But Bill Quinn has salvaged a difficult situation, it isn't clear IF Vince can lock up the southern stalemate line or not. And so, Bill sets up his attacks. and Melinda cuts Paris' support, then there is a guessing game over whether Brest or the Mid-Atlantic falls. And either way, there is not a long term line here yet. But Don did support Melinda's annihilation. I view that as arranged, so that England can rebuild as a fleet to further the advantage over Vince.

TURKEY: Seems to have been abandoned by the others, so smartly works with David Hood who is a great tactician and can help Vince prosecute the war. The next Fall guessing game will say a lot about speed of midgame moving to endgame.

Well, I'll chime in since I haven't promised any article. I have an article in mind, but I haven't started it, so I don't know where or how it would go.

Besides, I had already decided on what my angle for this turn would be.

I have been spending a lot of time trying to figure out what players should do and wishing that they would pursue different strategies, just to amuse me. Well, rather than doing that again, I'll consider the tactical implications of the various moves.

This might be more useful for readers than speculating

about the diplomacy.

OK, let's start with England. England has committed fully to going after France. This probably looked like an easier thing to pull off before David Hood took over for Buz Eddy. With this move, we see David's genius at work.

Before this move, England had been facing a Turkish fleet in MAO that was blocking any progress, but he had just gotten an army into Burgundy. France did not have a stalemate line set up. On the one hand, there were enough fleets lined up to hold the MAO - support could be had from F Bre, F Spa, or F Wes. In contrast, there were only three English fleets that could attack. But the problem was the English army in Burgundy. The Italian SC, Marseilles, was open, as was the vital province of Gascony. Also vulnerable was Picardy, if France didn't give it enough supports. Either F Bre or A Par could support Picardy, but those were also the best forces for defending Gascony.

If France chose NOT to take Marseilles (which he did) then England could have retreated there, though I think they believed that what happened and did happen was what would happen in making that choice. This takes one more fleet out of connection to the Mid-Atlantic.

Looking at this position, England wants to take Picardy while either holding Burgundy or finding an opportune retreat.

It seemed likely to me that France would cover Marseilles for Italy. I didn't anticipate that he would also block any move to Gascony.

Why? Gascony is the linchpin of French defense, and David Hood knew that. I think David did it right, and this is how the "if I do this and he does that and I do this" type thinking ends up. But, again, I think England/Russia (if this is all arranged, as seems likely) won the tactical battle this time, up three levels, as they anticipated it.

I didn't anticipate the move to cover Gascony solely because I didn't think of that permutation, not because it wasn't a superior move.

It seemed reasonably likely that England would make a supported attack on Picardy. He chose to do so via convoy, rather than moving from Belgium. He did hit Paris to cut support, but support from Brest would have been sufficient to hold Picardy. But France has chosen to prefer losing Picardy while holding everything else.

The interesting twist here is just how the Italians took Burgundy. It wasn't done with French support. Indeed,

it's not clear that France and Italy were coordinating at all. Instead, we see the Russians providing the crucial support. Don may have chosen to do so just to get that pesky Italian army out of the Ruhr. But it's hard to imagine that England will be thrilled with the development.

And, interestingly, we disagree. England will be the fleet power and one more fleet can ensure that Turkey eventually succumbs. Also don't forget Russian F Rome that sits safely behind the lines, very hard to annihilate while England is barreling down on the Mediterranean.

England cannot simply bypass France and invade Turkey. I thought that, with that in mind, having an English army in Burgundy is far more useful than having a disband. It's not clear to me that Italy is helping England at all. Is that how you read this result? Do you think Italy will order Bur - Gas to help England take the MAO? That doesn't seem likely to me. I suppose England and Italy could coordinate in an attack on Paris. But England could have done that by himself.

England now has a terrible offensive position with regard to France. Also, every single other player on the board worked against him in the Spring. What can he do now?

Again, perhaps, but I disagree. We'll see who is right.

Now let's move to the other major development of the turn. Having built F Con, Turkey now moves several forces into a more anti-Russian position. This could be based on paranoia, or it might be a truly aggressive move. My initial thought was that Turkey should have kept his army in Bul to be working with the army in Ser against Rumania. But the Turkish move has a different advantage. While it gives a weaker offensive position against Rum, that will change after the Fall move, presuming Turkey moves his fleet to Bul(EC).

So what do we have here? Turkey has lined up forces against Sevastapol, but I doubt he expected to see the Russians move A Mos - Sev, A War - Mos. Had Russia moved differently, poaching Sev might have been done easily.

And here, too, I think the behind the scenes Diplomacy ensured that both Turkey and Russia knew they were now at war.

And then there's the Italian position to consider. Those two armies in Venice and Trieste look mighty vulnerable to the neighboring three Russian armies. The obvious attack here involves A Tyr - Ven, combined with the armies in Vie and Bud ganging up on A Tri. But the Turkish moves are going to force Russia to

reconsider. What will the Turks in Serbia do? They could be involved in an attack on Rumania if A Bud doesn't support A Rum. The support from Sev would certainly be cut. And thinking on it, the support from Bud could be cut by the Italians.

The legitimate question is how firm is Italian support for the presumed ER alliance?? It could be REALLY lukewarm. If I'm Don, I'm not sure I do attack Melinda right now. Working together instead, Serbia is toast and Turkey is in trouble on all fronts.

Yeah, I don't think it's all that strong, obviously, since I'm not convinced it exists at all. I think it's reasonable to conclude that Don knew that Melinda was ordering Ruh - Bur, but he may have simply guessed that this would happen. It was certainly in the Russian interest to get that annoying army out of Ruhr. With those Russian armies surrounding the Italian SCs in Ven & Tri, if there's any coordination it's in the gun-to-the-head type.

The vulnerability of Rum raises the question of the

SPRING 1907

The return of the Tardis was uneventful but, on the way, The Doctor took the opportunity of explaining to young Brooklyn about his relationship to Queen Victoria and hence why he had been chosen as sword-bearer. The eleven year old was even more surprised than when he had discovered that magicians and goblins were real (and indeed Time Lords) but he listened closely to The Doctor's words and nodded his head as he realised the full implications. Then he looked up at his two companions with a little spark of amusement in his eyes. "So," he said, "I guess that means that Mom is really a Princess and I could be a King?"

Merlin and The Doctor exchanged glances. "I told you he was a smart lad Doctor," said the old magician with a grin.

"Well," replied the Time Lord, "yes, I suppose so Brooklyn."

The young boy looked thoughtful. Then his eyes sparked again. "It's just that Mom used to be called 'Posh Spice' and sometimes she can be a bit sort of bossy, you know?"

Merlin laughed. "And your point is young man?"

advisability of A War - Mos. A War - Ukr would have provided just as much support for A Sev but would have provided more flexibility.

Well, that's about it for these two situations. We now have a board alive with possibilities. We have a lot of players making half-moves towards other players. This might well be a situation where new combinations develop. For example, I could see Turkey taking Portugal, which France cannot defend. Turkey is really spread thin for an 8-SC power.

And then there's the Italian army in Burgundy. While it seems unlikely, it could be sent to Paris. I've seen crazier developments.

I'm keen to see what happens next.

Yup, agreed, and Rick leans one way, I lean the other, in predicting where it's going. What do YOU think, before reading ahead???

"Well," he replied with a shy little smirk on his face, "I was just thinking it might be best if she didn't find out about the Queen Victoria stuff."

Merlin laughed again and patted the boy's shoulder. "Oh Brooklyn, we have indeed chosen well."



The Doctor laughed too. "That sounds like a good plan Brooklyn," he said as he guided the Tardis into the cargo bay of the 'Further Glory.'

The familiar screeching sound died away as the Tardis materialised in the cargo bay. The Doctor turned on the viewscreen and the three companions

looked at the picture of the empty bay. Then the door opened and a creature moved slowly inside, quite unlike anything Brooklyn had ever seen before. The boy gasped. "Oh gee," he whispered, "a real alien."

The Doctor laid a hand on the boy's shoulder. "Yes Brooklyn," he said quietly, "General U'til has come to meet us himself. Try not to be too frightened, he is a wise old soldier and very fond of youngsters."

Brooklyn gazed in wonder at what he saw. Then he looked up at his two companions. "I'm not frightened, honest - well maybe a bit nervous. But I so want to meet a real alien, though I'd feel better if you guys stayed with me."

Both adults laid a hand on each of his shoulders. "We will boy," said Merlin, "have no fear of that." The Doctor opened the door and they stepped outside, Brooklyn just a step behind the other two and feeling rather more nervous than he had admitted.

General U'til stood still as the three companions approached him. "I see the trip was successful Doctor," he said, "that is good news indeed." He looked at Merlin. "And of course you are the magician Merlin. The Fndili Empire is in your debt for what you have accomplished so far." Merlin just smiled and nodded his head.

Then his eye stalks moved and he looked down at Brooklyn. The young boy looked back at him steadily, though his legs were shaking slightly and he was so glad his two friends were with him. "And you are Brooklyn," he said quietly. "You have a very great destiny to fulfil and this ship and all aboard will do all we can to assist you. You are indeed a most honoured guest and very very welcome."

The young boy beamed at the kind words, already feeling his initial fear of a real live alien fading away. "Gee, thanks General," he replied, "I promise I'll do the really best I can." Then he looked up at his two companions, took a deep breath, and stepped forward with a slightly shaking hand outstretched. "It's really nice to meet you General," he whispered.

Merlin and The Doctor exchanged glances, both realising that this was going better than they could

ever have dared hope. The General slowly extended an upper tentacle and gently grasped Brooklyn's hand, smiling to himself as he detected a little shudder from the boy as he did so. "And it's really nice to meet you Brooklyn," he replied, "and I think we are going to get along really well."

Brooklyn just grinned as he shook the General's tentacle. This was just so cool!

Then General U'til looked at The Doctor. "Apologies Doctor but it is time for the next briefing of the trainees. Could I ask you to show Merlin and Brooklyn to their quarters?"

The Time Lord smiled. "Of course General, we'll see you tomorrow."

The old soldier twisted three tentacles in the sign of Sincere Thanks and hurried to the meeting hall.

The trainees were already assembled. General U'til took his place and cried, "Hail Fndili."

"Hail Fndili," came the response.

He looked at them for a moment as he collected his thoughts. So young, he thought, and so inexperienced. "Gentlemen," he began, "The Doctor has returned with the young boy and the magical sword - some of you may meet him tomorrow. But although events are moving as planned I urge you to remember we still face a terrible danger."

The meeting hall remained quiet.

"So," continued the old soldier, "to the briefing. As you will see England still continues the attack on France but is beginning to be slowed by the combined forces of France, Turkey and Russia. And although there is clearly at least an understanding between England and Russia in Scandinavia I wonder if this will continue for much longer?"

"Italy has, somewhat surprisingly perhaps, received support from Russia. Could this mean a full Russian invasion of English territory is now imminent?"

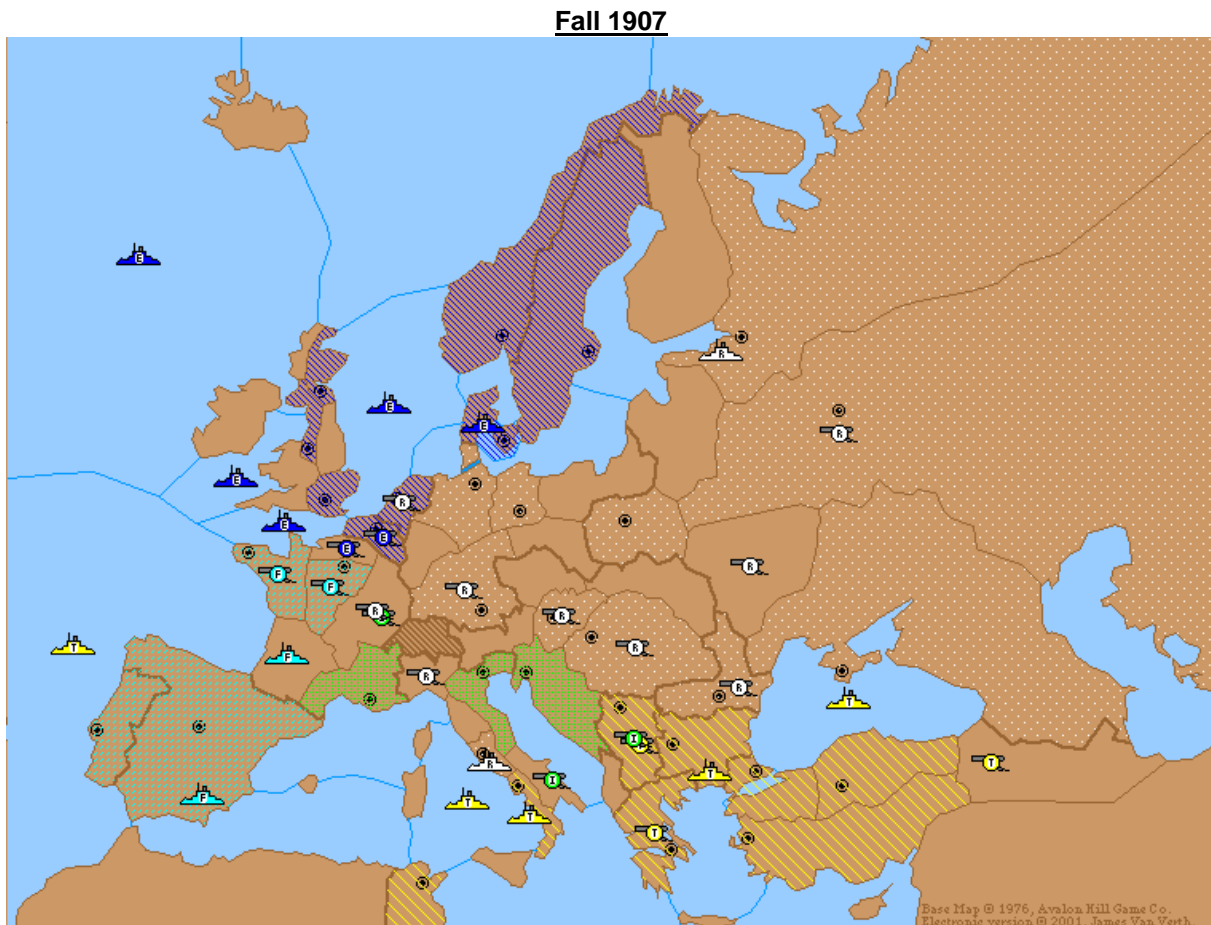
"Finally, and as I anticipated, The Russian and Turkish forces now seem to be positioning themselves around the Black Sea. This could of course be an agreed defensive position allowing both nations to continue their expansion in the North and West - or it could equally mean another bloody conflict is about to erupt!"

"I think the positions in six months from now might give us the answer."

"As usual Gentlemen, your observations by midday tomorrow. Hail Fndili."

With the briefing concluded the General returned to his cabin, still very unsure about The Doctor's plan.

GM Note: At this point, due to overwhelming family issues, the Turkish player, Vince Lutterbie, was forced to resign. He was replaced by Gary Behnen.



England: A Belgium Supports A Munich – Burgundy, F Denmark Hold, F English Channel - Brest (*Bounce*), F Irish Sea - English Channel (*Bounce*), F North Atlantic Ocean Supports F Gascony - Mid-Atlantic Ocean (*Void*), F North Sea - English Channel (*Bounce*), A Picardy Supports A Burgundy - Paris (*Cut*).

France: A Brest - Picardy (*Fails*), F Gascony - Brest (*Bounce*), F Marseilles - Spain(sc), A Paris Supports A Brest - Picardy (*Cut*).

Italy: A Burgundy - Paris (*Dislodged*, retreat to Ruhr or Marseilles or OTB), A Trieste – Serbia, A Venice - Apulia.

Russia: A Berlin – Munich, A Budapest Supports A Rumania, A Kiel – Holland, A Moscow - Sevastopol (*Bounce*), A Munich – Burgundy, F Rome Hold, A Rumania Supports A Trieste – Serbia, A Sevastopol – Ukraine, F St Petersburg(sc) Hold, A Tyrolia – Piedmont, A Vienna Supports A Budapest.

Turkey: A Armenia - Sevastopol (*Bounce*), F Black Sea Supports A Serbia – Rumania, F Constantinople - Bulgaria(sc), A Greece - Serbia (*Fails*), F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - English Channel (*Bounce*),

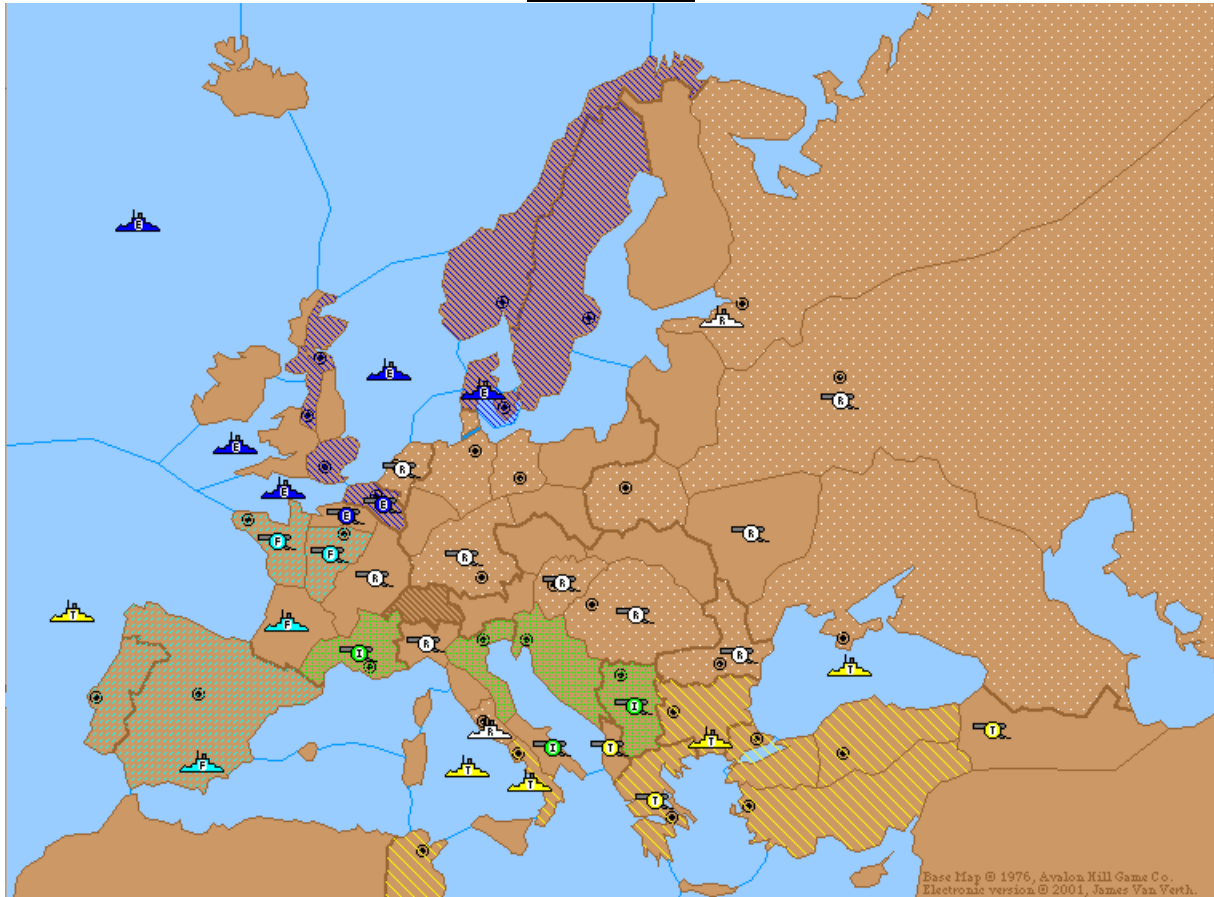
A Serbia—Rumania (*Dislodged*, retreat to Albania or OTB), F Tyrrhenian Sea – Naples,
F Western Mediterranean - Tyrrhenian Sea.

PRESS

RUSSIA to TURKEY: That relations between two heretofore allied nations have degraded so rapidly and completely is troubling. Was Russia's hope for peace this one season so troubling? Whatever ... in words first uttered many years ago ... FIAT VELLUM!!!

London : Every plan is perfect til the first shot is fired. I've fired many. Only shot down two. Hope my marksmanship has improved.

Autumn 1907



England: Has A Belgium, F Denmark, F English Channel, F Irish Sea, F North Atlantic Ocean, F North Sea, A Picardy.

France: Has A Brest, F Gascony, A Paris, F Spain(sc).

Italy: Retreat A Burgundy - Marseilles.. Has A Apulia, A Marseilles, A Serbia.

Russia: Has A Budapest, A Burgundy, A Holland, A Moscow, A Munich, A Piedmont, F Rome, A Rumania, F St Petersburg(sc), A Ukraine, A Vienna.

Turkey: Retreat A Serbia - Albania.. Has A Albania, A Armenia, F Black Sea, F Bulgaria(sc), A Greece, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F Naples, F Tyrrhenian Sea.

Supply Center Chart

| | |
|----------|---|
| England: | Belgium, Denmark, Edinburgh, Liverpool, London, Norway, Sweden=7, Even |
| France: | Brest, Paris, Portugal, Spain=4, Even |
| Italy: | Marseilles, Serbia, Trieste, Venice=4, Build 1 |
| Russia: | Berlin, Budapest, Holland, Kiel, Moscow, Munich, Rome, Rumania, Sevastopol, St Petersburg, Vienna, Warsaw=12, Build 1 |
| Turkey: | Ankara, Bulgaria, Constantinople, Greece, Naples, Smyrna, Tunis=7, Remove 1 |

PRESS

The dogs came back into view. The Wolfhound was still in the lead, but was closely pursued by the Akbash and the Setter. Suddenly, two events occurred almost simultaneously. The Wolfhound slowed, causing the Akbash to slow. The Italian Greyhound bit the hamstring on the Akbash, and waved her tail prettily to the Wolfhound.

The men in the stands booed their displeasure.

The French Poodle tried a quick end around but was blocked by the more aggressive Setter.

Then, almost all of the movement on the infield halted, while the Wolfhound turned and bared his teeth at all of the dogs. He was ignored by the Poodle, and the Akbash was frantically licking his left rear leg. The Greyhound sidled up to the larger Wolfhound and he allowed her to sit next to him while he stared at the Setter.

The Setter advanced nervously then rolled on his back, exposing his neck.

The Wolfhound strode forward and urinated on the Setter, thus finally and ceremoniously establishing his dominance.

The owner of the Setter went to his truck and pulled out a shotgun. He strode toward the infield. Bubba Joe halted him and asked what he intended to do. The angry owner stated, "What I shoulda done earlier, put him out of his misery. He is going to just let that Wolfhound dominate him."

"I reckon that's so", opined Bubba Joe, "but it looks like the Akbash and the Poodle still have some fight in them."

"Well, I don't own them, and I don't own the Greyhound neither, but I aim to finish off my sorry whelp and if a stray shot hits the Greyhound, well, I'll buy Junior a beer and call it even."

The sun set under the horizon, the last rays of light settling on the Wolfhounds glistening teeth.

Fall and Autumn 1907 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

Well, it's a shame that Vince had to go.

I will give Jim credit for recognizing that Don and Melinda were in fact working together. That's always an interesting twist for me. When players know each other fairly well, they are far more likely to work together after a stab.

Yes, and there are doctrinaire players who believe this is "wrong" somehow. It is in fact THE essential aspect of the game that makes it interesting. If you don't like it, push the game up a level.

Vince (or, apparently Gary) did not recognize this development. Instead of supporting himself to hold in Serbia, he foolishly made a futile attack on Rumania and has as a result lost control of Serbia. And the fleet is in Bul(SC) instead of Bul(EC)...why? Was Gary taken advantage of as a new player to the game? If Vince had submitted the orders, would have have taken the risk of leaving A Ser unsupported? The results suggest that Gary thought Melinda would cut the support of A Bud.

I think the best answer is Gary wasn't really paying attention, we'll see if Behnen does better, but the hand is difficult as dealt. Behnen is a world class poker player, he'll need to be.

Surprisingly, Melinda has gotten a build and can both retreat to Marseilles and get a build in Venice. She could easily have been down to one SC after this move.

While we're talking about botching tactics, we see in France that yet again Mr. Hood has the advantage over his larger English neighbor. So we're, what, three years or so after England turned on France and he's yet to get a single SC out of it? He hasn't even taken the MAO!! And now the Russians have walked into Holland.

From a strategic standpoint here, it's hard to see how England can continue to go after Turkey & France. I don't care if it's part of the master plan; it seems like the master plan can only result in a Russian solo. Well, the builds and disbands should be interesting. If Turkey removes F MAO, that will change the game a lot.

PRESS: Bill and Don (apparently, and I think pretty definitely) finally jump back in with a bit of press. Bill seems to be getting frustrated with how good a tactician David Hood is. He will continue to be frustrated. Don, on the other hand, seems to be solidifying his march to a solo and declaring that the "pen is mightier than the sword"? He spent much of his Diplomacy career publishing "Fiat Bellum" (Let there be War in Latin) as a subzine of Steve Langley's Magus. So, "Fiat Vellum" (Let there be Writing (?!)) appears to be the best of press, a good triple entendre. BUT, most worrisomely for the rest of the game, our external commentators, Richard and Faz, are missing in action (from both Fall and Autumn retreats!). The only Autumn press we do have is from the "dogs" noting how the Russian wolfhound continues to dominate his "ally", the English setter, and calls the Dutch affair a leg lifting

slight. More on that below.

ITALY: So, I had an unfair advantage looking at this game. I've observed Melinda's play for decades (and so has Don), as Melinda and Don have both become a bit more active again in recent years it seems that they've been in quite a few games together (all of which I've either been in myself or closely observing). Despite Don's stabbing, it didn't surprise me at all that Melinda chose Don over Gary, and a defining characteristic of the hobby of the 1980's was this sort of toadying behavior to he who stabbed you. I was a "master" of it myself. Melinda probably didn't come up with the tactics, but that was pretty brilliant, to anticipate that France would have to go back to Spain (SC) and thus the retreat to Marseilles would be open as Serbia was toast (as I noted last time). Don is allowing the build, and why not? He needs the Italian to make progress against Turkey.

TURKEY: Well, clearly part of the problem here was difficulties Gary had in continuing negotiations. Don predicted Gary's moves perfectly (even backing into Ukraine and opening Sevastopol for the build that could be a fleet). And then Gary felt he had to back out (bringing in the brilliant and supposedly retired Gary Behnen may help things, I hope). Turkey still has the usual good defensive position, but it is a bit unclear if there is much hope of advancing and I think if Italy/Russia stay together it ultimately will turn into a battle of guessing games that Turkey cannot continue to win. Russia's one stray fleet is a

bit threatened, such that Italy may have to build A Venice, rather than F Venice, which might be better for the long run.

FRANCE: David couldn't have built anyway, so he made some good maneuvers here that still keep Turkey in the MidAtlantic for one more turn. It seems that the luck runs out now though if REI remains together. France is doing what he can.

ENGLAND: Since Berlin went to Munich as Kiel went to Holland, this seems like it was arranged for England not to get to rebuild his annihilated unit in order to let Russia get the build in Sevastopol needed to break the back of Turkey. Delayed, delayed, delayed gratification. If the alliance continues to hold (and it may not as Behnen's entry could change the dynamics), then England does get the MidAtlantic in spring, but so what? He's so hopelessly behind Russia's tempo? Still, I suppose, Russia still is six away from soloing, so there is time, maybe England proceeds and gets a few real builds before challenging the Wolfhound.

RUSSIA: Continuing the puppet leading battle, all players seem to be playing to Don's tune. The only hope for change appears to be the change of players to Gary Behnen. Don and Gary are old poker pals, but Behnen also is friendly with Melinda, will he lure Melinda to switch sides? We shall see, I suppose. On this one, as with all changes of dynamics with new players, it depends on how the "vellum turns". We shall see.

FALL 1907

The three companions met up the following day and The Doctor showed them the way to the mess hall, both adults resting a hand on the young boy's shoulders as they passed several Fndili crew members. But Brooklyn seemed quite unconcerned, just grinning at the strange creatures as he passed them. The Time Lord instructed Merlin and Brooklyn on how to use the food generators, with Merlin choosing just cereal and milk but the eleven year old managing to create a plate of what looked (and tasted) pretty much like waffles and maple syrup.

As they finished their meal General U'til approached. "Gentlemen," he said, "we have a few hours until the next briefing. I was wondering if Brooklyn might like me to give him a tour of the ship?"

The young boy almost choked on the last of his waffles. "Oh crikey," he exclaimed, "that would be great!" Then he looked at his two companions. "Is it okay guys?" he asked.

Merlin smiled at The Doctor and gave a slight nod of his head. The Doctor smiled back. "Of course it's okay," he said, "go and have a look at your first alien spaceship while Merlin and I have a chat about what we need to do next."

With a huge smile on his face the eleven year old walked off with the old General. Merlin and The Doctor exchanged glances and smiled again. "We really did choose well Doctor," said the old magician. The Doctor just nodded, but was wondering about what was to come.

General U'til took Brooklyn on a full tour, showing him the massive hyperdrive engines, the fully stocked weapons bay, the shield generators and then the bridge. "Brooklyn," he said, "I would like to introduce my Science Officer, Lieutenant B'des, who has done some very clever work to help us against the threat we are facing."

The young Fndili twisted two tentacles in the sign of Honour and Welcome, then extended one to Brooklyn, who took it without hesitation. "Good to meet you Lieutenant," he said, "I promise I will do my very best to save us all."

The Lieutenant bowed his eyestalks in a sign of respect. "The whole of the ship's crew will be in your debt Brooklyn," he replied. The General made a mental note to add a few sentences on his report on B'des concerning his tact and diplomacy.

Then the eleven year old looked over at the old soldier. "General," he said, "this ship is way bigger than our Shuttles, and much more advanced. Do you have a picture of it, you know, from the outside?"

The General thought for a moment and then laughed. "Yes Brooklyn, I do. Come to my cabin and let me show you."

They entered the General's cabin and the Fndili raised a tentacle and pointed at the far wall. "There Brooklyn," he said, "that is a painting of the 'Further Glory' in the battle against the Cheldans." He paused for a moment before continuing. "That was truly a heroic episode in the history of this ship."

Brooklyn looked at the picture and gazed at it in wonder. "Oh wow," was all he could say.



General U'til sighed. "Alas the 'Further Glory' is an old ship now and only used for training missions such as this." He laughed. "As, indeed, am I."

The young boy grinned. "But I bet you've fought in lots of space battles General?"

The old soldier sighed again. "Indeed I have Brooklyn, indeed I have." Then he paused for a moment and then motioned to the young boy to take a seat. "I wonder, would you perhaps like to hear of some of them?"

Brooklyn's eyes sparkled with excitement. "Oh yes please General," he replied.

It was more than an hour later when General U'til, with Brooklyn still listening intently and gazing at him in wide eyed wonder, suddenly realised how much time had passed. "Brooklyn, I'm sorry," he said, "this old soldier has been prattling for far too long. It's time for the next briefing of the trainees."

"Oh that's okay General," replied the eleven year old, "I just loved all those stories. Er, I was wondering, would it be okay if I came to the briefing too and met more of your crew?"

General U'til twined two tentacles in a sign of Surprise and Delight (although of course Brooklyn didn't recognise it). "Why yes my boy," he said, "that is an excellent suggestion - and why don't you bring the sword as well?"

"Yeah, great idea!" exclaimed Brooklyn and rushed off to his quarters to get Excalibur. He returned minutes later with the sword and the General escorted him to the meeting hall.

The trainees were already waiting and the General noticed that Merlin and The Doctor were also present.

He looked out at the young trainees, still fearing the worst but keeping his thoughts to himself. "Hail Fndili!" he cried.

"Hail Fndili," came the response.

He paused as he thought about what he needed to say. "Gentlemen," he began, "you know the situation is perilous but The Doctor has a plan to save not just us but the entire galaxy. Before I begin the briefing I would therefore like to introduce Brooklyn Beckham and the magical sword Excalibur." He motioned to the young boy who, a little nervously, walked up to him waving the sword.

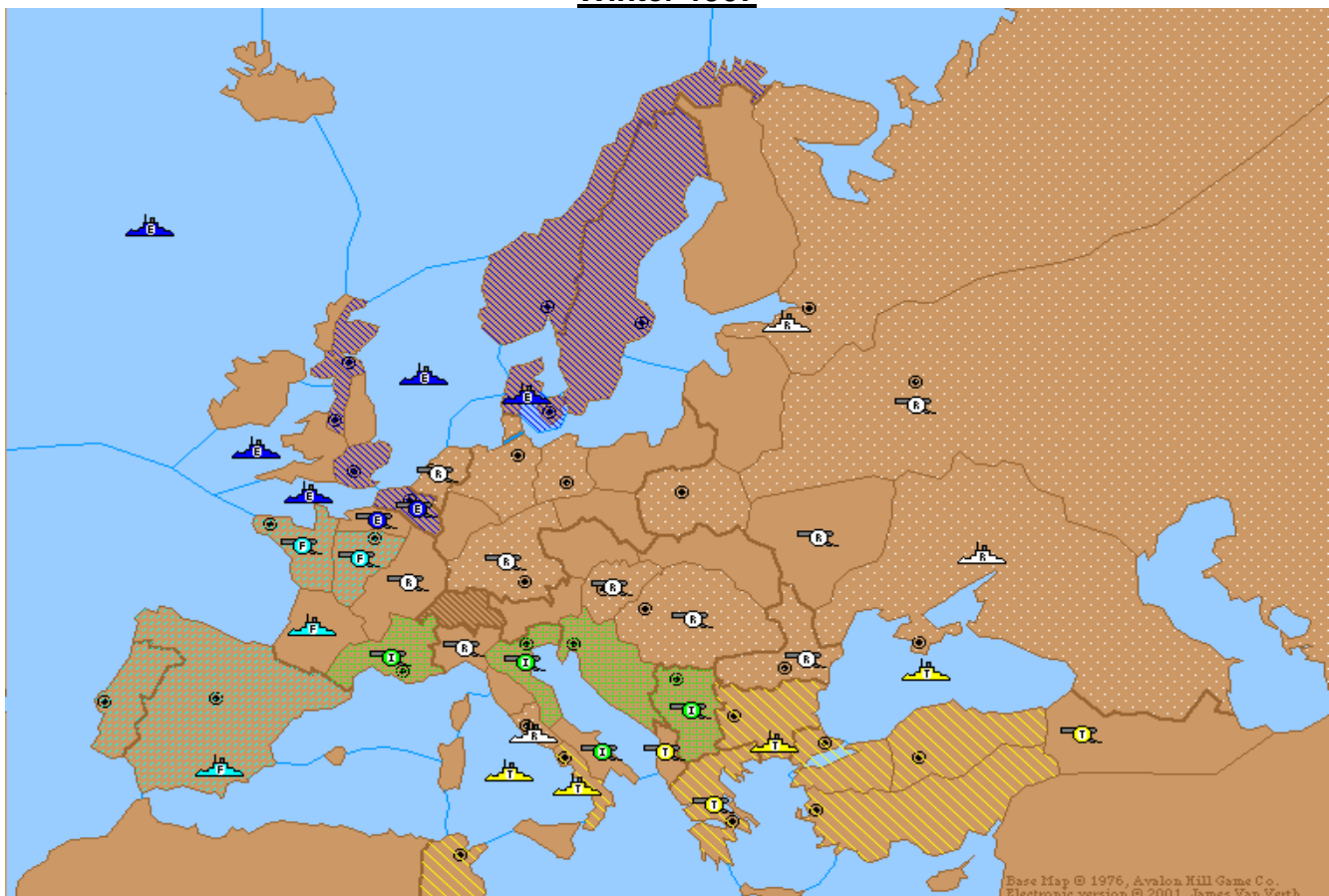
There was a moments silence as most of the trainees got their first look at the young boy wielding a sword nearly as tall as he was. Then they too all twined two tentacles and shouted, "Hail Brooklyn!"

The eleven year old looked a bit embarrassed but managed at least a bit of a smile. "Thanks guys," he said quietly, "I promise I'll do my best." Then he rushed over to the side where Merlin and The Doctor were watching him in surprise and delight. "That was well done boy," murmured Merlin with a pat on his shoulder, "very well done."

The old General was equally delighted and was just beginning to wonder if perhaps this remarkable young human child could yet save them all? But again he kept those thoughts to himself. "So Gentlemen, to the briefing."

"As you can see the alliance between England and Russia in the North still seems to be holding. But will England make any headway against France? That will of course depend on the reaction of Turkey, and Russia holds the key. You can see that Russia and Turkey are now moving their forces and clearly positioning for conflict - as I had predicted. That conflict will I think come very soon, and I believe it will determine the final outcome of this war." "As usual Gentlemen, your observations please by midday tomorrow. Hail Fndili!"

Winter 1907



What does the future hold? The expected or the unexpected?

England: A Belgium, F Denmark, F English Channel, F Irish Sea, F North Atlantic Ocean, F North Sea, A Picardy.

France: A Brest, F Gascony, A Paris, F Spain(sc).

Italy: Build A Venice..Has A Apulia, A Marseilles, A Serbia, A Venice.

Russia: Build F Sevastopol..Has A Budapest, A Burgundy, A Holland, A Moscow, A Munich, A Piedmont, F Rome, A Rumania, F Sevastopol, F St Petersburg(sc), A Ukraine, A Vienna.

Turkey: Remove F Mid-Atlantic Ocean..Has A Albania, A Armenia, F Black Sea, F Bulgaria(sc), A Greece, F Naples, F Tyrrhenian Sea.

Winter 1907 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

Not much to say here. The Turkish removal was the most influential adjustment, but it was really his only choice. The Spring results should be more interesting. In particular, I'm interested to see what happens to the Russians in Holland.

I agree, Russia set up his fleet build well, but does

depend on keeping Melinda on his side to make progress against Turkey. Melinda goes along with the army build to support Rome. And Turkey removes the farthest unit, hoping to have England and France shake up the Italy/Russia alliance. That's about it until we see what the negotiations with the new player do on the board.

WINTER 1907

The General was ready to begin the next briefing and stood quietly in the meeting hall waiting for the trainees to assemble. This was an earlier briefing than usual for he needed to join the humans as soon as it finished to discuss the detailed plans for the sealing of the rift.

The hall soon quietened as the trainees took their places. "Hail Fndili!" cried General U'til.

"Hail Fndili," came the response.

"Well, Gentlemen," he began, "we see a new Russian fleet in Sevastopol and Turkey disbands its fleet in the Atlantic - clearly both countries are expecting conflict, as I, and indeed many of you, had predicted. I think the next few observations will soon show us how this war will end."

"But now I must join The Doctor and his companions to prepare for the sealing of the rift. I will of course keep you fully informed of progress. Hail Fndili!"

With the briefing over the old soldier made his way to The Doctor's cabin, knowing that the discussion of the plans would already be under way. He entered and saw the Time Lord, Merlin and Brooklyn seated around a conference table. "Well Gentlemen," he said, as he seated himself at the table, "are we getting somewhere?"



The Doctor smiled. "I think we might be General," he replied. "We have had a long discussion with your Weapons Officer, Lieutenant R'lok, about the use of your Irillium mines and how, in their spiral pattern, they slowed the alien ship. Merlin believes that if we can use Excalibur to add a magical element to their working we can make them many times more effective - and so, hopefully, counter any attack from other alien ships when we attempt to seal the rift."

General U'til stood up and thumped the table. "By the Goddess Doctor," he shouted, "that is a plan indeed! Come, all of you, let us do it."

They made their way to the weapons storage bay where Lieutenant R'lok was waiting for them. More

than a hundred Irillium mines were nestled in their storage trays on the floor of the bay.

"So," asked the old General, "how do we do this Doctor?"

The Time Lord smiled. "That is a matter for Merlin and Brooklyn." He motioned to them to move closer. They did so, with Brooklyn holding Excalibur in front of him and Merlin raising his arms and beginning the spell of Making.

"Anál nathrach, orth'bháis's bethad, do chel denmha."

At first nothing seemed to happen. Brooklyn held the sword steady in front of him as the old magician repeated the chant. "Anál nathrach, orth'bháis's bethad, do chel denmha."

Then a mist began to emerge from the sword. Brooklyn looked across at Merlin but still held Excalibur steady. The old man smiled at the boy and

nodded as he repeated the chant. "Anál nathrach, orth'bháis's bethad, do chel denmha."

The mist deepened and slowly spread across the rows of mines. General U'til and Lieutenant R'lok exchanged glances and then looked at The Doctor - this was their first experience of magic. But the Time Lord just smiled at them and watched his companions, which gave them a little comfort.

The mist settled over the mines and then dispersed. Merlin ceased his chanting and smiled. "It is done General, your mines are now at least ten times more effective against a magical ship than before." He looked across to the Lieutenant as Brooklyn grinned at him. "You can now prepare them for launch Lieutenant," he said quietly.

The old General nodded to his Weapons Officer, who quickly began loading the mines into their dispensers.

The Doctor smiled again. "Gentlemen," he said, "I think we are ready."

Ask the GM

An Advice Column for Diplomacy World

Dear GM:

My wife says I shouldn't play Diplomacy any more because it makes me nasty and secretive. She also says it encourages me to think the worst of other people. How can I convince her Diplomacy is not all that bad?

Diplomacy is Good

Dear Good:

Duh—just use your Diplomacy skills and lie to her. Tell her you're going to a Candyland gaming tournament when you go off to your next Diplomacy convention.

I am worried about you as a player when need to ask me how to handle a problem that can be easily solved with a lie.

Your Pal,
The GM

Dear GM,

I want to play on the Judges but I can't figure out how it works—can you help me?

Judge Help

Dear Help,

Of course I'll be happy to help you. Just send your email to Doug Kent and we'll sign up for a gunboat game on a judge. Once we sign up I'll take you under my wing and I'll be happy to help you.

I can't guarantee that you'll have any centers left when I'm done helping you but I will help you.

Your Pal,
The GM

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