

Diplomacy *World*



Issue #115
Fall 2011

www.diplomacyworld.net



Notes from the Editor

Welcome to the latest issue of Diplomacy World. I'm sorry that I haven't had as much time this quarter to work on the zine, but fortunately I don't believe that has resulted in a lesser quality issue. As a matter of fact, we have some very enjoyable articles from contributors this time. So if you like this issue, thanks should go to them, not to me. Hmmm, that's probably the case EVERY issue, isn't it?

Before I go any further, I regret to announce the passing of Paul Bolduc from cancer. Paul had been publishing the zine **Boris the Spider** for quite a number of years, which contained a wide variety of multiplayer games as well as Diplomacy and the occasional variant. Paul had been sick for a while, so his passing does not come as a surprise, but it is saddening nonetheless. Paul managed to keep **Boris the Spider** going up until the very end with only minimal delays. I didn't know him very well on a personal level, but I've never heard anyone utter a word against him. Just a genuine nice guy.

Surprisingly, there have been three new Diplomacy zines that came to light recently. Perhaps the day of the postal zine or ezine, with longer deadlines but more personality than you'll find playing an online game on a website, has not completely passed. Could this be the beginning of a resurgence of sorts? One can only hope.

So, in no particular order:

Radar, a bi-weekly zine by Frederick Lahm. The goal is to run a single game of Diplomacy at a time, turns every two weeks, and report the results with commentary. If you'd like to see an issue or sign up for the first game, contact Frederick at lahm.frederick@gmail.com.

Fury of the Northmen by Colin Bruce. Colin's name is probably familiar to some of you. This monthly zine is running Chess and Britannia so far, with openings in Chess, Diplomacy, and Risk. This zine is distributed postal-only, although orders and negotiations can be via email. Contact Colin for a sample at 30 Almoners' Avenue, Cambridge, CB1 8PA, England. You can also find him at furyofthenorthmen@btopenworld.com but be sure to use Fury of the Northmen as the subject (he has a pretty aggressive spam filter).

Last but not least, there's **Quartz** by Geoff Kemp. This is "Volume 2" of **Quartz**, as Geoff used to publish the zine and has now restarted it. I participate quite a bit here, as Geoff always has a number of quizzes. Quartz

has openings in Sopwith, 221B Baker Street, Breaking Away, Railway Rivals, Diplomacy, and India (a Diplomacy variant). Email Geoff and ask for a sample to be sent back at ggeoff510@aol.com.

Hmmm, with these new zines starting, and still a number of zines rolling along, I wonder if my occasional plans to resurrect **The Zine Register** might have finally met with a logical starting moment? I'd be interested in any feedback on that idea; putting out an electronic version twice a year would not take a lot of work!



I'll close by reminding you the next deadline for Diplomacy World submissions is January 1st, 2012. 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 winter, and happy stabbing!

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

In This Issue:

Editorial: <i>Notes from the Editor</i> by Douglas Kent	Page 2
Convention Report: <i>GenCon 2011</i> by Will J. Abbott	Page 4
Strategy & Tactics: <i>The Legend of the Grand Alliance</i> by Joshua Danker-Dake	Page 6
Contest Results: <i>NADF T-Shirt Design Contest Winners</i> by Conrad Woodring	Page 9
Convention Report: <i>A Newbie's Experience at ManorCon 2011</i> by Alfred Nicol	Page 10
Feature: <i>Musical Diplomacy</i> by Björn Westling	Page 12
Feature: <i>Hardin and Diplomacy (Issac Asimov's <u>Foundation</u> Series)</i> by Will J. Abbott	Page 14
Convention News: <i>Chicago is Burning for You</i> by Jim O'Kelley	Page 15
Feature: <i>Diplomacywinks</i> by Eric Mead	Page 16
Feedback: Knives and Daggers – the Diplomacy World Letter Column	Page 22
Hobby History: <i>My Life With Ulrika: Part 4 (Ulrika Flies Solo)</i> by Richard Walkerdine	Page 23
Feature: <i>Couples Diplomacy (Probably Not a Remotely Good Idea)</i> by Alex Maslow	Page 25
Feature: <i>Charles Dickens on Diplomacy</i> by Russ Dennis	Page 27
Convention News: <i>Selected Upcoming Conventions</i>	Page 28
Feature: <i>Xenogogic: An Occasional Column Devoted to the World of Diplomacy</i> by Larry Peery	Page 29
Demo Game: <u>Diplomacy World</u> Demo Game – “Rotary Phones & 8-Track Tapes” 1908 – 1910 Results	Page 32

Gencon 2011

By Will J. Abbott

The 2011 Gencon Diplomacy tournament took place in Indianapolis, IN, at the Indiana Convention Center from August 4-6, 2011, during the Gencon games convention. This convention brought together perhaps 30,000 games players playing hundreds of games from Wednesday through Sunday. Board games like Diplomacy are played alongside miniatures games, collectible card games, role playing games, live action role playing games, and even some video games. In addition to the games, there is a large exhibitors' hall and various special events and features such as a costume parade.

Tournament Format

The Diplomacy tournament, run by Rogue Judges, is set up in a different format from many Diplomacy tournaments. Instead of a points system, the Gencon tournament features four qualifying rounds. Each game in the qualifying rounds lasts until the end of 1905, running about four hours. Each qualifying round has as many boards as are supported by the players who show up – typically three. Over the four qualifying rounds, the best performance by each country qualifies the player who made that performance for the final board. (If a player has multiple best country performances, one of the second place players qualifies; there are also tiebreakers in case more than one player has the same best result with a country.) Fifty-two people (including the TD) participated in this year's tournament. I did not see all of the qualifier games, as I was busy playing in some of them. Here I will give my own reminiscences from the games that I played.

During the qualifiers, Rogue Judges also held introductory sessions for players interested in the game but who either hadn't played before or hadn't played in a long time. These sessions could serve to bring players into the tournament as well – one of our finalists in fact was in an introductory session during last year's Gencon!

First Qualifier

In my first qualifier I drew Germany. I was eliminated in 1904. In this game, I intended to stay open to any alliance through 1901, hoping to get a feel for the England and France players and pick an alliance in 1902. Unfortunately, the alliance that emerged was an E/F, and I was left friendless.

Second Qualifier

In my second qualifier I drew Italy. I survived as a 3/3 power, not good enough to qualify. My early intentions were a cautious move west, letting France move north

on England. France moved north to cooperate, but events in the East scared me out of this plan. Austria got three builds, Turkey was essentially allied with Austria, and Russia was fading fast. Russia had attempted to attack Germany in 1901, hoping for a pile on Germany. The piling was on England, however, and Russia proved unable to resist A/T aggression. Out of concern that my move west would be followed by a stab by Austria I would not have sufficient forces to resist, I swung back east. This swing had the effect of wasting two whole turns: my turn to set up the intended assault on Iberia and the following turn redeploying to block Austria.

After the tournament, I played out the idea of using the same strategic ideas I started to implement in this game, but not swinging back east. This showed that the strategic idea, of an anti-French but harmless-looking setup in conjunction with a trusting alliance with Austria has definite potential. (The actual setup? I'm not going to reveal that until I get a chance to play it myself.)



Third Qualifier

In my third qualifier I drew Turkey. I was eliminated in 1904. Again I found myself friendless. I had thought I had developed a good potential alliance with Bob Rich's Italy and potential with Marc Blanchette's Austria and Russia. Bob and Marc are old friends, however, and Bob chose this game to unleash what may be a theoretical novelty (TN) in the Lepanto system: a version the Key Lepanto which moves the Italian A Trieste to Albania rather than Serbia, ultimately aiming potentially at Greece and leaving a number of possible convoys to the Turkish homeland. This TN worked perfectly in this game. I did not see the Lepanto coming, and was crushed, though I was able to linger on as a two-center Turkey for a while.

Fourth Qualifier

In my fourth qualifier I drew England. I survived as a 7/7 power, not good enough to qualify. Fortunately I was able to take advantage of oddities in this game. The first oddity concerned Germany, Austria, and Italy. Germany had opened F KIE-HOL, A MUN-RUH, A BER-KIE. Note that the German fleet moved to Holland, not Denmark. Austria opened A VIE-BOH. The Austrian player had the best Germany (she would qualify for the final board with that German performance), and entered into this last game with the main goal of preventing this German at least from beating her German score. (The German, as it turned out, was probably the weakest player on this board.) Italy opened with A VEN-TYR, A ROM-VEN. The board read this as anti-Austrian – except the German, who saw the Italian A TYR and Austrian A BOH as suggesting a combined assault on him. During the Fall 1901 negotiations, I checked with the German player. He was concerned with exactly this scenario. I knew therefore that his Fall 1901 moves would be F HOL H, A RUH-MUN, A KIE S A RUH-MUN. Denmark would be open. I had opened north: F EDI-NWG, F LON-NTH, A LVP-EDI. I had also gotten a good vibe from the French player. In Fall 1901, I therefore moved F NWG-NOR, A EDI-DEN, F NTH C A EDI-DEN, and build two. This conquest of Denmark brought France into an alliance with me, and started a takeout of Germany. Russia would start to expand in an attempt to take Best Russia. As a result, Turkey approached me for an anti-Russian “grand coalition”. This coalition originally included Germany (down to two centers) and France, but not Italy. In a turn, however, Italy defected from his alliance with Russia and joined the grand coalition; Germany proved to be in the way of France and myself and so was cut out. Russia ultimately was beat back from around 11 centers at his peak to a 1905 count of four centers. Turkey was able to do well enough to qualify for the final board. As of 1905, I had secured a position in the north and a firm alliance with France, which I could continue or stab as seemed appropriate.

Final Board

I did not play in the final board, but I had the opportunity to observe the entire game from the beginning to the final concession. Since I did not play, I was not privy to the actual negotiations, though I could observe who was talking to whom, as well as the board results. The game was well played. Unlike in previous years, none of the players seemed to have been out of their league on the final board.

This board featured Thomas Haver (qualifying with Italy, also having Best France) as Austria; Jennifer Cover (qualifying with Germany) as England; Tad Ringo (qualifying with England) as France; Nick Rohn

(qualifying with Austria) as Germany; Shawn McDuffee (qualifying with Russia) as Italy, Eli Klein (qualifying with Turkey) as Russia; and Andrew Shallue (qualifying with the second place France) as Turkey. Andrew had immediate problems, being forced out of Bulgaria in 1901. Eli also suffered early, and both of them failed to survive to the end. Shawn as Italy was able by pluck to survive to the end, finishing as a 2/1 Italy. At one point he had fleets in the Mid-Atlantic Ocean and the Black Sea, and nothing else. He finished controlling London and Liverpool only! Thomas had a 13 center Austria and received a concession after 1905; he was across the stalemate line and had the potential for at least three more centers the next year.

Watching a Diplomacy game is an interesting experience. You observe the board and who negotiates with whom, and try to infer what the alliances are, what their targets are, and what is likely to happen. Occasionally a player will talk briefly with you, but most of your discussions are with other spectators away from the board so as not to influence the outcome of the game. Surprisingly, Diplomacy makes a most intriguing spectator game; with more following, it could be intriguing programming on a sports channel. If poker can make it to television prominence, why not Diplomacy?

Why Gencon?

Gencon does not draw many top players, perhaps due to its setup and scoring system, and perhaps because of the cost of the badge. I go to Gencon not just for the Diplomacy, but to see friends who play other games. The presence of the other games gives the Gencon Diplomacy tournament its particular character. The games are shortened to four hours to allow people playing other games to participate. One can qualify for the final board (and thus win the tournament) without playing in all four qualifying rounds, allowing for other activities. The introductory games allow new players, or those who have not played for years, to get back in touch with the game without having to worry about swimming with the sharks right away. Gencon thus makes a great introduction to tournament Diplomacy for many players who might otherwise never push a piece, let alone stab an ally. Jennifer Cover played in the introductory games in 2010, and made it to the final board in 2011. Whether you finish first, seventeenth (such as myself), or tied for fourth-eighth, Gencon allows you to play some Diplomacy, have some fun in the Circle City, and explore other games, all in four days.

Thanks to Will for this piece. We really need more face-to-face event coverage, both to promote the events for the following year and to show what great fun can be had at the conventions themselves, win or lose.

The Legend of the Grand Alliance

By Joshua Danker-Dake

This is a follow-up of sorts to my previous article, "Finding Purpose When Victory Is Unattainable," from issue 107 (Feel free to refresh yourself there first).

In many of the Diplomacy games that you don't win, there is a point at which, if you are being objective, you will sit down, review your situation honestly, and determine that you have no realistic chance to win the game or be a part of any draw. This often takes place while you're being crushed by an alliance or when you've just been stabbed, perhaps even for a second time. And you might, rightly enough, stop thinking about trying to win.

Now, this doesn't mean that you cease to care about the game, flake out, or become a bad sport – far from it. It just means that you put aside the pipe dreams and adjust your priorities and your planning. This means that, much to the ire, perhaps, of other players, you might not be interested in participating in a Grand Alliance – at least not on their terms.

Let me start by linking you to [Roger Yonkoski's article on the Grand Alliance](#), which is probably the most thorough treatment of the subject on the web. If you're relatively new to Diplomacy and unfamiliar with the concept, then by all means read the whole thing. It's well thought-out, and quite a good article on the whole. Yonkoski's systematic approach to forming, implementing, and maintaining a Grand Alliance is spot-on.

Yonkoski defined a Grand Alliance as "an alliance that is required for a certain subset of powers to prevent one power from winning the game. If any one of these powers refuses to join, then the frontrunner would win." I'll use this definition here as well. The Grand Alliance is the theoretical solution to any frontrunner. Yonkoski makes it clear how difficult it can be to implement. But there are other issues as well.

Yonkoski says, "I believe that it should be the objective of all players to prevent anyone else from winning, if they cannot win themselves." This is a noble thought, but it isn't that simple. Diplomacy is a zero sum game: what Player A loses, Player B gains. You can't play to keep *anyone* else from winning unless *you're* winning. And what good does it do you if you help keep Player A from winning if it means Player B wins instead? What do you gain if you prevent someone else from winning at the expense of your own existence?

In Diplomacy, you typically can't prevent *anyone* from winning – but you can nearly always prevent *someone* from winning (or at least try your damndest). Let's consider the following mid-game scenario (which, even

though it involves three countries against two, fits Yonkoski's definition of a Grand Alliance, as there's only one true frontrunner):

Here, a French-English alliance is having its way with all comers, and it is patently clear to everyone except France that England will stab France and go for the solo as soon as is convenient. An Italian-Turkish-Russian-French alliance is proposed (Austria will be eliminated) to combat this partnership. France rejects this outright because he has convinced himself that England will help him get supply centers to balance out their 12-5 disparity – he's beyond help, so let's forget him and move on.

Russia naturally has concerns about the subsequently proposed I-T-R alliance: Turkey stabbed him earlier, and the two powers are now openly at war. For Russia to send his few units to the English front invites Turkey to clean him out, and he has little doubt that Turkey will. What should Russia do here?

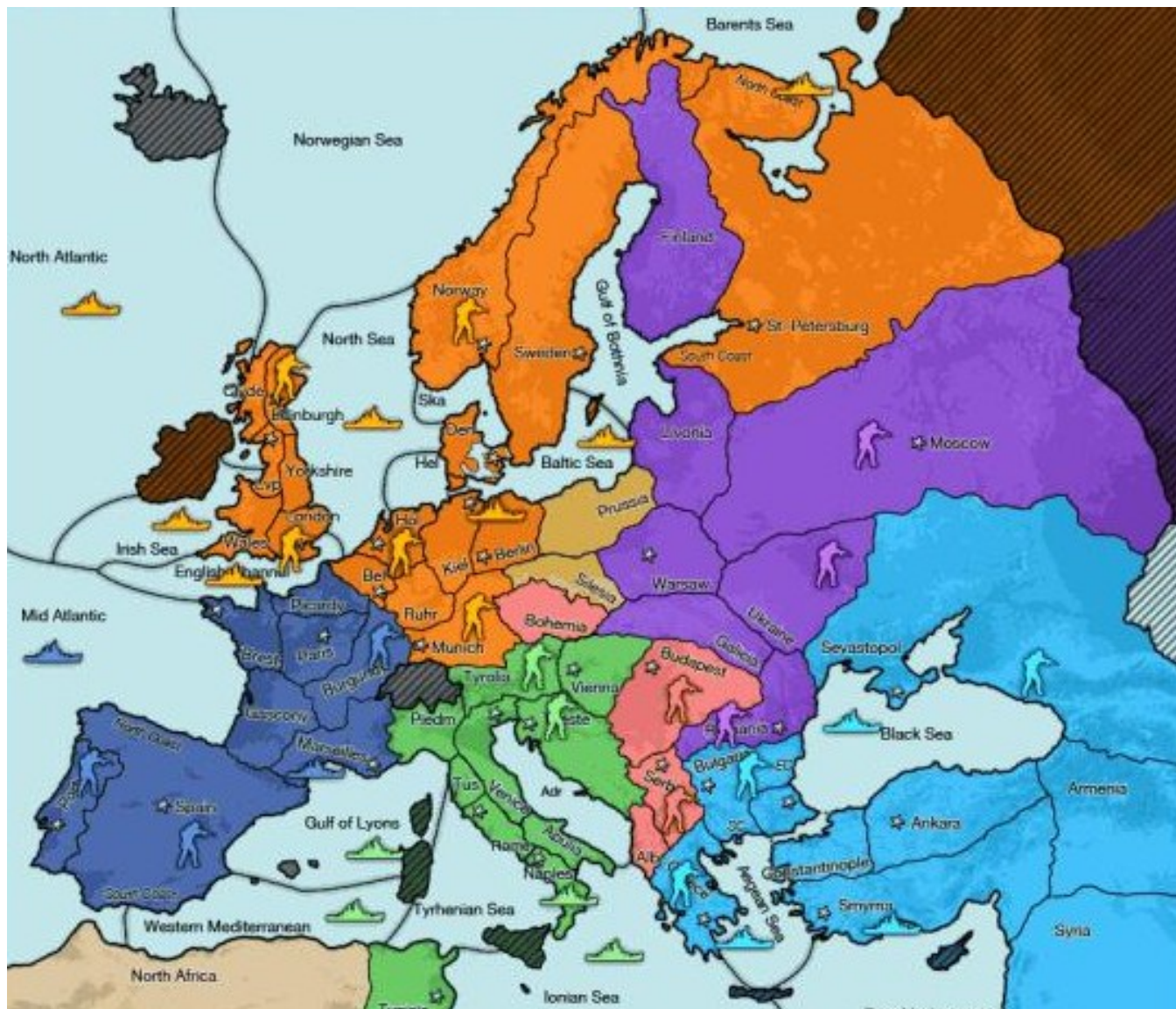
What Russia *does* do is set conditions for his membership in the alliance: since even with an alliance, Turkey is in no position to hurt either France or England immediately, Russia demands that Turkey cease all attacks and give him Sevastopol back so that he can safely deploy troops to the front. Russia also promises to Turkey and to Italy that if Turkey stabs him again, Russia will expend all his energy bringing Turkey down, as Russia can fight England or Turkey but not both. If Turkey cares about England not winning, he will comply, Russia says.

In the following turn, Turkey, gambling that he can play Austria and break through the Russian line, and, fearing that with no direct line to the front, he will be left out of the profits of the alliance, stabs Russia immediately. Russia then makes good on his promise of wrath, recapturing Sevastopol on his own while allowing England into Warsaw and Moscow. Russia, like a little yappy dog with his teeth locked onto Turkey's ankle, does just enough to slow Turkey's breakout, while England eats France and then solos with Turkey at ten centers.

To my mind, Russia's demands were not unreasonable (he's done something similar to the England in Yonkoski's "Using the Grand Alliance to Survive" example). If Russia buys into a Grand Alliance with no guarantees, where is his survival? He has none. At the point in the game illustrated above, he's been stabbed by all his neighbors, has no friends other than Italy, and, having reckoned that he has no reasonable chance at a win or a draw, has crossed into the dangerous "I'm not winning, screw you, I don't care" zone. Therefore, he

was willing to enter into a Grand Alliance (something other powers wanted) in exchange for security (something he wanted). Quid pro quo. Meanwhile,

Turkey gambled that he didn't need the Grand Alliance, and lost. Poor planning on his part, perhaps; fatal impatience, at the very least.



*Image from www.playdiplomacy.com

So is it fair to say that nobody really wanted a Grand Alliance except Italy? Maybe. But I think it's more accurate to say that nobody but Italy wanted a Grand Alliance *under the terms offered*. And there's one of the hitches. It's hard enough to keep everybody happy in a two-way alliance – if you're dealing with three or four powers who aren't naïve enough to sign up with no questions asked, you're going to run into major problems.

Furthermore, in our illustration, Russia was certainly in no position to keep "anyone" from winning – only one power or the other. By following through with his promise to drop his tiny hammer on Turkey, while he was not playing "to win" (I don't think any set of moves is a "play to win" for him at that point), he was certainly playing

with purpose, and he was definitely playing to keep *someone* from winning. The obvious frontrunner isn't the only one with a good chance to win, after all, and anyone bigger than you is a threat and a bully.

As I wrote in that previous article, Diplomacy isn't played in a vacuum. Both in person and online, you often play with the same players again and again. Plus, if you play online with new players, you can show them the link to your old game and say, "See what I did there? I am serious. If you cross me, I will do it to you, too." But empty talk is nothing. Your actions in one game may influence what happens in another game with the same players. This is why it's not uncommon to see people play for draws when they have solos sitting there for the taking, which is the other side of the no-Grand-Alliance

coin (and which gets less flak for some reason, probably because it's "nice").

I may be wrong, but it seems to me that the internet Diplomacy community tends as a whole to disagree with my position on the Grand Alliance. That is, more people believe in a social obligation to the Grand Alliance than in self-preservation (of course, like so many noble beliefs, this works a lot better in theory than in practice, and so a lot of people "believe" in it who have never managed to get one off the ground).

Incidentally, this phenomenon is not by any means unique to Diplomacy. For example, in the popular board game Settlers of Catan, it can be rather obvious. In a three-player game, Player A might say to Player B, "Player C is about to win – if you gift me a wood and a brick, I can take his Longest Road away." What does Player B do? Acquiesce to prolong the game and throw points to Player A? If so, he'll soon be chasing Player A, maybe even with Player C asking for another deal Player B would never make otherwise. Or should he refuse and take his chances? Either way, it is likely he will fall farther and farther behind, and will eventually lose to one or the other. You can redistribute points all day, but if you don't ever get any, what good does it do? I'm all for trying to prevent *somebody* from winning, but let's not pretend that we aren't helping *somebody else* win when we do it.

This whole issue can be summed up thusly: does the Diplomacy player have an obligation to prolong the game by any means necessary, even to his own detriment? I'd have a very hard time giving an unequivocal yes to that – after all, this is Diplomacy, which stands apart from other games because of its freedom – nay, its *mandate* – to do whatever you want. And you might quite reasonably feel that you work too hard in the early and mid-game to just hand people stuff at the end.

What the Grand Alliance theorists would have you do is drop everything – your grudges, your agenda, your goals – and enlist. That's obviously contrary to human nature, but it's also often unrealistic from a game perspective. If your neighbor was untrustworthy in the early game, odds are you still can't trust him. And now all of a sudden you're supposed to put all your eggs in his basket? "Trust, but verify," as Ronald Reagan used to say – and if you need an emergency Grand Alliance, you might not have time to verify.

If it gets to the point where you *need* a drop-everything

Grand Alliance, it might be too late anyhow. A lot of new players have trouble with mid- to long-term strategy – they don't know what the board is going to look like even a year or two down the road. They can't see what's coming, no matter how obvious. New players, please meditate on Matthew 16:2-3.

The likelihood of a successful Grand Alliance is increased substantially if you can lay some groundwork beforehand. The more time you have to coordinate with receptive parties, the more likely you can make everybody happy. Yet if you say, "Hey, France and England are getting mighty big, let's start making a plan," you will likely find that while those feeling the heat (Germany, Russia) will be quick to agree, those yet outside the horde's influence (Austria, Turkey) may want to delay, to grab what scraps they can. But a good player can see that a play against a besieged power that benefits him in the short run might benefit the frontrunner in the long run. Be careful when you jump on the pile, and don't stab your meat shield in the back. There's a time to take what he has, but there's also a time to prop him up.

In one sense, I suppose I'm saying that the Grand Alliance isn't always everything it's cracked up to be. There are worse things than losing, worse things than being eliminated – to me, becoming somebody else's subservient minion to no benefit of my own is one of them. And let's be honest: people don't always *want* a Grand Alliance. Everybody has an agenda, whether it's survival, revenge, or dying with dignity. I think that's legit.

Yonkoski says, "The hobby is better when everyone continues to play their position until the end, and in my opinion, plays to win or else prevent others from winning." I generally agree, but would restate it thusly: "The hobby is better when everyone continues to play their position until the end and play with purpose." I, for one, can't turn up my nose at anybody who wants to die on his feet. Do whatever you want to do, but do it with purpose, enthusiasm, and maximum effort.

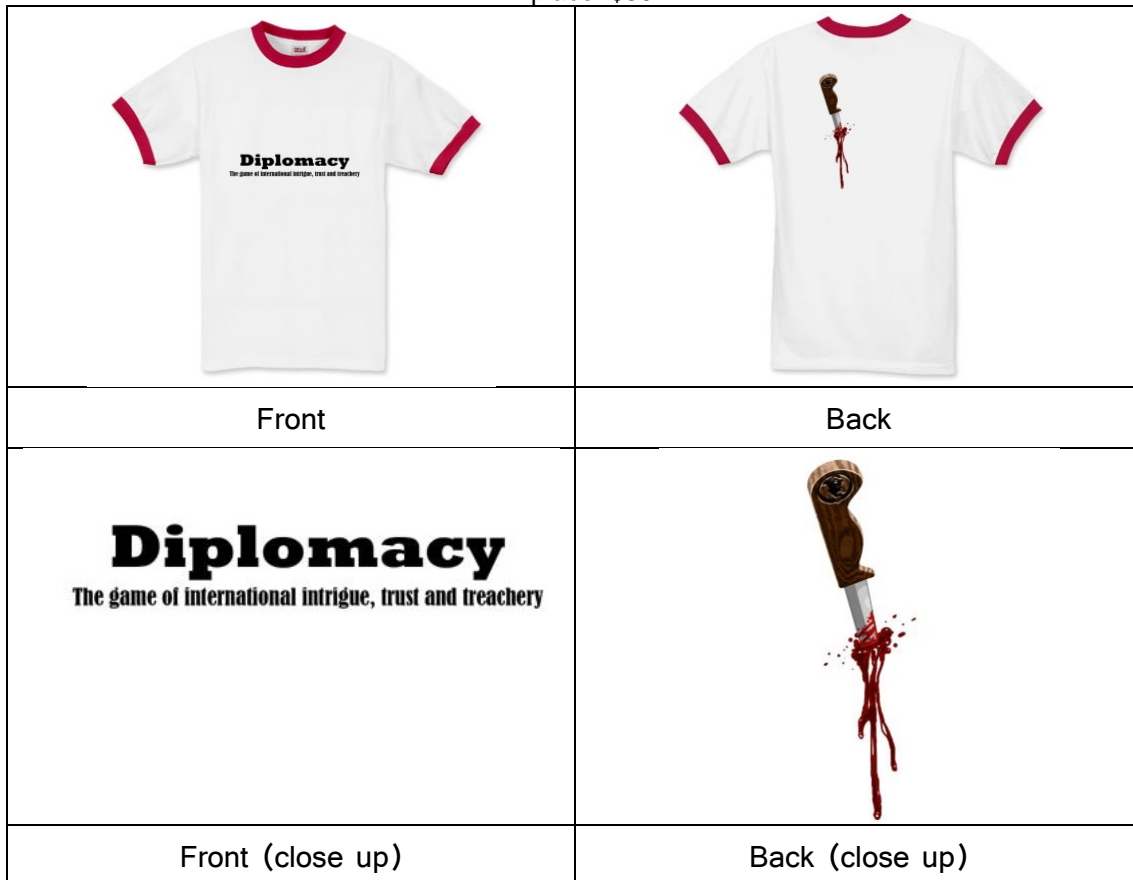
The Grand Alliance is great when it works. Absolutely. But quite often, whether because of bridges burned or incompatible goals, it just doesn't. And you know what? I think that's okay.

Joshua is the Diplomacy World Strategy and Tactics Editor, and one of the most reliable contributors I've had the pleasure of dealing with in a number of years.

NADF T-Shirt Design Contest Winners!

There were a total of 10 submissions for the NADF T-shirt design contest. Votes were cast by the NADF advisory committee. 1st and 2nd place both go to Richard Maltz

1st place: \$50



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



Remember, 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>

Both of Richard's designs are now available online. Thank you! - Conrad Woodring, NADF President

A Newbie's Experience at Manor Con 2011

By Alfred Nicol

This is an article for anyone who has never played face to face diplomacy before and wants to know what it is like, and also for any experienced tournament player who has forgotten what it is to be a naïve newbie. Having read an article in an earlier Diplomacy World issue about the attempts to revive the flagging face to face hobby in the UK I began to think about attending a tournament myself. I've never been to a games convention before and I have never played real diplomacy, PBEM on the diplomatic corp is quite different, so nervous though I was to walk into a lion's den not knowing anyone I thought I would give it a go.



I had heard that newbies at tournaments often don't do very well so I contacted by email one of the organisers. Dave, who emailed me back, said the hobby had moved on and it was not all about stabbing and more about the fun of the occasion. I noticed on arrival that pretty much everyone knew everyone and they were quick to swap stories of past successes and failures often dating back some years, including anecdotes from the world championship, of playing in two successive tournaments in the US and such like.

Yet despite these past battles two things immediately struck me. Off the board, and I must say this again, *off the board*, there was genuine warmth and camaraderie that transcended the game. This was not a geeky lot name dropping and self aggrandising; rather it was shared interest in a great game that had morphed into a real friendship between players. They were as quick to recount their great plays as they were to regale me with

stories of their own horrendous errors and mis-orders amongst much laughter.

The second thing that stood out was that they were willing to extend this warmth to me and other players. It became clear I was not someone to just make up the numbers and provide three easy centres, but a possible long term recruit to the hobby and they treated me accordingly. For this I am very grateful. I think they clocked two things about me, I knew the game so I was not a complete novice to diplomacy, but that I was a novice to ftf play. I found this out fairly quickly in the three games I played.



So how was it different from email play on diplomatic corp? One big difference was the timing. With twenty minutes ruthlessly ticking down on a laptop for adjudicating the previous turn, adjustments for the winter, diplomacy for the new turn and then order writing, it was absolutely fraught. The timing issue was something I had never come across before and some players used it to their advantage by deliberately taking up someone's time for so long ensuring there was no time for another to make any serious counter offer. This was a new experience for me; email gives you the luxury of extended conversations and the chance to build real relationships that ftf does not afford.

Linked to this is the issue of alliances which I found very hard to form. Having played email I have never had a problem finding an ally and trying my best to stick with them for a serious period of time. It was here that my not knowing people became an issue. They knew how each other played, who was renowned for stabbing and who was keen on alliances. Now this was probably as much due to my failings a diplomat as anything else but clearly knowledge of people makes a big difference. My style of play and my enjoyment comes from working in a three or a pair, I think as I get more experienced and develop a more confident, flexible style things will improve.

The last big difference was the scoring system and

league table. In diplomatic corp you play until the game is resolved but ftf requires a deadline of 1910 and a mathematical scoring system to determine the winner and an overall ranking. I am used to playing each game at a time, I don't bear grudges, and I don't look to see where I am in the league rankings, it's all a new start. I was now being introduced to the, "meta game" where people play the rankings as well as the board. This means that people's relative positions in the tournament have a part in decision making during the game. Essentially alliances in the final game were as much determined by the leader board as the game board.



On the way to the hall on Sunday all the talk was about the solo that had been previously scored on another board and how everyone would have to eliminate him. I understood the reasoning but I wanted to play my own game. I began Sunday as joint third out of 15 and was pleased with this, all I wanted was a decent alliance and a decent game but being placed as Turkey, next to Russia, the tournament's run away winner, was not easy. By the end of the first season I could see the writing on the wall and the catch twenty-two I was in. Ally with Russia, the one everyone wanted to kill, and I would be propping up a lame duck. However turn against him and then as soon as he was injured beyond reasonable repair AH and Italy were going to be gunning for me. I could not get anything diplomatically from either Italy or

AH at all; interestingly Italy was just below me on the leader board at start of play, and AH was equal so they both had a vested interest in turning on me. This isn't meant to sound like sour grapes; rather it is intended to illustrate how the previous games influenced the current one in a way I had never expected, naive as I am. I guess newbies like me will always find it a steep learning curve.



So what can I say in conclusion? No one could have been friendlier and the after game discussions were great, as was the beer. I was made to feel very welcome and warmly invited back for future games. Finishing seventh out of fifteen and winning an award for best Russia of the tournament is no disgrace; but I am kicking myself for the mistakes I made. I will have to go back, partly because I enjoyed it and partly to try and improve upon the mistakes I made. If you play diplomacy by email please have a go at the face to face game. This was after all the intention of Calhamer and it is a unique, terrifying, frustrating and yet compelling experience. Most of all, the weekend was made worthwhile by that simple virtue shown by all the players: kindness. (Off the board that is!)

Hopefully Alfred has helped take a bit of the fear of attending a face-to-face event from those of you who have never done so. Think about attending a club or full-fledged convention soon!

Musical Diplomacy

By Björn Westling

Here comes the list of songs with Diplomacy Provinces and Powers in their titles. In order to trim it down, I decided to only pick one song per province, and select the most adequate title. I have added a Youtube-link to most songs, so that you can create your own Diplomacy musical!

I - Primary songs (Title equal to the province or at least almost entirely equal)

Ankara – Haluk Levent

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pHNHDbLp6NU>

Armenia – Einstürzende Neubauten

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wCX6KvflouU>

Belgium – Bowling for Soup

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhuuRPsybY>

Berlin – Lou Reed

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hZzGbPrnUZQ>

Black Sea – Fennesz

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L6MFrYeCt_E

Bohemia – Mae Moore

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wiKB9UGYPPrQ>

Budapest – Jethro Tull

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gdxega_F9rs

Burgundy – Coal Chamber

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VwRChsFolU8>

Clyde - Dr. Hook

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X3I_9o9dYbM

Constantinople – The Residents

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFWRXMr5fKU>

Denmark - Claire Hamill

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6rn_6rzlIXE

England – Bloc Party

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=87jl4p4oS6s>

Finland – Monty Python

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pN2ZJBh92SM>

France – The Libertines

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kKCcEAAtS3Kc>

Galicia – Urban Trad

Greece – George Harrison

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JubwWxLtLDo>

Italy – Julia Fordham

Liverpool – I Nuovi Angeli, or by Sunrise

London - Tangerine Dream

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N--XKSv9a34>

Marseilles – The Angels

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P9DfXQIBamM>

Moscow – Wonderland

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljowaMDrbjl>



Munich – The Editors

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IxQc-WmU4nM>

North Sea – Ancient Rites

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=60XBsVnaGp0>

Paris – Delerium

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lbZraG5dm98>

Portugal - Christian Kjellvander

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EHs8j5P5tPg>

Ruhr – Die Lokalmatadore

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EMLFNfdtAms>

Russia – The Pinkerton Thugs

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tRiqhg9ZGI0>

Skagerack - Scafell Pike

Spain – Kristin Hersh

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GMTE_JbEotM

St. Petersburg – Supergrass

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLCzx7rXXel>

Sweden – The Divine Comedy

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUzmACvUQA0>

Tunis – Four Angels

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R5gZfG-Uhvs>

Wales – Wolfmother

Warsaw – Joy Division

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iwR6kHReYsw>

Vienna – Ultravox

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xJeWySiug1l>

II - Secondary songs

Adriatic Sea View – Band of Joy

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dpkU2Mumj8E>

Brest Litowsk '29 – Folkländer / Bierfiedler

Bulgarian Melody – Deep Forest

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMi2n3sTQX0>

The Turkey Song – The Damned

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kBoAmWSOfXg>

Edinburgh Man – The Fall

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7xwpFNzWrmA>

Copii Romania – Barclay James Harvest

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BwVPQW_EOFY

Germany Calling – Tone Band

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vDvTCQmbdPk>

Holland, 1945 – Neutral Milk Hotel

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sCjpbjCH5L0>

I am from Austria – Rainhard Fendrich

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=debsYo5j4nU>

La Trieste – Reamonn

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g6aqW04xUC4>

Lady from Tuscany – Renaissance

Maritim Belle Vue in Kiel – The Stereophonics

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ke7ipMf4wkE>

Thankfully not living in Yorkshire it doesn't apply - Dexys

Midnight Runners

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QfZKklWgWfw>

Prussian Blue – Bluebottle Kiss

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v4Xw_zsV6A0

Rome 64 CE – Behemoth

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s-bgYYfDJSw>

Roses of Picardy – James Malton

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3qnv-cT9qA>

Saturdays in Silesia – Rational Youth

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cCHafXHzrdk>

The Frostbitten Woodlands of Norway – Carpathian Forest

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MQenyU5Ugww>

Ukraine Ways – Renaissance

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LCOZBIEFPFg>

Venice Queen – The Red Hot Chili Peppers

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLinsn4incl>

Moon over Naples – Bert Kaempfert

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSUwbfGc_mQ

(Strawberry Ann) Switzerland – Braid

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SaptjSfT6gY>

Anybody else want to give it a go? Maybe just classical pieces, or do you think you have better choices for some of these categories? Let's hear from you!

Hardin and Diplomacy – (Isaac Asimov's Foundation series)

By Will J. Abbott

The legendary first Mayor of Terminus, Salvor Hardin, was a well-known and confirmed epigrammist. What is not as well known is that his life and sayings are applicable to the ancient and great game, Diplomacy, whose origins are now lost in the mists of prehistory. (Some have claimed that the playing surface of Diplomacy resembles a region of the legendary world of origin, Earth, but this is beyond the bounds of sober history.) What follows is an application of his maxims to that great game.



“Violence is the last refuge of the incompetent”

If you can get something without attacking, why attack? Why make an enemy? Persuasion has its limits, but within them, a good diplomat should stick to it; why spend two (or three or four....) units trying to force a center when the owner will give it to you gladly in exchange for something of value . . . especially if you do not value it yourself.

“Never let your sense of morals get in the way of doing what’s right.”

You're third in a 12-10-8-4-2 distribution. You've been allied with the leader, who has promised you a share in a two-way draw. The second place player has come to you with a way the leader gets the six units needed to win, if you do not oppose it. There is no flaw in the analysis; you've been over it yourself. Then you get a message from your ally, proposing moves for the alliance; you ally's moves are the first set in the path you were given

for the win. Do you switch sides?

Well, you've been and had a loyal ally; neither of you has stabbed the other, or even broken agreements. That DMZ from the first turn is still in force. You've kept a few units back, just in case, as has your ally; but neither of you has had any need to use them. But if your ally solos, you lose. If you stick to the alliance, you lose . . . and then where is the reward for your alliance? How can it be right to lose to your loyal ally, when you could yourself have a shot at the win after you stop your ally?

Verisof: “Can we risk the present for the sake of a nebulous future?” Hardin: “We must—because the future isn't nebulous.”

You *did* plan out the course of the game, right? Yes, I know, you can't know every little detail of the game before it happens. But if you've got a plan that will work (rather than just wishful thinking), risking an ineffectual stab to stick to your master plan is no risk. And if the stab is stronger, there is always

“What I did, instead, was to visit the three other kingdoms, one by one; point out to each that to allow the secret of nuclear power to fall into the hands of Anacreon was the quickest way of cutting their own throat, and suggest gently that they do the obvious thing.”

Hardin led what was essentially a 1/0 power—one without a military—to survival among four larger and stronger powers. Hardin's 1/0 power eventually became an 17-center colossus (even if it was game year 2399). When you cannot stop someone yourself, why not get someone else to do it? If you are the one center which proves absolutely crucial for someone's win, point it out to that power's rivals. Surely Austria-Hungary, Turkey, Germany, France, and Russia would not want England to take your Italy's last center, Tunis, when it is a center across the stalemate line. If they do not get together and demand that England leave you alone (or at least get out before the Fall season) they may find England impossible to stop when the final push comes.

I am a great fan of these “Diplomacy lessons from fiction” type articles (we have another later in the issue). They also work from television shows, movies...there are many possibilities. Think about it; maybe you can submit one. Email me at diplomacyworld@yahoo.com if you are short on ideas or inspiration.

Chicago Is Burning for You

By Jim O'Kelley

Not since Mrs. O'Leary's cow has Chicago seen such a fuss. This time, it's hot Diplomacy action that will set the city on fire.

On behalf of the Windy City Weasels Diplomacy club, I cordially invite you to join us for the World Diplomacy Championship at Weasel Moot VI. The event is set for August 10-12, 2012, at Chicago's historic Congress Plaza Hotel.



We'll trade you this magic bean for Belgium.

The Congress is located on Michigan Avenue, right across the street from Grant Park, the place where President Obama gave his acceptance speech three years ago and where every summer, music fanatics gather for Lollapalooza. The hotel is a short walk from the museum campus on one end and the giant bean on the other. And it looks out on beautiful Buckingham Fountain.



The hotel looks onto Buckingham Fountain, made famous in the opening montage of Married with Children.

We got a great room rate at the hotel of \$129 per night for a single or double. Within two blocks are a couple of cheaper alternatives. Dormitory-style housing is available at University Center for \$63 to \$81.50 per

night. And for those of you on a tighter budget, you can get a room at the Chicago Hostel for \$35 per night.

The tournament will start Friday morning at 9:45 a.m. We'll play two rounds on Friday, two on Saturday and one on Sunday. The Sunday round will feature a top board.

We'll seed the top board based on each player's best three scores from the first four rounds. The top seven will play for the world championship on Sunday, with the board winner taking that title.

The Weasel Moot title (and the North American Diplomacy championship, if our bid is successful), meanwhile, will be awarded based on best three out of five rounds. That means it's possible that the weekend will yield a world champion who isn't the tournament winner.



The historic Congress Plaza Hotel is a setting worthy of a world championship.

The metagamers among us will have lots to think about. Do you want to make the top board for a shot at the world championship? Or do you take the Eric Mead route, intentionally fall short of the top board, and then solo in the fifth round to win the tournament and the North American title? Good stuff.

Of course, you can't win either title if you don't join us in Chicago. Your trip starts with a visit to our website at <http://windycityweasels.org/wdc>. You'll find all the information you need right there. Preregistration opens on November 1st and will save you \$10.

We're excited to host this event, and we look forward to welcoming you to Chicago. But please, leave your matches at home.

Diplomacywinks

By Eric Mead

Now, I know, we're already on the wrong foot, because you're saying "What kind of a stupid name is that for a variant?" OK, now you've got me a little on the defensive, because I don't actually even know you, and you're already calling me stupid. And besides, it's an awesome name for this variant, because it's like a cross between Diplomacy and Tiddlywinks! Now you're saying "Why not call it Tiddiplomacy, because that name at least has character, unlike that utter garbage pile of a name you have written above." See, now we're both irritated, and that's no way to start a rulebook on how to play a variant. Let's start over, shall we?

Hi! So you want to learn to play DIPLOMACYWINKS, the awesomest and most awesomely named variant of Diplomacy you've ever played. Great! Let's get started!

The first version of Diplomacywinks was invented by Nathan Barnes and myself, who were hung over and sleep deprived on the Sunday morning of some god-forsaken tournament. (If it was a tournament that you organized, or won, I apologize for calling it god-forsaken. It might have been really fun, for all I know.) Due to the game's origins, I offer the standard disclaimer that if Diplomacywinks seems insufficiently fun on your first play through, be sure to try it again while hung over and sleep deprived. Or get drunk, or drink a bottle of cough syrup or something, before you play it.

Diplomacywinks is for 2-6 players (or more, I suppose, if you have a really big table, but I don't think we've tried it with more than 5). It can theoretically take many hours to play, but in practice every game of it is over in less than 15 minutes. It can be played on any standard Diplomacy board, but I highly recommend playing it on the largest board you can find, and using the wooden or fake wooden pieces with the blocks and skinny blocks. The plastic stars and anchors would probably just fizzle sadly, and the metal pieces could cause somebody to lose an eye, and I can't live with that on my conscience, especially since I already recommended drinking cough syrup while you play.

There are 5 phases to a game of Diplomacywinks. Here is a crucial detail regarding the 5 phases, with which you should be intimately familiar before proceeding: *each of the 5 phases of Diplomacywinks is progressively less fun than the previous phase.*

Phase I: The Piece-Throwing, or "fun" Phase, in which players get to throw armies and fleets and try to get them to land on the board in strategic locations.

Phase II: The Cleanup, or "everybody grabs for the pieces and yells at each other for a minute or two"

Phase, in which players look at what they have wrought, and make clever observations like "You can't have an army in the Norwegian Sea", "You can't have a fleet in Munich", "Dude, you have like 3 armies in Moscow!", and "That army has a piece of Brest!".

Phase III: Disambiguating, or "only part of the game where you actually have to use a bit of real strategic thinking" phase, in which ambiguities left over from the previous phase are resolved by players making decisions in sequence.

Phase IV: The Debate, or "who's going to be a big baby" phase, in which the players look at the final position of the board and have a rousing debate about who would win this game of Diplomacy if you actually bothered to play it out.

Phase V: The Playing It Out Phase. WARNING: You should never actually play Phase V, under any circumstances! It is not at all fun! See below for details.

Phase I: Piece Throwing

1. This is by far the most fun phase. Some have argued that it is the only fun phase. I will leave this to you to decide (Note: people who say that Phase I is the only fun phase are *correct*. But don't worry; it's so unbelievably fun that you'll be very willing to tolerate the other phases, especially if you've been drinking cough syrup).
2. Players select a color each, from the 7 available. If you cannot agree on this, you have no shot to have any more fun at this game, so stop reading now. The number of armies and fleets you begin the game with is based on the number of players in the game. 2 players: 8 of each. 3-4 players: 6 of each. 5 or more players: 5 of each.
3. The player who is awesomest, or oldest, or most handsome, or who invented Diplomacywinks, or who lost the last game, or whatever you like, goes first. Play proceeds clockwise, as quickly as humanly possible.
4. On your turn, select either an army or a fleet (whichever you prefer) from your pile. Take it firmly in your fingertips, and then bounce it onto the board! The only rule is that the piece must hit the table IN FRONT of the board at least once before finally landing on the board. So throw it in front of you, and try to get it to land somewhere useful after it bounces. You know, like Tiddlywinks. Doy.

5. If the piece hits the table, but doesn't make it as far as the board, that's tough. That piece is dead. If the piece hits the table, and skitters all the way past the board, it's dead. If it bounces off another piece that's already on the board, leave them both where they end up, on or off the board. (Yes, there is a skill to knocking somebody else's pieces off a province, and thereby claiming that province for yourself. Haven't you ever watched curling? Branch out a little, man. There's more to life than Diplomacy.)
6. In any event, don't make a big thing of it. Throw your piece, do a fist pump, cuss loudly, or whatever, and let your opponent take his turn. Remember, this is the only fun part of the game! Do not make it less fun for your opponents by taking up too much time.
7. When everybody has thrown all their pieces, proceed to Phase II.



Phase II: Cleanup

1. Hopefully, you know how to play Diplomacy, because if you don't, why on Earth are you reading this? Are you, like, trying to read the entire Internet alphabetically or something?
2. Good, because I'm counting on you knowing the rules for this phase. Here's what you do:
3. Work together with the other players. You don't have to take turns during this part or anything. But it's OK to slap each other's hands if you feel that they're

going too fast or cheating, even if you're wrong. Except, don't slap Rick Desper's hands; that seems mean.

Also, be extremely careful while this flurry of activity is taking place not to move any pieces that you're not directly dealing with! The exact locations where they have landed are frequently important.

4. Now we can begin to narrow things down. First, permanently remove from the board all the pieces that have landed in *completely* impossible locations, per the basic rules of Diplomacy. That is, armies that are *only* touching water, and fleets that are *only* touching landlocked provinces. And I guess an army that's on Switzerland without touching anything else should come off too, but I'm not sure whether that's possible.

However, don't get carried away. If a piece has settled in only the teensiest corner of somewhere that it could legally be, don't touch it yet! This step only rids us of the *totally* impossible pieces.

5. Now you're probably left with a big ol' jumble of pieces, some of which are entirely in the confines of a single space, but many of which are on borders between spaces. Also, some spaces will contain bunches of pieces. Especially those big fat Russian spaces. Take a deep breath. It's going to be OK.
6. Next, there will be pieces that are either entirely located inside the borders of a single space, or else can only legally be in one space, despite touching multiple spaces. Go ahead and scoot those pieces into their only legal provinces. Yes, you will frequently be scooting multiple pieces into the same space, because each of them can only legally be in that space. That's OK, we'll figure out which one actually owns the space later. For now, we'll say they have "Joint Custody". However, at this point you should only be doing this for pieces with *only one* legal space.

Three examples:

- a) If a fleet rests partially in Picardy, and partially in Paris, the thing is in Picardy, obviously, because Paris is landlocked, duh. It's OK to scoot it to Picardy. But if the fleet stretches between Paris, Picardy, and the English Channel, we don't know yet whether it's in Picardy or the English Channel, so don't touch it for now. Or I guess if you really want to, scoot it so that it's resting between Picardy and the English Channel, because it still can't be in Paris, because it's still a fleet, duh.

- b) If there is a red army that is on the border between the Norwegian Sea and Norway, and also a blue fleet that is entirely in Norway, then both of them have Joint Custody of Norway for the time being. We will settle this up later. For now, just scoot the red army into Norway.
- c) On the other hand, if that same red army is on the border between the Norwegian Sea and Norway, but the blue fleet is also on the border between those same two spaces, move the army into Norway (because that's the only legal destination for that piece), but leave the fleet right where it is for now, as it could legally be in either space. We'll deal with the fleet later, I promise.

When a single piece - or a collection of pieces with Joint Custody - can only legally be in one space, it gets a special sort of importance. The fact that these pieces are not indecisively resting in between two or more spaces means that their claim to their space is stronger. In fact, in that rarest of situations where there is only one piece sitting in only one space, with no interlopers nipping at its borders, then that space is done, owned, and decided, and you don't need to give it any more attention until Phase IV.

However, more often, you will find that you have to deal with Joint Custody in a space; or that pieces are resting on a border between 2 or more spaces that they could legally be; or, more terrifyingly, a combination of the two. I know, it's scary, but relax! Drink some cough syrup. We're going to get through this.

- 7. Now we can do a little housekeeping in those spaces which have one or more occupants that aren't bordering multiple spaces. If there are two or more pieces of the same type (army or fleet), and of the same color, and they can only possibly be in one space, remove the excess same-type pieces. However, don't do this to mixes of armies and fleets, or of different colors of pieces. We'll deal with these later. Right now, we're just taking off redundant pieces in an attempt to help our sanity.

Example: There are two yellow fleets, one yellow army, and one green army entirely inside the borders of Sevastopol (either because they landed that way, or because you scooted them there after you concluded that Sevastopol was their only legal province). Take off the extra yellow fleet, but leave everything else. You don't get any extra credit for having more than one piece of the same type in the same spot, so you may as well take the pieces off now.

There. At this point, some fraction of the spaces on the board will contain one or more pieces that we know have

a claim to that space. I will call these spaces "Resolved Spaces" for the rest of this article. I just thought of that, which makes me awesome.

- 8. Next, we start dealing with those meddling pieces that rest on the borders between multiple legal spaces, which will be most of the ones that are left. We already know that pieces in Resolved Spaces have the "strongest claim" to their spaces. Pieces that have the option of being somewhere unclaimed can now begin to "retreat" to alternate, unclaimed destinations.

We'll start with the easiest ones - pieces that are bordering only two spaces, one of which is Resolved and the other of which is entirely empty (that includes being empty of border straddlers coming from other directions). You can now scoot those guys into the unoccupied space, which is now Resolved itself.

Example: The Ionian Sea contains a red fleet and a black fleet, neither of which is touching any other spaces. Therefore, the Ionian is considered Resolved (despite having two fleets in it, because those fleets are OK having Joint Custody). If another red fleet borders both the Ionian and Tunis, and no other piece touches Tunis, you can slide the second red fleet to Tunis, and Tunis becomes Resolved.



You can also do this with multiple pieces that are in the exact same situation. In the above example, if there were two different fleets that straddled *only* the Ionian and Tunis, you could put both of the fleets in Tunis and give them Joint Custody of it. Another Resolved Space. Well done!

That's a mercifully simple example, and is only helpful in the event that a piece has only one retreat, and that retreat is to a totally empty space. In the harsh, cruel world of Diplomacywinks, it's seldom that easy. So hang in there, while we figure out how to retreat pieces into spaces that may have several competing claims. This is the hardest part to figure out. I know, because I just figured it out like yesterday. (If I taught you to play Diplomacywinks at a tournament already, I probably taught you wrong. Sorry.)

9. Let's get a few more pieces off the board, shall we? If a piece is located on the borders of two or more spaces that are *all* Resolved Spaces, that piece has no "valid retreats", and is annihilated! Boom. Too bad for you, piece. Off the board. You should have been more committal, instead of waffling between two possible destinations. Nerd.
10. If a piece sits on the border of 3 (or more) spaces, one of which is Resolved, you can scoot it to eliminate the Resolved Space as a possible destination. Example: if a fleet was on the border of the Ionian, Naples, and Apulia, but the Ionian is Resolved, you can scoot the fleet to show that it's trying to decide between Naples and Apulia, because it is no longer welcome in the Ionian.
11. AKA the Hardest Step, the Step of Doom, the Step Which Should Not Be Named, the Big Unit. Here we consider the spaces with *only one* retreat, but who *do* have competitors for that retreat. These guys get the next level of precedence, second only to totally Resolved pieces. For this step to make sense, you have to treat all of these one-retreat-only pieces as being simultaneously resolved (you know, like in Diplomacy, where you simultaneously resolve stuff). When you think of it that way, the correct resolution should be clearer. More on that in a moment.

If two (or more) pieces only have one retreat, and that one retreat is to the same space, they can share that space. So if Marseilles is Resolved, and Venice is resolved, and one piece rests on the border between Marseilles and Piedmont, and another rests of the border between Venice and Piedmont, go ahead and give those two pieces Joint Custody of Piedmont. You can do this even if there is a third piece which straddles Piedmont and the Gulf of Lyon (assuming the Gulf is not Resolved). Why? because the first two pieces have only one retreat from already Resolved Spaces, while the guy between Piedmont and the Gulf had multiple, valid retreats, therefore giving him a lower level of importance.

Whether it's a single one-retreat-only piece or multiple pieces with one retreat each to the same space, this then Resolves their destination space. Sometimes, as with PIE/GoL fleet above, this can then cause more units

to have to retreat.

This is where the simultaneous part comes in. After you do all of the one-retreat-only retreats "simultaneously", you will usually have created some new one-retreat-only pieces, and occasionally a few "no retreat" pieces, like the ones described in step 9.

12. At this point, you can go ahead and do steps 9, 10, and 11 again and again, and keep doing them until you get to step 11 and realize there are no more one-retreat-only pieces that need your attention.
13. Do one more round of cleanup, as you did in Step 7. That is to say, in the last few steps, you might have created newly redundant pieces, such as multiple yellow fleets in the Black Sea. Go ahead and throw out the duplicates.
14. Take a congratulatory swig of cough syrup, because you're through the hard part! Or anyway, the hard part for me to explain. It's actually not that hard. But bottoms up, anyway.

One more big giant example: You might want to set this one up yourself, to see what I mean. Put an army in Rumania, or two armies if you feel like it. Or two armies and a fleet. Either way, the important part is that Rumania is Resolved. Do the same with Ankara. Now take another fleet, and put it on the border between Rumania and the Black Sea. And another one of the border between Ankara and the Black Sea. Then put an army on the border of Rumania and Sevastapol, another on the border of Ukraine and Sevastapol, and finally, one last fleet on the border of Sevastapol and the Black Sea. Not an uncommon situation at all in this game. How to untangle this web? Well, look for the ones with only one retreat. Of the five unsettled pieces (RUM/BLA, SEV/BLA, ANK/BLA, SEV/UKR, and RUM/SEV), three of them of them only have one retreat initially: RUM/SEV, RUM/BLA, and ANK/BLA. So if we were to think of them as resolving simultaneously, the outcome becomes obvious: RUM/SEV takes sole ownership of Sevastapol, and RUM/BLA and ANK/BLA take Joint Custody of the Black Sea. Now we have two more to deal with in the next round. SEV/BLA and SEV/UKR. Uh oh! Bad luck for SEV/BLA. Both of his possible spaces just got Resolved. Off to that big shipyard in the sky. SEV/UKR catches a break though - UKR is still unclaimed, so slide him on up there, and problem solved.

15. Oh, damn. One more thing: coasts. The rule we've always used is that fleets are on the coast that it looks like they should probably be on, based on where they landed. It's always worked for us. Not good enough? Perhaps I can suggest a different, and much stodgier, Diplomacy variant to you!



Phase III: Disambiguating

1. I know what you're thinking: "Jeez, you mean there's still stuff that's not resolved in this dumb game? I just read like 15 steps, and the cough syrup is starting to kick in!"
2. Well, OK. It's a fair criticism. But this phase is pretty easy, and you actually get a little bit of control over the board here. The first thing you do in this phase is count up the total number of pieces you have remaining on the board. You will be a little sad when you realize the attrition level of your pieces. Between pieces that sailed right past the board and landed in Jim O'Kelley's scotch and soda, armies that landed in the Western Med, and pieces subjected to the cruel, fickle whims of Phase II, you may have lost 2/3 of your force or more. But, stiff upper lip, Diplomacywinker. There's a slight silver lining here. The player with the fewest pieces on the board gets to go first in Phase III! (If there's a tie, it goes to the guy who went closest to last during Phase I).
3. Starting with the unlucky sod, and proceeding clockwise, each player on their turn gets to Disambiguate something that is still ambiguous. There are two types of ambiguous things:
 - a) There will be spaces that contain multiple pieces (that is, the Joint Custody spaces).
 - b) There are some pieces that will not have been forced to retreat during Phase II, and will therefore still be perched on the borders of two or more spaces without any obvious way of deciding which one they belong in.

If, on your turn, you want to address a Joint Custody problem, you can do that. Pick one space that has too many pieces in it. Pick the piece you actually want to be on that space, and take the rest off of the board! (For

example, if you're playing yellow, and there is a yellow fleet, a yellow army, a red army, and a black army all on St. Petersburg, you might decide that the only proper ruler of that province is the yellow army. Trash the other 3 pieces). You don't actually HAVE to choose your own piece to keep, and you'll occasionally be called upon to Disambiguate a space where you don't actually have a piece just because it's your turn.

If you'd rather Disambiguate a piece's location, that's cool too. Just pick which space you want that piece to own, and it's all his. This may occasionally cause a little mini-Phase II to happen, when one decision causes a chain reaction of pieces that have to retreat. That's OK. Anything that gets more pieces solved more quickly is good by me. Remember, you are, by this point, in merely the 3rd most fun phase.

Again, you don't have to target only your own pieces. You may occasionally prefer to irritate your opponent by pushing his piece somewhere uncool. Like Bohemia, or Clyde.

Example: There is a fleet that could be in any of Denmark, Baltic Sea, or Sweden, and an army on the border of Sweden and Finland. A player could, on his turn, choose to put the fleet into Sweden, which would cause the army to retreat to Finland. Or he could put the army in Sweden, which would eliminate Sweden as a possible destination of the fleet (that fleet would still have to be Disambiguated between Denmark and the Baltic on somebody else's turn). Or he could place the fleet in Denmark or the Baltic, which would leave the army for someone else to decide.

4. Keep taking turns doing this until all of the decisions have been made about all of the pieces and spaces that were still ambiguous. At the end of this phase, believe it or not, you now have a board that looks like an (albeit zany) regular old Diplomacy board, with spaces occupied by a maximum of one piece (of a legal type). I told you this wasn't as hard as it looked.

Phase IV: The Debate

1. Now look at the board. I mean, really look at it. (Uh oh. Is it appearing to melt? You might have had too much cough syrup. Don't come crying to me. That's on you.)
2. Clear your mind. Imagine that, for whatever reason, you and your friends had been playing Diplomacy, and after a few seasons, the board actually looked like the board you are now staring at.
3. Ask yourself the following critical question: *who is going to win this game of Diplomacy?*

4. I assume that you answered "why, I am going to win this game, of course! I am the greatest living Diplomacy player!" because that's what most Diplomacy players would think first. But do yourself - and the other Diplomacywinks players - a huge favor: repeat step 3 a few times before saying anything out loud about it.
5. If you still genuinely feel like you are the rightful winner of this game, go ahead and say so out loud. In fact, if you've concluded that it's one of the other players, go ahead and say that out loud too.
6. Perhaps you're in luck! Perhaps everybody said the same person's name! (Except for the guy whose name everybody else said, who probably said "Me." It would be weird if he didn't. Like, if his name was Joe, and he said "I think Joe won this game!" Keep an eye on anybody who does this, and let me know if he behaves the same way during regular Diplomacy games, saying things like "Joe needs to talk to you, Austria!" and "ooh, you backstabbed Joe. Nobody backstabs Joe!" I think that would be funny.)
7. If everybody agrees that the same player won, I have wonderful news for you. Your game is over! Take a moment to congratulate the lucky winner, but be sure to congratulate yourself as well, because your reward is that you get to start over, and go all the way back to the (much much more fun, recall) Phase II! (For an extra bit of fun, reward yourself by rotating the board 90 degrees before you begin your next game of Diplomacywinks, because then you're not throwing your pieces at the exact same spots. In fact, you can do that whether you've ended the game at this step, or you need to progress to the less fun steps below. But between you and me, it feels a little more righteous if you're able to do it while everybody is still enjoying themselves.)
8. But this doesn't always happen. Sometimes people are stubborn, and they disagree about who won the game. At this point, you are going to have to have a Debate.

Here are some tools you might use to settle the Debate:

- a) You can use logic to persuade your opponents of things. For instance you can point out the stranglehold that the yellow pieces will have on the supply-center-rich Balkans.
- b) You can assassinate your opponents' characters, for example by accusing them of being spoilsports who can't stand to lose at anything and who are acting like babies.
- c) You can remind your opponents how much more fun it would be if you just ended the game and started

over, rather than sitting around having this absurd Debate. Then when you see their faces light up, you can repeat the name of your suggested winner, and see if they shrug and agree to your result.

- d) You can ask Edi Birsan, if he happens to be walking by, to look at the board and pick a winner. I suppose you could ask somebody else who wasn't involved in your game, instead, but Edi seems like the best choice.
- e) **WARNING! YOU SHOULD NEVER USE THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTION, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES!** You could actually require your friends to proceed to Phase V, in which you actually play the game.



Phase V: The Playing it Out Phase.

1. I cannot emphasize enough the amazingly un-fun nature of this Phase, and the terrible things it would suggest about your character, your intelligence, and your sense of fun and fair play if you were actually to require your friends to play out a game of Diplomacywinks. You are not playing this game because you like Diplomacy. Well, OK, you probably are, but if that's how you feel, you should probably have just played Diplomacy. And besides, you have

a hangover, the cough syrup isn't doing enough to soothe it, and another round of your tournament is starting in like a half hour. You're just trying to kill a little time by tossing some pieces on the board, for pity's sake! How on earth did your ego become so invested in this process that you won't just drop the argument and accept that the other guy won, you deranged little Napoleon?

2. But having said that, I guess maybe what went wrong was that you were using some ploy during Phase IV where you threatened to make everybody play, and your scheme somehow went wrong, and so here you are.
3. OK, I'm gonna say... 5 minute deadlines. Your home supply centers are any dots you're on after the first move. So, negotiate, write one set of orders, resolve 'em, and then do a dot count. Then build or disband (probably disband, initially). I dunno. It's honestly

never come up, but that seems like a pretty reasonable set of rules, no?

4. And after every season, you have to go back to Phase IV for a bit to see if you can end the game yet.
5. Oh, and no draws. Diplomacywinks should always have a winner.
6. And if anybody ever gets to 18 in a game of Diplomacywinks, please send me an email and tell me what on earth happened.
(press@diplomacycast.com. Have you heard of Diplomacycast? Try the Googles.)

Granted, some of this is quite silly...but there's nothing wrong with some silliness and fun, now is there? Oh, there is? Drat!

Knives and Daggers - The Diplomacy World Letter Column



Russ Dennis: When I first stumbled across Diplomacy, I envisioned in my mind a scene of me playing with my family and close friends...I then promptly decided I would never play F2F. While those I know are all serious gamers, they are not shall I say...Diplomacy players. While I enjoy Diplomacy, I enjoy having friends and family more.

I came onto the judge scene and enjoyed the games immensely for many years. There was always though the urge to see how I would stack up in F2F play. The shorter deadlines, the higher pressure, the great sophistication all appealed to me.

A few months ago, we started Iowa Diplomacy. It is a group for people around central Iowa that want the great vitality of F2F play. There is currently over 24 diplomacy players that strive to gather one Saturday a month to become the leader of Europe. It is a very eclectic group.

We have people with backgrounds in postal diplomacy, play by email, and tournaments. The greatest feat of our club though has been introducing new players to the hobby. There is currently a list of 12 who are now passionate about Diplomacy.

If you're ever in the area, contact me so you can have the opportunity to meet this delightful group.



Eric Mead: Thanks so much to Jack McHugh for listening, and for the feedback, and for the review in Diplomacy World! We read a little bit of it on air in the newest Episode (Ep7, just went up today) and had a bit of fun with it. (And of course, gave lots of positive shout-outs to Diplomacy World).

Discussion Question for Next Issue:

Since last month's Discussion Question resulted in ZERO responses, here's a simple one for this issue: What can be done to help liven up the Diplomacy World letter column, and to encourage more feedback and participation from the readers?

My Life With Ulrika: Part 4 (Ulrika Flies Solo)

by Richard Walkerdine

THE STORY SO FAR. Walkerdine is now in an almost hopeless situation. Alone in space, slowly drifting further away from the ruined Tardis, thrusters not working and no sign of Ulrika or any other form of rescue. Could it get any worse? Well, yes it probably could... Now read on...

My cries of help had met with no response and, with a sick feeling in my stomach, I realised the battle in the Tardis control room must have meant the end for all of them. I would shed no tears for the two simulacra, but the thought that Ulrika had bought it too...she might be a cold-hearted pathological killer, but after all we had been through together for so many years...I felt a lump in my throat. "Oh Ulrika," I whispered, "I will miss you so much..."

...but then my reverie was broken by the familiar tug of a tractor beam. At last, I was being rescued – but by whom? I felt my space suit being slowly drawn backwards but couldn't see who or what was controlling it. Then I felt another blow to the back of my head (this was getting a bit tedious), followed by....darkness... I came to and found myself lying on a cold slab of steel-hard plastic, my eyes almost blinded by a brilliant white light. Before I could recover my senses I felt my blood run cold, as an almost forgotten voice came from above: "So, Walkerdine, we finally meet?"

I glanced across at the viewscreen and my worst fears were confirmed – it was Conrad von Metzke! And with that evil glint in his eyes and those bared teeth I knew this was going to get a whole lot worse.

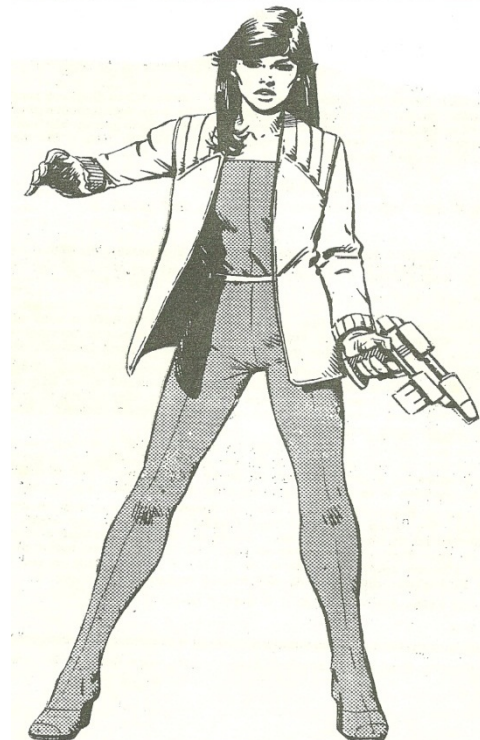


"Where is the old bastard?" I muttered for the umpteenth time. I had been through the escape pod twice now, checked every square foot of what was left of the Tardis, and radar-checked all of near space, but there was not a sign of Walkerdine anywhere. There was no way he could have escaped by himself so someone must have taken him – but who? I decided to return to the remains of the Tardis again to investigate.

And then I found it. A very weak signal and a long way away, and on a frequency not used in decades – but it had to be the answer! I did a quick repair job on the warp drive and headed in pursuit. But then I slowed as I

realised the object I was chasing was another Tardis! What was going on here? I was getting very confused.

But then I remembered I had to do something about his stupid zine. With Walkerdine missing I realised it fell to me to get the damn thing out on time, something I had to do once before (when Piggott trapped him in the past) though at least this time it was all typed and ready to print apart from the cover. Then I smiled as an idea struck me. At last, I had the chance to get one over on him. With his ego he would like nothing better than to have his own picture on the cover and so, with a grin, I decided I would put mine there instead! I quickly searched for an old photo and began typing: 'Special Ulrika Meinhof pin-up issue'.



It was quickly done. I smiled as I looked at my picture – not a bad likeness. I printed enough copies of his silly zine to satisfy his hundreds of adoring fans and sent them off. That would be certain to make Walkerdine annoyed when he saw it - if he was ever in a position to see it...

I brushed away a tear at that thought and realised it was time for action again. I returned to the control room and continued my pursuit of the other Tardis...

"Good god, von Metzke," I gasped, "I didn't expect this. Piggott was bad enough but at least he was part human.

You were supposed to have returned to your own dimension long ago!"

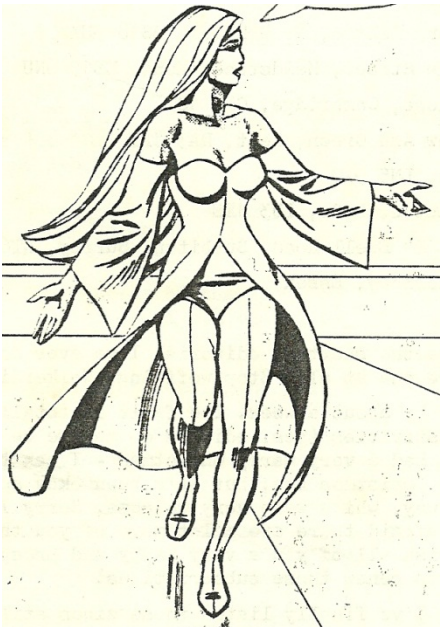
He grinned and raised his eyebrows. "You don't need to worry about Piggott any more, I've seen to that." Then his voice took on a harsher tone. "But I've decided I like it here, and with Piggott gone it's just you and that Meinhof woman standing between me and total hobby domination."

The mention of Ulrika's name brought a lump to my throat again as I remembered the carnage in the Tardis. "I hardly think she's going to be getting the better of anyone any more," I said bitterly.

"Don't make me laugh," snarled von Metzke. "I know she disposed of the two simulacra and my instruments tell me she is still alive – but in a ruined Tardis in which she can do nothing!"

The viewscreen blanked out and for the first time I became aware of the manacles that bound my hands and feet. But despite my hopeless situation I found myself smiling – Ulrika was alive! No matter what von Metzke was planning my life suddenly seemed a little brighter...

As I closed in on the other Tardis I realised it was heading for the pleasure planet Eroticon Six! Well, I could believe that of Walkerdine but if he had been captured what in hell was going on? I decided to proceed more carefully and kept at a safe distance as we approached the planet. Not wishing to be too conspicuous when I arrived I also changed into a more revealing outfit and donned a blond wig...



...But as I walked to the other Tardis I immediately realised my cover was blown when a squad of frog-masked stormtroopers confronted me. My blaster soon disposed of them and I entered the other Tardis, only to

be confronted by the evil grinning figure of Conrad von Metzke!

"All right, von Metzke, what have you done with him?" I snarled.

"Why Miss Meinhof, nothing at all," replied the hideous creature. "Please, take a look at the viewscreen."

I looked at the screen and saw a picture of Walkerdine, manacled hand and foot to a large slab of plastic. I looked up at the evil menace.

"All right, what's the game?"

"It's not a game any more," he replied. "This time it's all quite serious. From now on you will be working for me. You and Walkerdine have thwarted my plans for hobby domination far too often, so this time I am going to make sure you are working with me instead of against me – and to make sure you do as you're told Walkerdine is going to stay like that until I finally succeed. There are several little jobs to do where your particular killing skills could prove very useful."

So that was it! The hideous multi-dimensional creature was now planning even more atrocities! I realised the best thing I could do would be to play for time, make him think I was going along with his scheme and wait for a chance to turn the tables on him.

I pretended to think for a few moments, then I let my shoulders sag and hung my head. "All right von Metzke," I said quietly, "it looks as though you've won this round."

He laughed. "Indeed I have Miss Meinhoff."

I struggled against the manacles but to no avail. von Metzke had anchored them securely in the thick plastic slab and there was nothing I could do. My only hope now was Ulrika, but if her Tardis was ruined as the evil multi-dimensional creature claimed what could even she do? I lay back on the slab as another wave of despair engulfed me...

I had to be careful – very careful. von Metzke was watching my every move and I knew that the slightest slip could mean the end. But with Piggott gone the worst threat was over and rubbing out Birsan (at the coffee machine, obviously) was really easy. Lew Pulsipher was more tricky as he had his squad of half naked acolytes surrounding him, but my blaster was well up to the task. I returned to the Tardis to report the job done.

But then he made his mistake. Convinced now that all his rivals were finally eliminated and I was willing to do any of his bidding he turned his back on me. It only took a second, I pulled the trigger, the beam fired, and von

Metzke was reduced to a mess of protoplasmic slime. To be sure it was pretty repulsive and stinking slime but what would you expect?

I rushed into the hold and started undoing the manacles. "Come on Walkerdine, we need to get away from here and quickly."

I awoke as I felt the manacles being removed. I opened my eyes and gasped in astonishment as I saw it was Ulrika. "But Ulrika," I gasped, "how did you do it?"

"Never mind that," she muttered, "we just need to get out and get back to the other Tardis. I think I've got it fixed."

But then the door opened and Diana Ross walked in. "Richard," she asked, "and with that woman again?"

Ulrika sighed a deep sigh. "Oh shit!"

(TO BE CONTINUED)

I continue to deny the existence of Richard Walkerdine. That doesn't stop him from appearing in Diplomacy World, apparently!

Couples Diplomacy (Probably not a remotely good idea)

By Alex Maslow

First, apologies to the Weasels in Chicago because I said I'd write a con review for the summer publication but I didn't, and by the time the fall issue comes out, Weasel Moot will have come and gone. Sorry, fellahs!

That said, Weasel Moot was an absolute blast, and ComCon was also great. There's not much to say for myself in either tourney, except the last game of Weasel Moot when I had the pleasure of playing Turkey against Edi Birsan's England and Eric Mead (of DiplomacyCast) was Austria. Edi managed an English army in Armenia (I actually think it was in Syria by the time the game ended in a draw). And yes, let me emphasize, this was my BEST game of the two tournaments. I will say that the Weasels are some of the finest scum our hobby has to offer, and I would seriously consider moving to Chicago just to be closer to their hobby. If you ever have a chance to party with Jim O'Kelley and his gang, by God, do that.

But besides all that, there was an amusing game that happened I'd like to talk about. The night before the ComCon tournament began, there was a practice game, and newbies were specially invited. Only two showed up, but there were six of us Dippers so we had enough to throw together a quick game. The idea was mostly to give them a chance to endure the baptism by fire that the first game of Dip is for everyone without it being in the tournament. As it happened, we learned much more than they did.

The two were a male and female pair. At first I was convinced it was father and daughter, but as the game went on it became increasingly clear they were dating, if not married (It never occurred to me to check for a ring). I was Austria and by a very sad coincidence the guy (we'll call him Frank) was Russia and the girl (we'll call her Jewel) was Turkey. So needless to say I was a little

worried that A) they would team up immediately and B) the idea of stabbing each other for tactical and strategic purposes would seem preposterous to them as neither would be interested in winning but just in trying to play the game. And so it goes.

I have a standard way of acting in games with newbies in Dip games. I was a newbie once and remember how hard it was, and I think it is far more important to give them a fun game and hope they come back for more than to teach them through "tough love." I will usually say I am such and such country and you are so and so country, and these two countries get along well at first / are destined for war in the beginning. Regardless of the country relations, I kindheartedly say I am always available for questions of rules and what is an acceptable move and what is a void move. I absolutely will not trick them into making an illegal move. And I mean that.

This has backfired on me in spectacular ways in the past, and I recall a game where I was Germany and the new guy was Austria and I was pleased as punch and I said Germany and Austria never fight early on and he can count on me to be his friend. Unfortunately, everyone else told the poor soul I was full of it and how surprised was I when Austrian and Italian troops were in Boh and Tyr. I did not survive long, as the Austrian remained convinced I had lied to him from the start and was prepared to show me no mercy, despite my insistence he would get nothing. He was just mad because he thought I lied. Even after the game he refused to accept what I was saying. I had this event keen in mind when the countries were picked at ComCon and I was on the poor side of this ART triangle (Not that Austria is terrible, but that being Austria when RT have a positive history together spells trouble, or in any event hard work).

I began talking with Jewel who seemed eager to play the game ruthlessly. I explained how the Balkans generally get divided and suggested she and I work to ensure Frank doesn't Russia's usual share. I suggested she bounce him in Bla.

I then spoke to Frank and said it is possible for us to work together but we needed Turkey out of the game fast, and he seemed keen to that idea, and said he'd go to Arm to try to outflank her. I asked him just to go to Bla but he was stalwart on the topic. Then I spoke to Italy and Germany and saw Jewel and Frank talking in the corner. I grew mildly concerned.

The moves came out and Bla had bounced. Russia had split his forces, sending War to Gal and Mos to StP, and Turkey had gone the unsuspecting Con to Bul and Smy to Con. I had gone to Gal with Vie to show Jewel I was serious (only a matter of time before she feels sorry for her dad/boyfriend/husband and calls off the attack) and so we bounced there, too. Yawn.



I'm not going to relate move by move what happened, because what happened on the board isn't important. It was interesting to watch our two newbs argue and manipulate each other. It made my planning much easier. Jewel would coyly suggest ideas to Frank, and Frank sometimes would harshly rebuke Jewel during adjudications. Any move against him was deemed "silly" or showed her lack of understanding. It was the sort of things players usually say, except his voice didn't seem to be kidding at all. After a while we all started to feel a

little uncomfortable, and when Frank said she'd have to be careful or Jewel would be walking home, I feel we all mentally drew straws to see who'd have to drive her home, just in case.

Eventually the fury seemed to be directed at me, albeit in a more acceptable way. Frank wanted me to plug Jewel's growth in the Balkans (she'd gotten to Greece) and Jewel wanted me to lead an attack against Frank (who'd gotten fat up north and so was able to hold us easily). Italy was busy with England, so I could feasibly go to Greece except for my utter lack of fleets. In any event both convinced the other I was treacherous and they ended up bulldozing right through me, arguing just as much as ever every turn. Luckily by then England had broke through Italy and helped propped me up and we called the game a draw. "Luckily."

They say most dictators try to distract a dissatisfied public by pointing to "the enemy without." Perhaps couples do that, too. Certainly these ones did. They were no less angry than they had been, they were just angry together at something ELSE. Poor little me.

I've played competitive games with my girlfriend and sure we get to trash talking and I have maybe jokingly threatened to let her walk home after she makes some comment at a party, but I'd like to think I'm clearly joking. Surely Jewel is an expert deceiver, because it seemed she had true fear in her eyes.



So if you want to spice up your Thanksgiving dinner, convince your extended family to play Diplomacy. Just make sure you're in a big city with a responsive cab service. And you've put away the carving knives.

I'm not sure whether to wish for an invitation to Alex's place for Thanksgiving this year...or to be glad I won't receive one!

Charles Dickens on Diplomacy

By Russ Dennis

Ebenezer Scrooge. Nicholas Nickleby, the Dodger, David Copperfield... Charles Dickens created these unforgettable characters. I am convinced that Dickens would have been a Diplomacy legend.

Of course if you have ever read a Dickens novel, you'll know he was never short of words. He probably would have struggled with time limits and deadlines. Regardless, anyone who could craft such a diverse cast of characters would have been a shrewd diplomat indeed. Alas, he was born before his time.

There was one character though who has much to teach the Diplomacy aficionado...Uriah Heep of the novel David Copperfield. He is one of the most recognizable villains in all of Dickens's works.



When David Copperfield, first meets Uriah Heep, he is taken back by how repulsive he seems. Dickens describes him as gangly with bony fingers and hands. In fact, Heep's first handshake with Copperfield is described as cold and fishy. Throughout the book more characterizations reveal the vileness of this villain.

What could this repulsive character teach us about Diplomacy? To be sure, many players view their rivals as undesirable wretches waiting to be wiped from the earth. To only view Heep through his outer façade though would cause one to miss the many diplomatic strengths he possessed.

First, he was studious. We find out that Heep taught himself law at night while clerking at the law offices of Mr. Wickfield. Study is what separates the great diplomat from the good. In the short time limits of a game, there simply is not enough time to obsess over your moves. Most of the great moves you see in F2F happen because one saw them played before or had played a game where they had the time to really think through all the possibilities. Seldom do great moves come from sudden inspiration.

This is one of the great attractions to postal or email games. The opportunity to exhaust all the possible combinations will in my opinion help your strategy IQ grow by leaps and bounds.

Also, the hobby has now been going strong for over 50 years. There is an abundant wealth of information and strategy for those willing to take the time. If you do not want to learn at the feet of those diplomats who have gone before you, you will not be ready for the next level Uriah Heep has to teach us.

This level is of feigned humility. Uriah was a master of just that. The book is overflowing with the declarations of Uriah's "umbleness." All of this is ironically declared by Uriah himself.

Nothing will get you eliminated faster than to be viewed as a proud and boastful diplomat. Who wants to work with someone with a superiority complex? Such a person is not respectful of others opinions or situations. He only sees the board one way...his way! Woe to the player who does not consent to his every whim. Even if such a player forges a strong alliance in the beginning, by mid-game his constant belligerence towards those around him will be his undoing.

Your neighbors need to view you, at the very least, as someone who is down to earth and flexible. Though you cannot always acquiesce to your ally's request, you

should always leave them feeling that you would help them if you could. Oftentimes, the person who was the calm and humble diplomat gets spared elimination.

The true goal is to be viewed as an asset and not a threat. If you are not a threat, you give yourself a good chance of making it to the end game. You must master the art of making yourself useful but not a risk. All of us see it; the first player to make it to seven centers immediately gets taken down. Never mind that seven is practically as far away as six or five to eighteen, that is of no consequence; the nation is now a threat and must be eliminated.

By not being a risk, you get the chance to bide your time until you can make your dash for victory. Feigned humility is important. It is not just your words though; it is also your actions. You must choose humility as your road to power.

Of course this is only a ruse for the next level...the shock. This is where your plans will be made known to everyone.

Uriah's hard work was finally paid off when he became a full partner at the firm. This was stunning to everyone but Uriah. He had been working hard behind the scenes to secure his upward advancement. Later on, it is revealed that he was black mailing Mr. Wickfield, but that was secondary to the fact he achieved his goal.

Eventually, there will come a time when you must advance your interests and unfortunately lose a friend. It does not necessarily have to be a stab, but it is a move that is vital for your continued success and advancement. After this move, it will be hard to convince that nation of your "umblé" intentions. No matter, you are now pressing on to victory.

This leads us to Uriah's big mistake...the overreach. Uriah had everything he wanted, except one thing: he wanted to marry Mr. Wickfield's daughter. This proved to be his downfall. While Mr. Wickfield would allow him to blackmail him in business, his family was off limits.

I have seen many beginning diplomats try to stab their ally before they were in position to make it to eighteen. The only result was that the player then had a new enemy to deal with. The time for your stab may never come and a draw may be your only solution, but don't make enemy because you overreached your position.

If all else fails, fall back to the tried and true. Be "umblé" again! When Uriah was finally caught, he was sentenced and thrown into prison. While there, he reverts to his "umblé ways" and becomes a model prisoner. I like to think that eventually Uriah made it some kind of higher station because he went back to his roots.

There will come a time when the world will be against you and that your nation will seem to be merely a pawn for others. If you are going to emerge and push on to great things, you must cease any powerful aspirations you have...at least in the public sphere. You must revert back to behind the scenes dealings: sow discord, make non-threatening moves, forge new alliances, and then shock again.

Uriah Heep's life will teach the aspiring diplomat much. The most important elements though are to remember to study hard, to wait for the moment, to not overreach, but most importantly..."Stay Umblé!"

As I stated elsewhere in this issue, this type of article remains among my favorites these days.

Selected Upcoming Conventions

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

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

Championnat de France de Diplomacy - Saturday November 5th 2011 - Sunday November 6th 2011 - Paris, France - <http://www.championnat-de-france.org>

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

Surprisingly, no other upcoming conventions are listed on the website at the present time.

Xenogogic: An Occasional Column Devoted to the World of Diplomacy

by Larry Peery

It's been an interesting quarter on the dip&Dip (diplomacy & Diplomacy) scene. Two Ottos made the news (Bismarck and Habsburg). The USA-PRC struggle for the number one position in the world's power-pecking order escalated into a war of paper bullets, perhaps a precursor of things to come. And even some smaller countries, like Sri Lanka and Fiji, managed to get some attention on the diplomatic front. On paper and face-to-face diplomats continued to do what they do best, produce copious amounts of hot air. No doubt the same thing is going on in Sydney at WDC as I write this.

From The Economist, 31 March 2011

Otto von Bismarck, Hard to be king under Bismarck, a man of contradictions. No author given.

From New York Times, 31 March 2011

Otto von Bismarck, Master Statesman
by Henry A. Kissinger

Two reviews of Jonathan Steinberg's new book, *Bismarck, A Life* (illustrated, 577 pp, Oxford University Press, \$34.95, list, \$20.97 on Amazon.com) appeared the same day. The Economist called Bismarck "19th-century Europe's greatest statesman (alongside Napoleon)." Henry Kissinger's much longer review is vintage Kissinger, a combination of history and political science. There are differences between the two. The Economist says Bismarck served as Prussia's political leader for 26 years. Kissinger gives him 28 years. Details, details. The book is full of them. I wonder if Kissinger, in his heart of hearts, doesn't think of himself as the 20th-century's equivalent to Bismarck?"

From The Guardian and BBC News, 4 July 2011

Otto von Habsburg Obituary

The Guardian taglines its obit "Son of Austria's last emperor and champion of European unity," and the BBC says, "Habsburg: Last heir to Austro-Hungarian empire dies." Habsburg (pronounced Hapsburg) spent two decades as a member of the European Parliament working to bring the states that once made up his family's empire into the EU. Just in case there's any question that we have the right Otto von Habsburg, his complete name was Franz Joseph Otto Robert Maria Anton Karl Max Heinrich Sixtus Xavier Felix Renatus Ludwig Gaetan Pius Ignatius von Habsburg!

From The Diplomat, 5 April 2011 - by Richard Weitz
West's Diplomacy Trumps China Fear
USA vs PRC On-going Debate

China and Russia were both worried about Western military action in Libya. So why didn't they veto it when they had the chance? How did the Western coalition persuade the Chinese and Russia's to go along with their military intervention in Libya, considering their historical opposition to such interventions? Did the Western powers do something right, or did the Chinese and Russians just not care? An interesting analysis of an on-going tempest in an oil well.

From the Media - Chinese Generals Shoot Off Their Mouths

The paper bullets war between the PRC and USA (and Taiwan) continues to escalate. "It's a book launch like no other. PLA's General Liu Yuan writes sombre preface to a colleague's book, promoting a return to 60-year old ideology." "Princeling General Attracts Notice with Criticism of Party." The book causing the uproar is by Chinese intellectual Zhang Musheng, "Changing Our View of Culture and History," a collection of essays suggesting a return to New Democracy," e.g. the days and ways of Mao Zedong. Liu's introduction offers some rare criticism of current Chinese politics and society. Interestingly, Liu is the son of Liu Shaoqi, once reported to be Mao's supposed successor.

On the other side of the Straits a retired Taiwanese air force general, Hsia Ying-chou, said that there should be on distinction between the Republic of China (Taiwan) and People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China since they were both "China's army." His remark was published, etc. before a political uproar forced him to deny saying it.

On the sticks and stones front the PLA's first aircraft carrier completed its first sea trials successfully (e.g. it made it back to port), just before the USA finally confirmed it would sell up-grade packages for Taiwan's aging air force fighters, but not the latest version of those planes, which carry an anti-stealth radar system.

From The Drum (Australian Broadcasting Company), 17 May 2011

International Diplomacy Is Not About the Truth
by Stephen Keim

International diplomacy is not about the truth. The truth can be ignored most of the time. There you have it, a saying worthy of Bismarck or Kissinger. Keim discusses his maxim as it pertains to the Sri Lankan civil war that went on for so long. An interesting study of a conflict that didn't get a lot of attention in the USA.

From The Guardian, 18 April 2011

The Curious World of Diplomatic Relations
by Paul Behrens

It may let diplomats get away with murder (or at least not paying their traffic tickets), but 50 years on, the Vienna convention on diplomatic relations is still the only option. An unassuming document at first sight (53 articles, couched in technical language), it has over the years become the bible for diplomats around the world. Today, it celebrates a special birthday - it was signed exactly 50 years ago. Pull out your copy and read it! Today 187 countries have signed it and abide it, usually.

From The Washington Post, 12 April 2011

Two Books on the Future of Power and Diplomacy
by Ian Morris

Morris teaches at Stanford University. Fans of Condi Rice take note. He reviews two books that look to the future of the world," as seen through diplomacy-colored glasses. The first, "How to Run the World," is by Parag Khanna, a 30-something journalist. The second, "The Future of Power," is by Joseph S. Nye, a professor at Harvard, who is probably twice Khanna's age; and in this case age does equate with experience and wisdom. The books are interesting, not for their wannabe or oughttobe approaches, but for their mightbe examinations of the possibilities of how Generation Y's geopolitics will develop.

From The New York Times, 24 June 2011

The Seesaw of Power - by Serge Schmemmann

Schmemmann interviews three authors, include Nye, about their Western (hard power) vs Eastern (soft power) approaches to the coming world. The other two authors are Dambisa Moyo, an economist born in Kenya; and Kishore Mahbubani, a former Singaporean diplomat. Moyo's book is "How the West Was Lost: Fifty Years of Economic Folly." Mahbubani's efforts have centered on his view as dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy in Singapore. Different perspectives on the same phenomenon.

From The Diplomat, 16 May 2011

When Maps Mislead - by James R. Holmes

Military maps can be useful. But ones showing the range of China's missiles underscore their shortcomings. Things like the number of missiles, their range, their accuracy, and the type and size of their warheads are all subject to debate; depending on who's doing the bean-counting. The author of his story is an instructor at the US Naval War College; which may have something to do with his interpretation of the facts, if facts they are.

From USA Today, 1 April 2011

Nixon Library Tells Full Watergate Story

The Nixon Presidential Library and Museum recently reopened its Watergate Galley which unveils more of "the truth" about what Watergate was about. Prior to a reality check the gallery was nothing more than a puff-piece that sought to protect Nixon's place in history. Those who remember, albeit vaguely, what happened will find their memories jogged by the displays. The too young to remember will learn a lot about the president affectionately known as "Tricky Dick." :-) The Library is located in Yorba Linda, California

From The New York Times, 31 March 2011

Richard Holbrooke's Papers Entrusted to George Packer
by Julie Bosman

Mr. Holbrooke, a prominent diplomat in Democratic administrations since the 1960s, recently passed on. He had planned to write a memoir, the story of a life that spanned numerous international conflicts, many of which he saw up close, and more than a few in Washington. His career took off at age 35 when he became the youngest person ever to serve as assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs. Packer will complete the project for Knopf under a multi-million dollar contract.

From The New York Times, 18-19 April 2011

Waging Peace With Justice & The Weapons of Diplomacy, and the Human Factor - by Kati Marton

Marton, the widow of Richard Holbrooke, writes about his role in the Dayton peace talks which brought the various warring Balkan factions, and American and European mediators, together. I hope she'll write her own book

From TomDispatch

What Will Turn Americans Against Militarism?
by Adam Hochschild

Hochschild, who wrote "King Leopold's Ghost," has just published a new book, "To End All Wars: A Study of Loyalty and Rebellion, 1914-1918." He writes, "What if, from the beginning, everyone killed in the Iraq and Afghan wars had been buried in a single large cemetery easily accessible to the American public? Would it bring the fighting to a halt more quickly if we could see the hundreds of thousands of tombstones, military and civilian, spreading hill after hill, field after field, across our landscape?" Interesting question.

From the US Department of State, 19 April 2011

Secretary Clinton and Former Secretary Kissinger to Hold Conversations on Diplomacy
Media Note, Office of the Spokesman
Discussing the issues of the day and their experiences, these two Foggy Bottom power houses got together to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Diplomatic

Reception Rooms at the Department of State. The public wasn't invited but a limited number of the press were. Be interesting to see what they wrote about the encounter. I believe there were videos released with moderator Charlie Rose.

Jewish/Female/Black: The Changing SOS: America's Secretary of State in the Era of Albright, Powell, Rice, and Clinton - by Larry Peery

I've just spent an enlightening couple of months reading through a pile of books on three recent and one current US secretaries of state: Madeleine Albright, Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice, and Hillary Clinton. Among them were: "Madam Secretary," "Read My Pins," and "The Mighty and the Almighty: Reflections on America, God and World Affairs," all by Madeleine Albright; "Soldier: The Life of Colin Powell," by Karen DeYoung; "Leadership Secrets of Colin Powell," by Oren Hariri; "Conti: The Condoleezza Rice Story," by Antonia Felix; "Condoleezza Rice: An American Life," by Elisabeth Bumiller; "Living History," by Hillary Rodham Clinton; and "A Woman In Charge," by Carl Bernstein. Powell and Rice were in the news recently with their responses to the publication of former V-P Dick Cheney's memoir. Still to come, the memoir that George W. Bush is working on. It's too soon to have a good picture of Clinton's time as secretary of state. It may be that it will be part of another memoir covering her time as a senator from NY and secretary of state; or it may be forgotten if she makes it to the White House on her own.

These are four very different people who each held the senior cabinet position at a time of great turmoil for the USA. I had no set agenda as I began my reading, just a list of bullet points I would refer to as I read their biographies, each one a check point on their life and career path. Here's the list:

President (who appointed them and whom they served)
Date of Birth/Place of Birth
Childhood
Education Early Career
Pre-Secretary of State Position(s)
Secretary of State Executive/Administrator Performance
Secretary of State Tactical Strengths and Weaknesses
Secretary of State Strategic Strengths and Weaknesses
Presidential Access and Advisory Role to the President
Major Achievements
Major Failures
Travels
Number of miles traveled/ number of countries visited/
number of heads of state, government, or peers Met
Major or Milestone Publications and Speeches
Quotations by as Secretary of State

Quotations about as Secretary of State
Quirks
Post Secretary of State Career

If I'd had the time I would have made a chart for each of these points for each secretary. Oh well. Even peeriblah has its limits.

What I did come away with were three key impressions. First, that there was an almost uncanny continuum or progressive (small P) evolution of the office and the people who held it over a period of time. It begins with Henry A. Kissinger, a European-born Jew, continues through Madeleine Albright, also a European-born Jew but also a woman. Then we have Colin Powell, with his Jamaican roots and not quite black skin. Next is Condoleezza Rice, also black, albeit an atypical one, and a woman. And currently we have Hillary Clinton, a white female. The Founding Fathers would have been shocked. Good.

Second, my reading drove home the importance of the president to the secretary of state and vice versa. A good president could make a great secretary of state. A bad president could just as easily ruin a secretary of state's performance, no matter how brilliant they were. It wasn't the background, education or experience that determined the success or failure of any of these secretaries of state. It was their relationship with the president. If they had the president's trust and access to him, they could succeed. If they didn't, they probably didn't. Kissinger had access to Nixon, but not his trust. Albright had both access and trust. Powell had limited access and trust. Rice had both to a strong degree. With Clinton it's too soon to say.

Third, it was impossible to avoid noticing that all four of these secretaries of state had fascinating characters combining elements of strength and weakness. No matter how good they were, they all had flaws which, to a greater or lesser degree, impacted their performance. No surprise there. Hopefully this brief discussion will stimulate your memories of these people. Think about them as individuals and what they did.

And now move on and compare them with Dippers you've known. I asked Edi Birsan to list woman or black Dippers he'd known or heard of. There were some women, going back almost to the beginning of the hobby, and a few of them were really good players. The list of blacks was far shorter. He named two and I could think of only one other. Any thoughts on that?

The less the rest of you write, the more Peeriblah you get! Let that be a lesson to all of you! You have been warned!

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: Gary Behnen

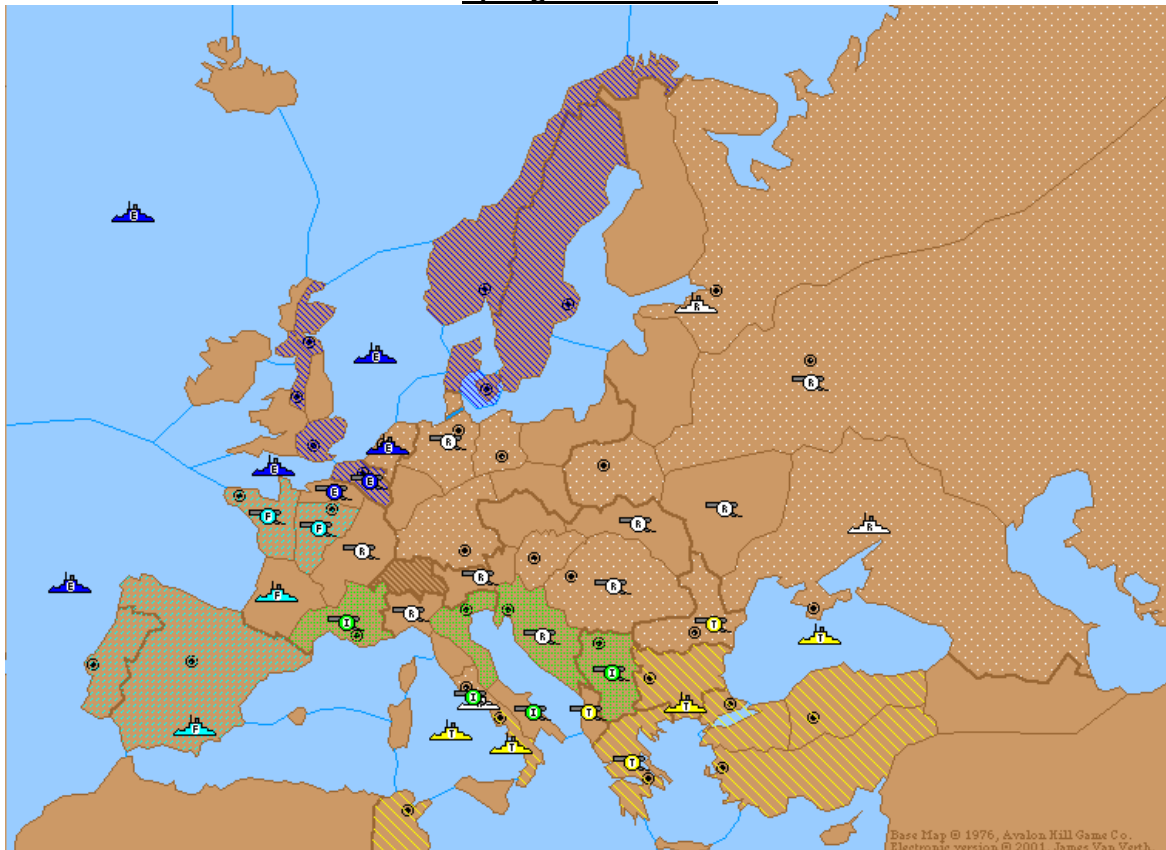
The Commentators:

Jim Burgess (**BOLD**)
 Rick Desper (Normal Font)
 Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

The GM:

Douglas Kent

Spring 1908 Results



England: A Belgium Supports A Picardy, F Denmark - North Sea,
 F English Channel Supports F Irish Sea - Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F Irish Sea - Mid-Atlantic Ocean,
 F North Atlantic Ocean Supports F Irish Sea - Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F North Sea – Holland, A Picardy Supports A Belgium.

France: A Brest - Gascony (*Bounce*), F Gascony - Mid-Atlantic Ocean (*Fails*), A Paris Supports A Brest – Gascony,
 F Spain(sc) Supports F Gascony - Mid-Atlantic Ocean.

Italy: A Apulia Supports A Venice – Rome, A Marseilles - Gascony (*Bounce*),
 A Serbia Supports A Vienna - Trieste (*Cut*), A Venice - Rome.

Russia: A Budapest Supports A Serbia, A Burgundy Supports A Marseilles – Gascony, A Holland – Kiel,
 A Moscow - Sevastopol (*Fails*), A Munich – Tyrolia, A Piedmont - Marseilles (*Fails*),
~~F Rome – Tyrrhenian Sea~~ (*Dislodged*, retreat to Tuscany or OTB), A Rumania – Galicia,
F Sevastopol - Black Sea (*Fails*), F St Petersburg(sc) Hold, A Ukraine Supports A Moscow - Sevastopol (*Fails*),
 A Vienna - Trieste.

Turkey: A Albania - Serbia (*Fails*), A Armenia – Rumania, F Black Sea Convoys A Armenia – Rumania,

F Bulgaria(sc) Hold, A Greece Supports A Albania – Serbia, F Naples Supports A Apulia - Rome (*Void*),
F Tyrrhenian Sea Supports F Naples (*Cut*).

PRESS

London: After weeks of gibberish the lines to Turkey were cut.

Constantinople: It's a sad commentary in a Demo Game when a player will toady to easily allow a victory for a player. It demeans the game and the victory. 2nd place simply means you are the biggest culprit and 1st loser. This is in no way an indictment of the player going for the win, but it would have been a great "demonstration" if you would have faced a concerted effort after building your position.

(Somewhere on a foggy mountaintop) - "Good morning, Mr. Drucker. Just need a few things today." The woman handed her shopping list to the man behind the counter at the country store.

"Peach preserves, 200 ft. of copper line, 20 lbs. of yeast, 40 lb. of sugar, side of ham, peanut butter, and diet root beer." Mr. Drucker nodded. "No problem. It'll take about an hour. By the way, did you hear about Ricky Tidwell's mamma?"

"Doris Tidwell?" The woman shook her head. "No, what?"

"They caught her taking male hormones!"

"They...who?"

"The NCAA!" Mr. Drucker leaned over the counter and lowered his voice. "When the University came to sign Ricky to the football team, they caught sight of Doris and signed her!"

"Well, a woman with Bear Bryant tattooed on her forearm WILL draw attention," the woman admitted. "So Doris is gonna play in the SEC?"

"No...she failed the drug test...the male --- "

"Hormones, yeah, you mentioned that." The woman slightly smiled. "Guess Sheriff Buck's pretty busy with mess, huh?"

"Oh, yes!" Mr. Drucker quickly nodded.

The woman leaned closer and chuckled. "Why don't you triple that order, Mr. Drucker?"

MALICE IN CENTERLAND - Part Five: Recess is

Over - Malice was only moderately injured as he slammed into the musty pile of old szines falling at the rate of ... well, you do the math, but it was pretty damn

fast. Though he'd ooze blood for several hours from the hundred or so paper cuts caused by plummeting into the stack of old szines, he was otherwise unscathed and considered himself very lucky indeed as he staggered to his feet. Looking around he found it dark overhead, but could see a dimly lit corridor before him down which the Mutant Butler was scrambling away, just barely in sight. Not the brightest at the best of times – and certainly not with the concussion he was nursing for sheer drop into discarded mound of publisher crap and being knocked (let's face it) quite nearly senseless – Malice made his way down the corridor after the Mutant Butler moving like the wind would move if it had just nose-dived into a pile of old paper at the bottom of a deep hole. As the Mutant Butler turned a corner somewhere ahead, Malice heard it exclaim,

"Oh, my bells and whistles! My GPS antennae, too! How late it's getting! I'll most certainly NMR!!! I'm late! I'm very, very late!"

Malice was not far behind as the android rounded the corner and so he was surprised to find it nowhere in sight when he turned the corner, too. He found himself gazing down a long, low hall lit poorly by bare overhead bulbs. The carpet was worn and stained, while the walls were marred by graffiti. Ashtrays were affixed to the walls in random placement. The reek of stale beer and cigarettes permeated the air. Malice was nearly overwhelmed. Somewhere off ahead he heard a door slam. Then another and another. Then the sound of many doors slamming together.

The hall had doors on both sides for as far as Malice could see. It took him only a few minutes to try every door and find each one locked. The doors stood identical, one after another, with nothing else in corridor. Well, except for the small sliding panel at the very end of the hallway over which was a sign reading 'Laundry Chute'. The panel had no buttons, lights, or numbers, only a small slot to one side. Malice wandered more or less aimlessly back to the center of the lengthy passage wondering how he might get out of where he'd arrived, when he came upon a hotel maid's cart which he had somehow overlooked. The cart was laden with litter bags, clean and soiled linens and towels, matchbooks, little cellophane-wrapped plastic cups ("Individually packaged for your protection" he read), boxed shower caps, toothbrushes, tiny soaps, and petite bottles of shampoo and conditioner. He pocketed a handful of matches and shower caps (Malice rarely used soap or a toothbrush) in a manner suggesting significant fetish. He was about to continue wandering when he saw on top of the cart a plastic card bearing an black strip on

one side. It had the look and size of a credit card and Malice recognized it as a key of sorts. Beneath it was a freshly starched and ironed maid's uniform. A paper tag pinned to the uniform had the words "WEAR ME" scrawled in large, poorly formed letters. (Think Burgess script.) It was all very well to say 'Wear Me', but our leery Malice wasn't going to do that in a hurry; quite apart from the fact that he'd only last year given up cross dressing after months of expensive therapy, he wasn't at all sure the uniform was his size, and it certainly didn't flatter his (still soggy) shoes at all. Or his eyes. And absolutely wasn't his style. Still.

Moments later Malice looked at the uniform's label for the size and on discovering it to be an XXL he manfully discarded his clothing and slipped the pale blue pinafore dress on. The embroidery over the breast pocket read "Lupe".

"What a curious feeling!" said Malice. "Apart from the fact that it fits like it was made for me – well, it's a *bit* tight in the waist – it also makes me feel smaller and more petite and ... " And so it was indeed. In fact, Malice shrank swiftly and, faster than you could say 'petitely-height-challenged' he found himself less than five inches tall. Rather than panic as you or I might have done, he was excited as he realized he was exactly small enough to fit through the laundry chute. He scurried down the hall only to find – poor Malice! – that the sliding panel remained closed and that he'd left the plastic key on top of the cart. Malice returned to the cart and tried his best to climb one of its struts but, as he was still bleeding from the paper cuts, everything quickly became too slippery for climbing of any sort. He soon tired himself out with trying and, when he was too tired to try further, he sat on the floor swearing himself silly.

After ten or so minutes of swearing, his eyes came to rest on a small doll on the bottom shelf of the cart. He got up and, curious as ever, picked it up only to find that it wasn't really a doll at all, but rather a well-formed puppet. The puppet's face was brightly painted and on its shirt was stitched the word "Today". (Malice could not know that the puppet's master, an unknown no-talent aspiring-to-wanna-be Centerland luminary, was a

horribly inept speller in addition to his other numerous failings and that, in truth, the puppet's true name was 'Toady'. Which wasn't so much a name as a label. An unfortunate one. Alas.) About Today's neck hung a small sign which read simply "TRUST ME". Curious, thought Malice. He turned the puppet over only to find a second small sign pinned to Today's back in classic practical joker fashion. This sign read "STAB ME". As if to emphasize the point, a worn dagger protruded from the puppet's back which bore the signs of having, indeed, been stabbed. Repeatedly. A lot. Maliciously. Violently. Ruthlessly. And then some. Curiouser and curiouser. Malice thought Today had something of the unsavory look of a voodoo doll about him and was about to toss him back on the cart when he noticed two things. The puppet's arms and legs still had strings attached and the strings had been roughly broken. Second, neatly printed on Today's heel were the words "PROPERTY OF THE TOADFATHER. Return to NSWG if found. Or else." As Malice pondered the meaning of the words for a moment the puppet slipped from his hands, landing face down. "STAB ME," commanded the note on Today's back and, without knowing why, Malice grabbed the puppet in one hand and, pulling the dagger free with the other, did as bidden. In the poor light of the corridor, the dagger glinted over and over as it landed in the puppet's back. As each blow fell the puppet seemed to cry out "Give me another! Give me another!" More oddly yet, Malice found himself growing in size again with each blow. Soon, his head touched the ceiling and, finding he'd grown more than ten feet tall. He grabbed the key from the cart and returned to the laundry chute. He jammed the key into the slot and the panel slipped open noiselessly, just as he knew it would.

"Mon Dieu! Sacre pomme d'terre!" cried Malice in anguish as he realized he was again too large – this time by double the size – to pass through the chute to freedom. Poor Malice! It was as much as he could to, lying on his side, to reach one arm down the chute and to listen to the faint noises coming from below; but to get down the chute was more hopeless than ever. He sat back and began to cry, the blue maid's uniform already much the worse for the wear.

Summer 1908 Results

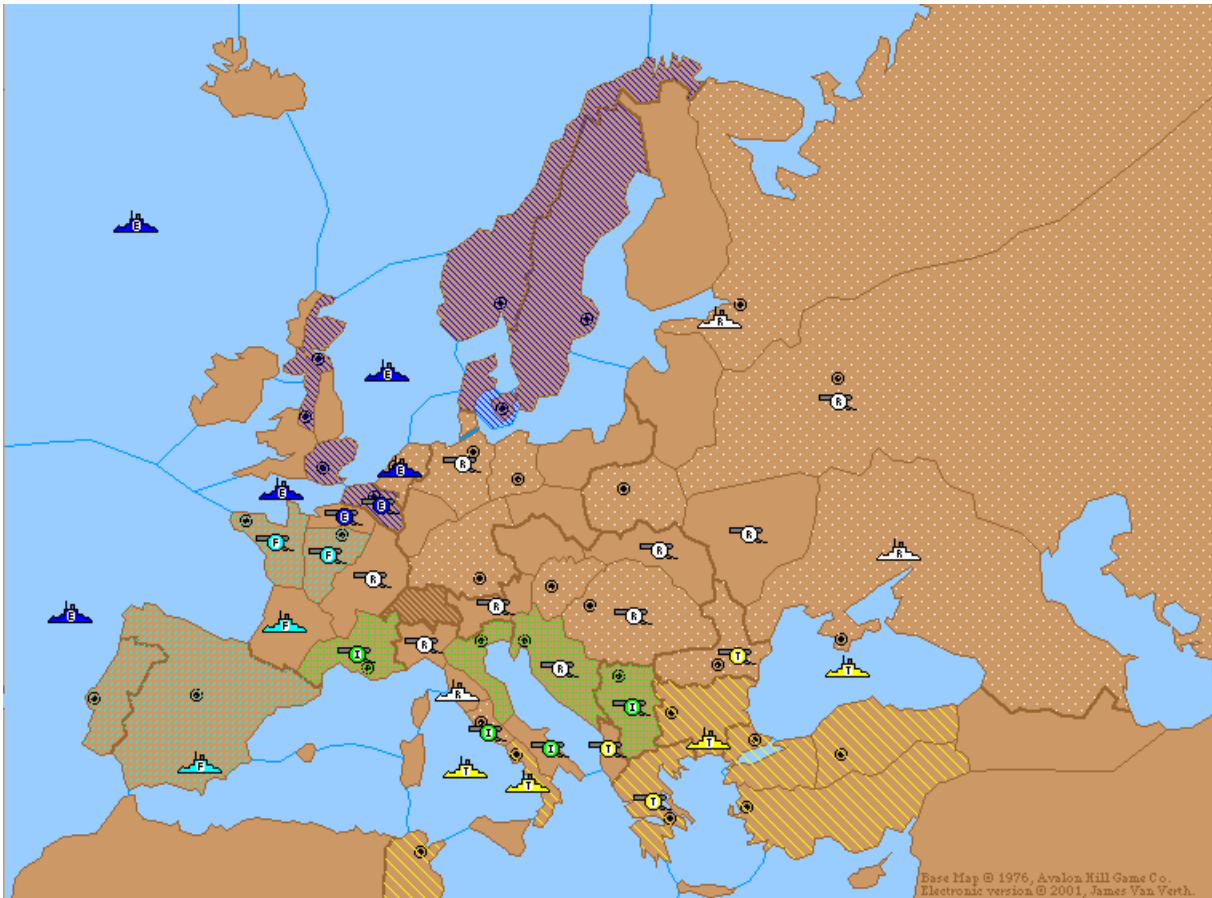
England: Has A Belgium, F English Channel, F Holland, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F North Atlantic Ocean, F North Sea, A Picardy.

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

Italy: Has A Apulia, A Marseilles, A Rome, A Serbia.

Russia: Retreat F Rome – Tuscany..Has A Budapest, A Burgundy, A Galicia, A Kiel, A Moscow, A Piedmont, F Sevastopol, F St Petersburg(sc), A Trieste, F Tuscany, A Tyrolia, A Ukraine.

Turkey: Has A Albania, F Black Sea, F Bulgaria(sc), A Greece, F Naples, A Rumania, F Tyrrhenian Sea.



PRESS

RUSSIA to TURKEY: Nice convoy! Hadn't seen that one coming. Looks like the little gambit to take the Black Sea didn't work; my net caught the wrong little fishy. My guess is you'll allow that unit to retreat to BUL and move your fleet to CON where it belongs. Certainly shores things up a bit, eh? Even so, that warm water Russian fleet slipped away after all and will come back to wreak havoc.

MOSCOW to ROME: See? We left it exactly as we found it, though with less pasta, wine and virtuous

women on our departure than on our arrival. (Eh, sailors will be sailors, and what better place for shore leave than The eternal City?) Next, on to reclaim the rest of your homeland? The Italian risorgimento is alive and well though overdue by about 30 years. Garibaldi would be proud.

RUSSIAN ARMY SOUTH to TURKISH ARMY

RUMANIA: Enjoy it while it lasts, friends, and turn out the lights when you retreat ... er, leave.

Spring and Summer 1908 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

Press: As there have been some waking and some sleeping, and then it is another day, let me again lead with the most important part, the press commentary. First off, in both seasons Richard Walkerdine is missing in action. He may be letting some tension build up on what will happen next, or he may just be busy. We did notice. Faz's presumed foggy mountaintop continues the Mr. Drucker storyline as they get what could be seen as a bit rude. As a result, I won't translate what I think

is the triple entendre subtext. Be assured though that if you see it, you're right, it's intentional. I think.... The big awakening is from our board leader, Mr. Duck, who rather than ducking seems to be standing up for some Socratic instruction. Malice in Centerland is an old ode to the Alice T-shirts and plans that we brought to the 2000 World DipCon in Baltimore. I just this last month pulled out my old "Alice" T-shirt that I proudly wore there as we recently have renovated our bathroom and dressing

room here at the Providence homestead. Don is revisiting and reformulating that old Malice in Centerland storyline as he careens toward what seems like certain victory. Gary Behnen seems to be the only one complaining as his reference to toadying seems to be aimed at both Melinda and Bill? Should they be the Gates couple?? Yes, lame, I know. I will translate a few things for you in the Malice in Centerland press that probably would be lost otherwise. The noseweegie references to North Sealth, West George, the original dipszine of Terry Tallman, the Toadfather, are connections to Seattle, Chief Sealth, and the state of Washington. What is the state of Washington anyway? In the dumps?? Also, in the postal days, I was famous for my scrawled handwriting, which is even worse today from disuse in the keyboard age. I used to handwrite my press to Don, which unlike Mike Barno's handwriting to me, really was barely readable torture. I thought that the today/toady think was sheer genius, if you thought it was lame, I don't want to hear about it. Oh yeah, and for the most of you who've never seen the dagger wielding Alice on my T-Shirt, think Scream Part 42. Now, moving on to the male Gates' response to the toady accusations, note that he cut communications with Gary as spouting gibberish? What gibberish was this, Don can't be going for the solo, can he? Nah. Well, we have Don's three responses in Summer. First, is the damning with faint praise on the obvious convoy to Rumania. Second, was the ha-ha at the planned Rome dislodgement. Third was the denouement for the Rumanian attack, annihilation. Oh well....

I'm not going to comment on the press.

Turns like this illustrate the futility of trying to understand the alliance structure when you only have results and press to consider. The moves involving Russia, Italy, and Turkey are particularly hard to figure.

Looking at the details:

England: takes Holland as Russia backs out and, presuming Russia cooperates in France, looks likely to take Brest. Might forego the immediate capture of Brest in order to sneak a fleet past Gibraltar. The game is definitely turning to England's favor with Turkey's pull-back and Russia's decision to never exploit his advantages in the North.

England: It is unclear how much of all this is Bill Quinn's ability to negotiate with Don Williams and how much it is Don Williams trying to walk a fine line toward a solo. While I agree that England gains, it is unclear if that is just short term or long term. We will see, I don't really expect England to go from there to attack Russia.

France: is not going to last long unless he comes to some kind of new arrangement with Russia or England. I suspect Brest falls in the Fall move, and Paris looks to fall next year. At that point, it's just Iberia, which could have a life of its own, depending on how the diplomacy shakes out.

France: Most players do not know how to play the "France left in Iberia" game. I know that David Hood does. I hope that we get to see that played out so people can watch how it is done. But I agree that Brest and Paris are going to fall.

Italy: a very interesting move. Melinda takes Rome by force from Russia. But something for readers to consider: this may have been arranged with Don. He can retreat to Tuscany at which point Turkey has to worry about losing Naples. Actually, if I/R work together, they can force Naples, but Turkey could take Rome in return. The armies in Marseilles and Serbia are too isolated to be useful except as puppet forces.

I agree that I think the IR attack was arranged. Don seems to be testing out all of the "who am I really attacking?" moves as he sets up for a likely solo. More on Don below.

Russia: this is really a fascinating move from Don. He walks out of Rumania, which allows Turkey to convoy an army across the Black Sea. He's walked out of Holland and also lost Rome in the Spring move. OTOH, he's taken Trieste and can take Venice in the Fall. Also, he's got a strong position on Marseilles. This combination of moves could mean a lot of things. Holland is surely a loss, but he can easily retake Rumania, should he so choose.

Right, I think it was a feint to take back Rumania and get an edge on Turkey by misdirection. I'm a bit less sure if he is attacking Melinda more now, I think that is still an alliance deal.

If Don wants to make a solo run, he's going to need to establish a significant naval presence somewhere, and soon. He could try to get another fleet built in Sev. Or he might decide to finally build another fleet in the North. At some point, he'll have to do something, since there isn't a stable E/R stalemate line to be had in this game. (One exists in theory, but it would require a lot more Russian naval strength in the Med than he currently has.)

I agree that Don will be trying to arrange a F Sev this fall. I'm not sure if he can do it, but it is a weakness in his solo chances until he really takes Turkey's home centers. I believe that is what he will try to do next.

Turkey: I'm still wondering at the value of F Bul (SC). A

fleet on the East coast would be far more useful right now. A fleet on the East coast would at least make the tactical situation regarding Serbia/Rumania a bit dicier for Russia & Italy. (I suspect, though, that Russia wouldn't have walked out of Rumania if the Turkish fleet had been more advantageously placed.)

This is certainly true, I see Russia as trying to use the fact that this is where the fleet is to try to get the upper hand in taking the Turkish home centers. That, I think, will become clearer with the next moves.

In summary, the moves in the South have me confused. I really don't understand the convoy to Rumania. We might see Russia destroy that army, but

somehow see another Turkish fleet on the map.

I think he will destroy that army. And they will try to avoid Turkey being able to rebuild it as a fleet. That's the plan, I agree it is dicey on execution.

One thing I will say about this game: we've reached a true mid-game where a lot of different things can happen. In recent years, I've only played the occasional FTF game, and they have an annoying tendency to stall between 1905 and 1907. This game has a ton of possibilities right now.

Yes, I really want to see the next season, you readers all can just go on below....

SPRING/SUMMER 1908

The General was again holding an early briefing before the Tardis and its occupants left for the rift. The Irillium mines were all in their dispensers and everything was now ready. He waited quietly as the trainees assembled.

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

"Hail Fndili," came the response.

"Well, Gentlemen," he began, "as expected we continue to see Russia and Turkey preparing for conflict, although Russia seems to have made better preparations. England has now withdrawn from Scandinavia which leaves it free to continue the assault on France and Russia can concentrate on the south. We also see Italy being assisted by Russia - a clever move to bring on board another ally. It might even mean Italy's survival - although I suspect the tables may yet turn if Russia's assault on Turkey goes well. But Russia is clearly the most powerful country now and I would expect that to continue. As usual Gentlemen, I require your observations by midday tomorrow."

"But now I must join The Doctor and his companions for the launch of his craft. We will make our next time-jump immediately in order to be able to concentrate on the closing of the rift. Viewscreens throughout the 'Further Glory' will be showing all the details to all the ship's company. Hail Fndili!"

With the briefing over the time-jump was made and the old General made his way to the cargo bay where the Tardis stood. The three companions stood waiting for him, The Doctor smiling, Merlin looking a little concerned and Brooklyn looking rather excited. "So Doctor," said General U'til, "is everything prepared? Lieutenant R'lok has the mines ready and will dispense them when you wish."

"We are ready General," replied the Time Lord. "I think the best strategy might be to send half the mines through the rift, in the spiral pattern of course, and keep the rest around the Tardis."

The old soldier nodded and pressed his communicator. "Did you hear that R'lok?"

"Yes sir," came the reply.

"See to it then, and remember, this might be our only chance."

"Understood sir," replied the Weapons Officer.

The General took a deep breath and looked into The Doctor's eyes. "It is done old friend, and by The Goddess I wish you all well."

"Thank you General," replied the Time Lord. Merlin and Brooklyn just smiled and nodded. Then all three entered the Tardis and, as the old soldier watched, the familiar screeching sound was heard as the craft dematerialised and headed for the rift.

The viewscreens all over the ship showed the Tardis materialise just a few miles from the rift, which looked like a long glowing mouth with tiny lights twinkling inside it. As the crew watched they saw half the mines, in a perfect spiral, enter the rift with the remainder in position around The Doctor's craft.

Aboard the Tardis the Doctor smiled at his two companions. "Shall we begin?" he said as he opened the craft's door.

Brooklyn looked alarmed. "But Doctor, we're in space, all the air will be sucked out."

The Time Lord smiled. "Don't worry Brooklyn," he replied, "there is a force shield around the Tardis that will keep us safe."

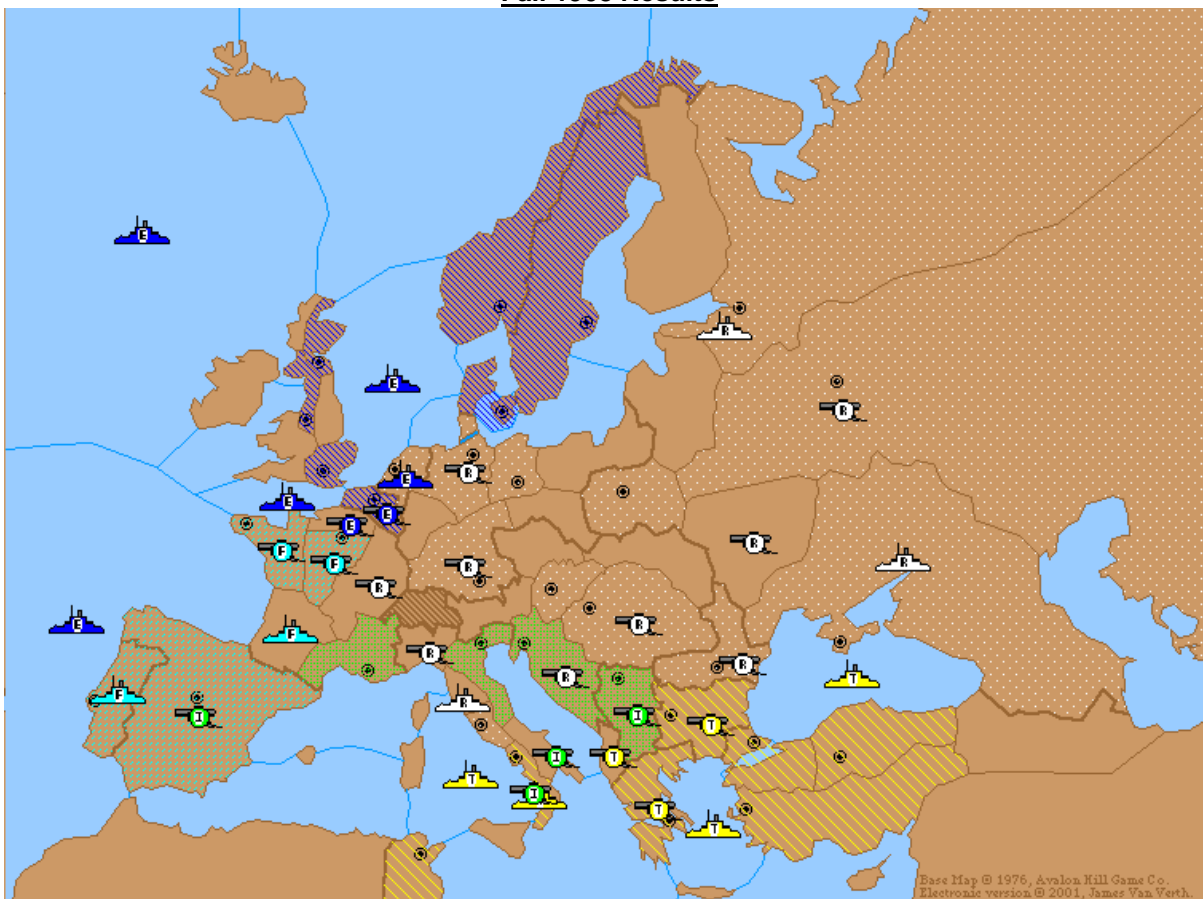
Brooklyn looked relieved and he and Merlin moved to the open doorway. As they looked out at the rift they could see some explosions from within.

On board the 'Further Glory' General U'til turned to his Weapons Officer. "The modified mines are working well R'lok," he murmured.

"Yes Sir," replied the Lieutenant, "but not perfectly. Look."

Two alien ships were emerging from the rift.

Fall 1908 Results



I'm beginning to wonder if there is only one possible way this will end.

England: A Belgium - Picardy (*Fails*), F English Channel Supports A Picardy – Brest, F Holland Hold, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean Supports A Marseilles – Spain, F North Atlantic Ocean Hold, F North Sea - Denmark (*Bounce*), A Picardy - Brest (*Fails*).

France: A Brest Supports A Paris (*Cut*), F Gascony - Spain(nc) (*Fails*), A Paris Supports A Brest, F Spain(sc) - Portugal.

Italy: A Apulia Supports A Rome – Naples, A Marseilles – Spain, A Rome - Naples.,

A Serbia Supports A Galicia - Rumania (*Cut*).

Russia: A Budapest Supports A Serbia, A Burgundy - Gascony (*Fails*), A Galicia – Rumania, A Kiel - Denmark (*Bounce*), A Moscow Supports F Sevastopol, A Piedmont - Tuscany (*Fails*), F Sevastopol Supports A Galicia – Rumania, F St Petersburg(sc) Hold, A Trieste Supports A Serbia, F Tuscany - Tyrrhenian Sea (*Fails*), A Tyrolia – Munich, A Ukraine Supports A Galicia - Rumania.

Turkey: A Albania - Serbia (*Fails*), F Black Sea Supports A Rumania – Bulgaria, F Bulgaria(sc) - Aegean Sea, A Greece Supports A Albania – Serbia, ~~F Naples Supports F Tuscany – Rome~~ (*Dislodged*, retreat to Ionian Sea or OTB), A Rumania – Bulgaria, F Tyrrhenian Sea Supports F Naples (*Cut*).

PRESS

London: There has been a great deal of casting about of Brains lately.

(Somewhere on a foggy mountaintop) - The woman smiled and leaned against the lamp post. "Nice day for the Pioneer's Day Parade", she mentioned to the man standing next to her.

The Sheriff smiled. "Glad I got that Tidwell mess settled."

"You need to leave poor Ricky Tidwell's mother alone," the woman admonished. "Woman led the league in sacks."

"Almost killed a couple of running backs," the Sheriff pointed out.

The woman shrugged. "Can't stand the hits, don't put on the gear." Then she broadly grinned. "Looks like the Lewis sisters in the lead float."

"Who?"

"Lewis sisters," the woman explained. "Descendents of one of the early pioneer families." She pointed at the garish float. "From left to right...there's Ann 'call me Rebecca 'cause I'm in Witness Protection', Deb 'I'm a bitch because I have a do-less husband and eight kids', Hannah 'mess with me and I'll open a can of whoop-ass on you for breakfast, lunch, and dinner for the rest of your natural born life'. Oh, and Esther's not here because she faked her death." She frowned. "Don't see Sarah either. Oh, well...she's kinda shy. Or their

brother, Will. But then he's always off running errands for Deb's husband." She gleefully grinned at the Sheriff. "Deb's husband is an 'artiste', you know."

"Oh my God! Oh my God! She's coming! Run for your lives!"

Both turned to see Mr. Drucker running hell-bent for leather down the middle of the street, passing the Lewis sisters' float. The women genially waved at him then broke into peals of laughter.

"Who's coming?" the Sheriff called out.

"Her! Nancy Lewis! The Black Widow of Bunnell Run!" Mr. Drucker screamed over his shoulder.

Most men in the crowd followed Mr. Ducker's example and ran hell-bent for leather away from the parade route.

"Who?" The Sheriff curiously asked.

"Most married woman in the County," the woman chuckled. "You should note that every man who ran is unmarried." She gave him a crooked grin. "Like you." She saw the Sheriff's eyes begin to glaze over and laughed as she walked away. "Told you that you should've let poor Ricky Tidwell's mother alone. The Sisterhood takes care of its own."

"So you're the new Sheriff," the Black Widow cooed. "My, you have remarkable musculature for one so young."

Autumn 1908 Results

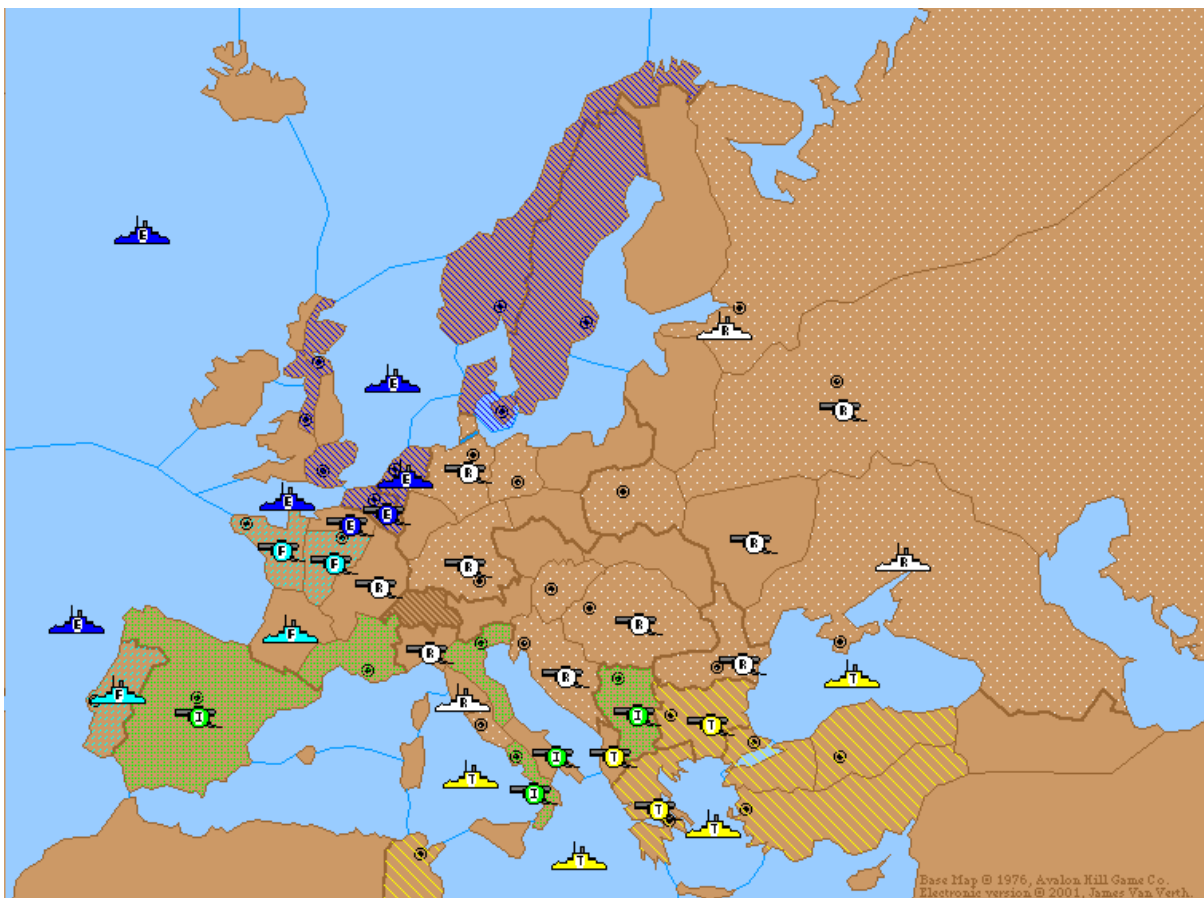
England: Has A Belgium, F English Channel, F Holland, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F North Atlantic Ocean, F North Sea, A Picardy.

France: Has A Brest, F Gascony, A Paris, F Portugal.

Italy: Has A Apulia, A Naples, A Serbia, A Spain.

Russia: Has A Budapest, A Burgundy, A Kiel, A Moscow, A Munich, A Piedmont, A Rumania, F Sevastopol, F St Petersburg(sc), A Trieste, F Tuscany, A Ukraine.

Turkey: Retreat F Naples - Ionian Sea...Has F Aegean Sea, A Albania, F Black Sea, A Bulgaria, A Greece, F Ionian Sea, F Tyrrhenian Sea.



I'm beginning to wonder if there is only one possible way this will end.

Supply Center Chart

England: Belgium, Denmark, Edinburgh, Holland, Liverpool, London, Norway, Sweden=8, Build 1
 France: Brest, Paris, Portugal=3, Remove 1
 Italy: Marseilles, Naples, Serbia, Spain, Venice=5, Build 1
 Russia: Berlin, Budapest, Kiel, Moscow, Munich, Rome, Rumania, Sevastopol, St Petersburg, Trieste, Vienna, Warsaw=12, Even
 Turkey: Ankara, Bulgaria, Constantinople, Greece, Smyrna, Tunis=6, Remove 1

PRESS

Free Swiss: Duckworth, Congrats on snatching a 3-way draw from the jaws of victory!

Fall and Autumn 1908 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

The turn is a disaster for Turkey and things look more and more like a certain type of result is nearly inevitable. Is it interfering with the play of the game to point out an obvious danger? Well, it's a demo game, so kibbitzing is part of the format.

After I sent my Spring commentary, I noticed that Italy and Russia had set up a possible build for Italy. I didn't mention it, but it's come to fruition.

Italy owns 5 SCs and has four forces. I would not be surprised to see a fleet build in Venice.

Turkey had a guessing game with respect to Naples. Since there was no way to cut the support of A Apu, it seemed likely that we'd see A Apu S A Rom - Nap, combined with F Tus - TyS to cut support. Turkey had no way to stop such an attack, but he could have ordered TyS - Rom to take Rome to compensate for the loss of Naples. And if he'd wanted to keep the Russians out of TyS, he could have ordered Nap - TyS.

Of course, this strategy could have been countered by Russia ordering Tus - Rom. But it seems like Turkey spent more effort on trying to cut a deal with Russia than

on viewing Russia/Italy as bound together and trying to figure the best tactics.

France is also collapsing. It seems like England is playing with a hope that Italy will not let Russia solo. I don't know if that's true, nor do I know if it's the most important thing. What would happen, say, if Turkey disbanded his fleet in the Black Sea? That front would collapse rapidly and I'm not sure Russia could be stopped at that point.

If Melinda wants Don to solo, he's going to solo. That bridge has been crossed and there's no going back.

FALL
back to country by country....

England: Nothing moves, and nothing was going to move. These moves by Bill Quinn were easily countered by David Hood. Arranged bounce over Denmark, so what? Bill really should be doing **SOMETHING** by now. And failing that, the others needed to band together, but.... England supports Melinda, and rather than spurning the ER, she takes the support, gets Spain, and we raise the IRE of all right thinking Diplomacyites everywhere. Is Don going to be the proof of the Edi Birsan dictum on how to solo in Diplomacy games??

France: David didn't have any great choices, and might have TRIED to convince Melinda to choose Gary and leave him alone, but it didn't happen, Spain falls and next game year France is out unless something changes. Disappointing? Perhaps, but good play creates IRE all the time.

Italy: As noted last season, Melinda remains the linchpin of the game, and she chooses the Italian Don, Mafiosi again, in the hookup between the Russian mob and the Mafia. Looks bad for the good guys. While they could have tried to give Melinda back all her home centers this turn, instead they went for the guaranteed success against Naples and

leave Rome for now in Russian hands. Melinda gets a build in Venice, and one believes it will be a fleet to press the attack on Gary.

Russia: The puppet master continues his glorious show. He only has 12 centers and stays even for now, but the tortoiselike nature of the advance is nearly always best for ultimate Russian victory. And Don still leads the board without any enemies who can hurt him. That bodes well for the next year when Turkey has a tough choice about what to remove and France will be out of the game.

Turkey: The diplomatic front is what is important here. One wonders how hard Gary Behnen is pressing Melinda, but the key is what we see on the board. Failure. Gary does the active retreat from Rumania to avoid an annihilation. There remains a fleet dance in the Black Sea, now Don can guess with Gary about Armenia and Black Sea since Gary didn't convoy back over to Armenia. Eventually, Gary loses this and Russia continues the advance.

Press: Presumably that is really Bill Quinn speaking from London. Don is rather far from the solo, I read the subtext as "I finally will gain next year and don't count me out". We'll see. Presumably also, our loyal Faz continues the Mountaintop series with a widow themed play on how the Melinda really controls the game? I don't know, you guys tell me what it means....

AUTUMN
Gary retreats to the Ionian to keep the guessing open on what he removes. England gets one build, Melinda presumably builds the fleet to continue the slavish commitment to the Russians and a Free Swiss wag tries to imply that Don is now somehow going for a three way by not CHARGING to a solo. I remind everyone again to read Edi Birsan on this subject. I'd cast bets that Don himself wrote the Free Swiss press, and he's still on the clear path to the granted solo.

FALL 1908

As they watched the alien ships approach the Tardis Lieutenant R'lok's tentacles flew over his console as he redirected the mines, being careful to retain their spiral pattern. One of the alien craft exploded almost immediately and the whole of the ship's company cheered. General U'til lay a tentacle on his Weapons Officer's shoulder. "Good work R'lok", he murmured.

"Thank you Sir," the young officer replied as he continued to redirect the remaining mines. There

were more explosions and the second alien ship slowed and then halted, not totally destroyed but with debris all around it and clearly disabled. The ship's company cheered again. The old General felt another surge of pride at the abilities of his young crew. If they did eventually get back to Homeworld his report would be the most praiseworthy that had ever been written.

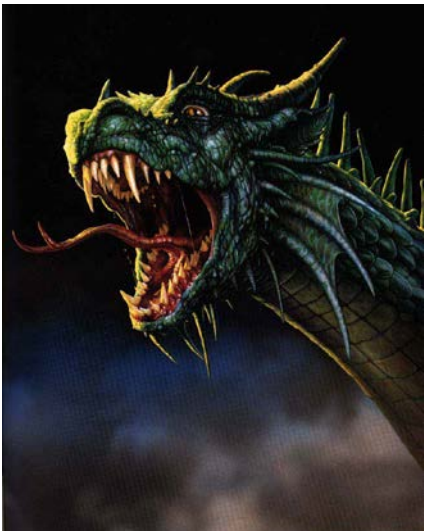
But although halted and disabled the second ship was not destroyed. As they watched they saw a dark object leave the vessel and move towards the Tardis.

The three companions on board the Doctor's craft saw it too. Brooklyn looked at the Time Lord. "What is it Doctor?" he whispered.

"I don't know," he replied, laying a hand on the young boy's shoulder. "But we are dealing with magical creatures here so we must be very careful."

Then there was a crash as the dark object, whatever it was, hit the side of the Tardis. The Doctor rushed to his console, desperately trying to discover what was happening. Merlin raised his arms and began muttering an incantation. Brooklyn stood near the open doorway, holding Excalibur in front of him and looking scared.

And then it appeared. A hideous looking creature peering through the open doorway, its mouth open wide showing rows of long sharp teeth and a wicked looking tongue flickering as it growled deeply.



Merlin took a step back with a look of horror on his face. "It's a dragon Doctor," he cried. "and the biggest I've ever seen. Brooklyn, get away from it!"

The Time Lord was furiously hitting buttons on his console, trying to get rid of the hideous creature but to no avail.

Then the eleven year old rushed forward with a strangled cry. "No, go away, we hate you, we hate you!"

"Brooklyn, no!" cried Merlin.

But the young boy wasn't listening. He rushed at the creature brandishing Excalibur and swung the mighty sword at it. There was a sickening thud as the magical weapon sank into the dragon's neck, then an ear-piercing cry as it's head was severed and it fell away into the cold vacuum of space.

Brooklyn just stood there, breathing deeply as he watched the remains of the dragon slowly drift away. Then he turned and looked at the old magician. "Please Merlin," he said quietly, "please nothing more scary than that."

Merlin pulled him to his chest and hugged him tightly. "No Brooklyn," he said, "nothing more scary than that." Then he looked across at The Doctor. "You see Doctor, I told you our sword-bearer was well chosen."

The Time Lord smiled and nodded his head. Aboard the 'Further Glory' the entire crew, including the old General, were shouting and cheering and wrapping tentacles in the sign of Ultimate Honour. General U'til waited for the noise to subside before he spoke. "Gentlemen, we have witnessed a great victory, but the war is not yet won. Let us continue our mission to analyse the war in Europe as our friends attempt to seal the rift. Hail Fndili!"

"Hail Fndili!" came the reply, with even greater strength than before.

"England and Italy are now clearly in alliance against France. And Italy has done some clever negotiating to achieve this as a year ago it was on the brink of total defeat. Now it seems that France may be the next Power to fall."

"In Scandinavia England and Russia still maintain their pact with the whole area now devoid of any military units. In the centre of the continent Russia is still allied with Italy - another example of Italy's negotiating skills and Russia's common sense approach

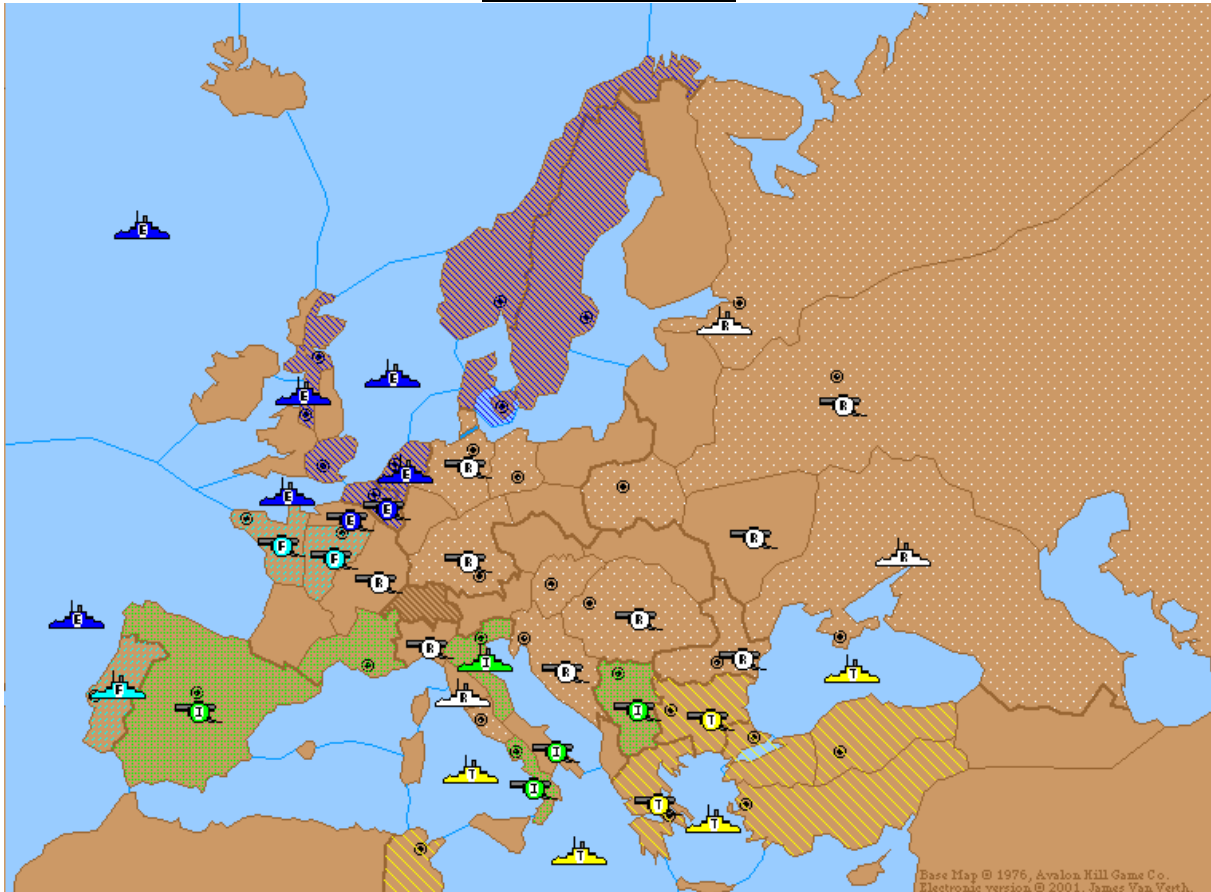
of making allies of smaller powers in support of the campaign against Turkey."

"But in the south the expected Russia/Turkey conflict has now begun, and with France being forced back against England and Italy Turkey appears to be isolated. Russia is now clearly the dominant Power and

I don't see this war lasting too much longer. As usual I require your reports by midday tomorrow ship's time. Hail Fndili!"

The Doctor moved the Tardis up to the entrance to the rift...

Winter 1908 Results



Next deadline an extra week late, as the Duck is busy arguing about rabbit season vs. duck season.

England: Build F Liverpool...Has A Belgium, F English Channel, F Holland, F Liverpool, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F North Atlantic Ocean, F North Sea, A Picardy.

France: Remove F Gascony...Has A Brest, A Paris, F Portugal.

Italy: Build F Venice...Has A Apulia, A Naples, A Serbia, A Spain, F Venice.

Russia: Has A Budapest, A Burgundy, A Kiel, A Moscow, A Munich, A Piedmont, A Rumania, F Sevastopol, F St Petersburg(sc), A Trieste, F Tuscany, A Ukraine.

Turkey: Remove A Albania...Has F Aegean Sea, F Black Sea, A Bulgaria, A Greece, F Ionian Sea, F Tyrrhenian Sea.

PRESS

DUCKWORTH to BEHNEN: Kiss my tail feathers, sourpuss! Your so called "plan", snatching dots from everyone but you, would have solidified the very thing you've been trying – rather transparently I might add – to accomplish since you got in here. Grab dots, get to fifteen and then ... stall between a pincer E/T? I'll do things my way, thank you very much; I do, believe it or not, know how to play this game. Things would be

different between Russia and Turkey if you were a different player, but what is, is.

RUSSIA to DOUG and ROTARY PLAYERS: Thanks for the indulgence of a (possible) minor game delay after Winter 1908. I will try to stay in touch while away but just in case I can't, thanks for your patience.

Winter 1908 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

Press First: This is one of Don's clearest Press Items, I would caution that it is possible he is beginning to overplay his very good hand. While everyone has decided for the moment to keep doing what they are doing, the worm can turn at any time. There is no reason to expect it will, but it could. Playing Russia slow and patient is one of the most effective ways to win as that country. The message that Don sends would be very real if he actually lashed out at everyone else. Still, he protesteth just a bit too much. Gary knows the people here, as mentioned previously he's always been one of Melinda's closest hobby friends, but still it is tough for him to walk in and make something of this Turkish position. So far, it looks bad, if Don's characterization is correct. I'm sure it only his partly correct, but it reflects the effect on Don. In any case, I wish we knew what Gary's comments to Melinda looked like, that's a tougher one to take.

England: The Fleet Liverpool ensures that the push south into the Mediterranean can continue, while still taking out France along the way. No one threatens Bill's position, but the question remains how compliant the Brits will continue to be toward Russia. In any case, no possible sign other than compliance is possible from that build.

France: David has fought a good tactical battle, but it appears to be over now. Since the main position is lost anyway, and Iberia is the only possible hangout for France to await an impact on the endgame, I probably would have kept the Fleet Gascony and tried to get into Spain. But no removal was a good removal in this position. It is highly likely that this is

France's last game year.

Italy: Melinda stuck with the plan, she built the fleet Venice. There are some very slightly tricky negotiations about who gets which center next. Does Don take Marseilles? Does Melinda get back her other home center? Perhaps not right away. Italy still doesn't have enough fleets to really push Turkey back, she awaits the arrival of English fleets from the west.

Russia: Don continues to play the board like a fiddle, and faces the guessing game over Black Sea and Armenia to slow the advance on the Turkish homeland. But he cannot be outguessed forever. Eventually Russia forces it. I would advocate F Sev-Bla at least once or twice, since getting in there moves you faster. Armenia just sets up the next guess over Ankara. But even if he does move to Armenia, then that gets Ankara faster which is the first center. I don't think Gary can count on any particular move.

Turkey: Gary chooses to remove the right unit, I think, since Albania was never going to gain anything without Melinda's active help. We are headed toward three remaining powers though, and Turkey isn't one of them. That can still change, but Melinda likely is the mind Gary has to work on. Turkey could have forced the issue by a removal "abandoning the homeland", but that extreme choice probably was not going to work, so he might as well do this. As noted above, he can defend for a long time, especially if he guesses right for a while.

WINTER 1908

As the Time Lord's machine approached they could see the rift in more detail, a great gash in the fabric of space with strange twinkling lights inside.

The Doctor brought the Tardis even closer as Merlin looked at Brooklyn and smiled. "Are you ready boy?" he asked quietly, "for this is the fulfilment of your destiny."

The eleven year old took a deep breath and managed a small smile in return. He held Excaliber in front of

him. "I'm ready Merlin," he replied. "I'm ready to save the galaxy."



The old magician placed a hand on the young boy's shoulder. "Hold the sword steady Brooklyn," he said, "make sure you keep it pointed at the rift while I once again use the spell of Making."

The young boy shook slightly as he realised how important this was, but held the sword steady as Merlin began his incantation. "Anál nathrach, orth'bháis's bethad, do chel denmha." Brooklyn watched with eyes wide, but nothing seemed to happen. Then Merlin repeated the incantation. "Anál nathrach, orth'bháis's bethad, do chel denmha."

As Brooklyn watched a faint mist issued from the tip of the sword and started slowly drifting towards the rift. The old magician repeated his spell in a louder voice: "**Anál nathrach, orth'bháis's bethad, do chel denmha.**"

The eleven year gasped as he saw the mist thicken but Merlin held his shoulders and he kept Excaliber steady. The thickening mist had now reached the rift and started to spread out all over it.

Aboard the 'Further Glory' all the crew, including General U'til, were holding their breath as they gazed at the scene on the viewscreens.

The mist thickened further, turning into a dark black cloud covering the whole of the rift. Brooklyn, Merlin and the Doctor, and all aboard the 'Further Glory', watched closely as the mist darkened even more. Then there was a flash - and it was gone! The rift was sealed.

Brooklyn fell back into Merlin's arms and dropped the sword. He looked up at him. "Did I do it Merlin," he asked, "did I really do it?"

Merlin smiled down at him. "That you did my boy," he replied, "that you did, and there is nobody that could have done it better."

Aboard the 'Further Glory' there was pandemonium as all the crew shouted and cheered, entwining all upper tentacles in the sign of Ultimate Honour.

General U'til waited a few minutes and then signalled for quiet. The noise eventually died away. "This has indeed been a great victory. The Earth, the Fndili and indeed the whole galaxy has been saved by a young boy, an old magician and a magic sword. I confess I did not think it possible and I am delighted to admit I was wrong."

Then he paused and looked at the trainees. "But this mission must continue and while The Doctor is returning to the 'Further Glory' we need to conduct our next review of the war in Europe. Hail Fndili."

"Hail Fndili," came the reply, with even more strength than before.

The old soldier smiled, feeling as much relief as his young charges. "The alliance between Russia and England clearly continues to be strong, as does that between Russia and Italy, at least for the moment. France continues to be pushed back and is now looking very shaky. As for Turkey they are clearly building defences against the expected Russian attack but for the moment those defences look solid. But if Russia continues to support Italy I suspect those defences can be breached. As usual gentlemen, I require your observations by midday tomorrow. Hail Fndili."

He turned and left the meeting room, eager to greet The Doctor and his companions on their return.

Spring 1909 Results

England: A Belgium – Burgundy, F English Channel Supports F North Atlantic Ocean – Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F Holland - North Sea, F Liverpool - North Atlantic Ocean, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - North Africa, F North Atlantic Ocean - Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F North Sea – Skagerrak, ~~A Picardy Supports A Belgium – Burgundy~~ (*Dislodged*, retreat to Belgium or OTB).

France: A Brest Supports A Paris – Picardy, A Paris – Picardy, F Portugal - Mid-Atlantic Ocean (*Fails*).

Italy: A Apulia Supports A Naples, A Naples Supports A Apulia, ~~A Serbia Supports A Trieste – Albania~~ (*Disbanded*), A Spain Supports F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - Spain(sc) (*Fails*), F Venice - Adriatic Sea.

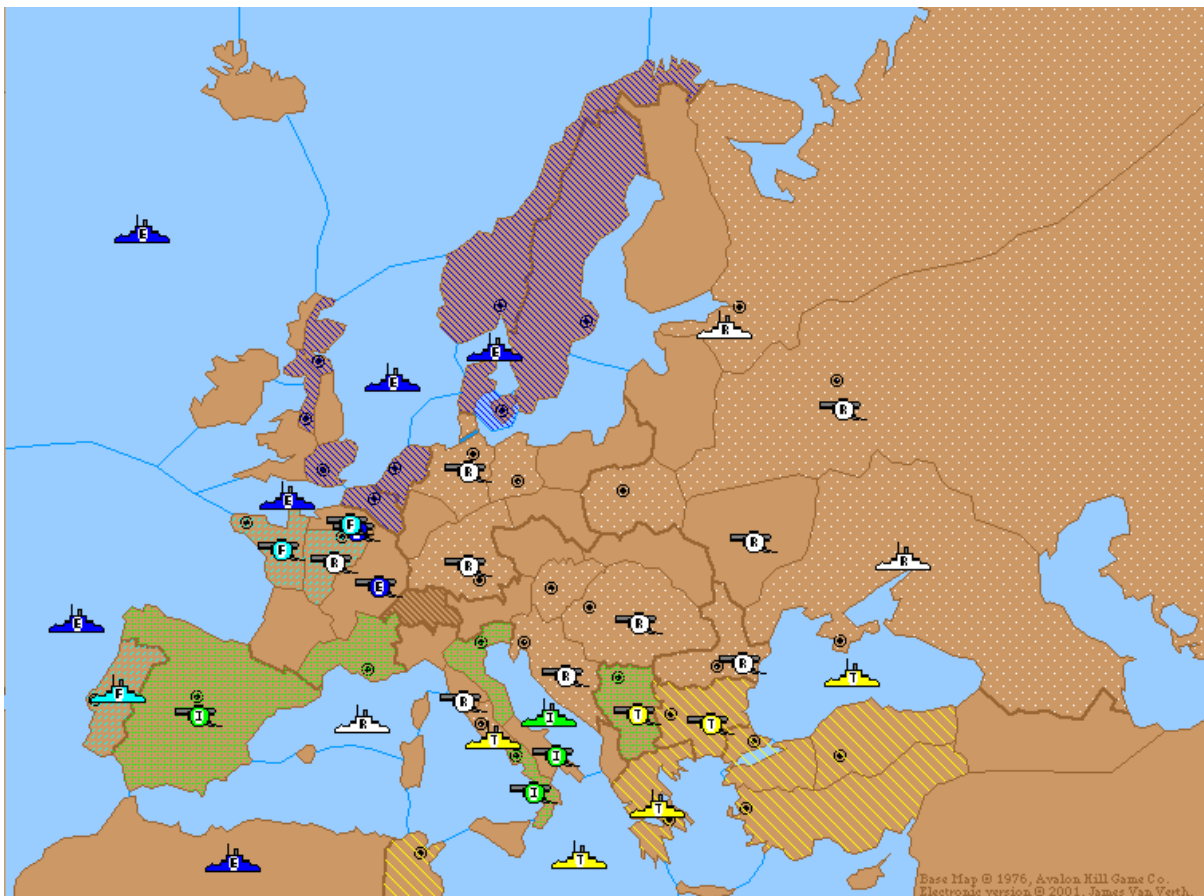
Russia: A Budapest Supports A Rumania, A Burgundy – Paris, A Kiel - Ruhr (*Bounce*),

A Moscow - Sevastopol (*Fails*), A Munich - Ruhr (*Bounce*), A Piedmont – Tuscany,

A Rumania Supports A Serbia (*Cut*), F Sevastopol - Black Sea (*Fails*), F St Petersburg(sc) Hold,

A Trieste - Albania (*Bounce*), F Tuscany - Gulf of Lyon, A Ukraine Supports A Rumania.

Turkey: F Aegean Sea – Greece, F Black Sea - Rumania (*Fails*), A Bulgaria Supports A Greece – Serbia, A Greece – Serbia, F Ionian Sea - Albania (*Bounce*), F Tyrrhenian Sea - Rome.



No press, but some pressing on the map.

Summer 1909 Results

England: Retreat A Picardy - Belgium.. Has A Belgium, A Burgundy, F English Channel, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F North Atlantic Ocean, F North Africa, F North Sea, F Skagerrak.

France: Has A Brest, A Picardy, F Portugal.

Italy: Has F Adriatic Sea, A Apulia, A Naples, A Spain.

Russia: A Budapest, F Gulf of Lyon, A Kiel, A Moscow, A Munich, A Paris, A Rumania, F Sevastopol, F St Petersburg(sc), A Trieste, A Tuscany, A Ukraine.

Turkey: Has F Black Sea, A Bulgaria, F Greece, F Ionian Sea, F Rome, A Serbia.

Spring/Summer 1909 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

General comment: Other than the fact that nothing is different and nothing changed, England continues to get outmaneuvered, likely on purpose, by Russia. The retreat from Picardy means that Russia will get a strong French position when, as is likely, David Hood is added to the elimination list. There really isn't anything else to say, but let me say a few things.

Press: I'd love to start here, but there's nothing to say, since nothing was said.

England: Moving to Skagerrak and out of Holland COULD be engaging with a plan eventually to jump Russia, or leaving Holland open for a stab may merely be ill-advised. Without seeing the

negotiations, it is difficult to say, but it looks like Russia fooled England into getting knocked back to Belgium. Yet another example of this, Bill Quinn needs to get some kind of game going.

France: David Hood is making wise defense choices, but as no chance as the game currently is constituted. That's it.

Italy: Russia may be giving Italy's home centers back to her, but hey, now she left the whole Balkan battle to the Russians. This was tactically avoidable, so again, I think Russia outmaneuvered his allies.

Russia: If music be the food of love, play on. What else am I supposed to say. Paris is his,

Turkey: This is the diplomatic problem that lies at the heart of the problems here. Turkey loses more ground and expects to lose more this fall.

Let's see...the diplomatic situation is basically unchanged, so all that's going on here is the dismantling of France and Turkey.

Well, by "all" I mean "mostly".

Russia is in Paris and presuming that England cuts support in Picardy while attacking Brest, Russia should stay in Paris.

I have no idea why England thinks this is a good idea. England has still gotten far less from going after France in several years than he would have gotten in one year from going after Russia. If he's not going to try to solo (which, whether he realizes it or not, is the state of affairs) then he may as well try to get more dots.

I suspect France will only have Portugal left. It's possible for him to lose both Brest and Portugal, but a half-decent defense of Brest would force England to use F MAO up there.

As for Turkey, he's popped the Italian A Ser, but it's not like he can hold Ser. Still, forcing Russia to retake Serbia means that he won't be able to press on Gre or Bul quite yet. Russia has to worry about losing Rum, but if he hits Bla while forcing Ser, then Turkey can only take Rum from Bla, and really, that would be a poor trade.

The Turkish F Rome is in danger of being sunk, esp. if Turkey takes the trouble to defend Tunis. If Italy takes Rome from Russia by dislodging the Turk, she can build yet another F Ven. I suspect that will happen.

SPRING 1909

Aboard the Tardis all three companions shouted, cheered and hugged each other. Young Brooklyn was almost crying as the significance of what they had done began to sink in.

"Yeah," the young boy shouted as he punched the air, "we did it guys, we saved the whole galaxy!"

Merlin and the Doctor were both smiling and laughing. "That we did boy," said the old magician, "that we did." He looked across at the Time Lord. "It was a good plan Doctor," he said quietly, "as I knew it would be."

The Doctor smiled and nodded. "Well, it was probably the only option actually. But now I think we should get back to the Fndili ship, I guess they are quite pleased too." He moved to the console and pressed buttons on the keyboard.

Aboard the 'Further Glory' it was still a scene of utter pandemonium as the whole crew celebrated what had been achieved. The old General waited

patiently until the noise subsided. Then he smiled. "Hail Fndili."

"HAIL FNDILI, HAIL BROOKLYN!" came the reply.

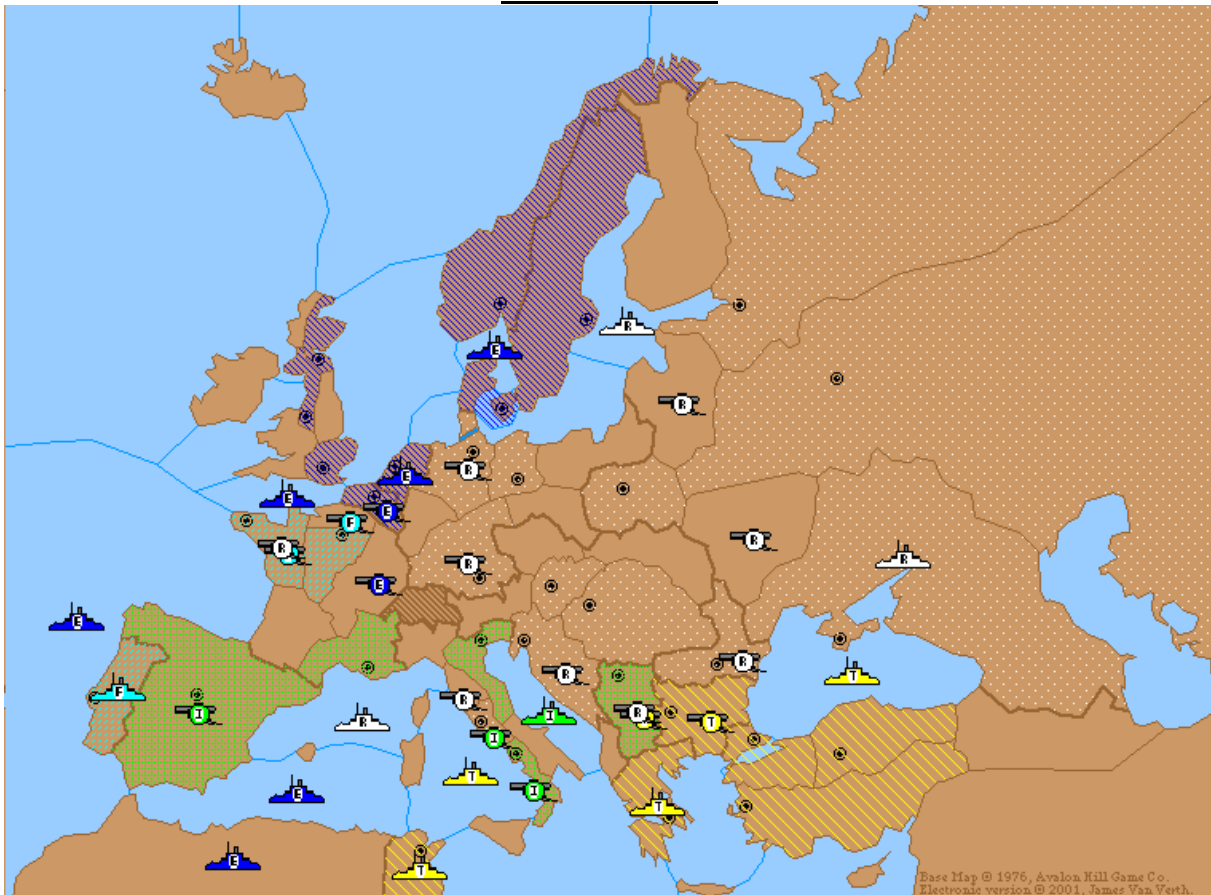
General U'til smiled again. "Yes gentlemen it was indeed a stupendous victory and the whole galaxy, not least the Fndili, will forever be in their debt, and in particular to that young boy." Then he paused as he collected his thoughts. "But the training mission must continue so let us again review the situation in Europe."

"Clearly the England/Russia alliance is still holding and with very little sign of mistrust by either nation. France is being pushed back further and is in dire need of help from somewhere - but where? Italy also seems to be in trouble again and needs help from either Turkey or Russia - but will it get it? Russia is clearly preparing for the next push forward and with the alliance with England still holding the targets can only be Italy or Turkey. Turkey itself is, for now, holding its position against Russia and, if it is to expand, then the only possible target is Italy. As

usual gentlemen, your reports and observations please by midday tomorrow. Hail Fndili."

He turned and left the meeting room, eager to greet The Doctor and his companions on their return.

Fall 1909 Results



Reports of the Demise of the French Were Premature

England: A Belgium - Picardy (*Fails*), A Burgundy - Paris (*Bounce*),
F English Channel Supports A Paris – Brest, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - Western Mediterranean,
F North Atlantic Ocean - Mid-Atlantic Ocean,
F North Africa Supports F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - Western Mediterranean, F North Sea – Holland,
F Skagerrak - Denmark (*Bounce*).

France: A Brest Supports A Picardy – Paris (*Dislodged*, retreat to Gascony or OTB),
A Picardy - Paris (*Bounce*), F Portugal - Spain(sc) (*Fails*).

Italy: F Adriatic Sea - Ionian Sea (*Bounce*), A Apulia – Rome, A Naples Supports A Apulia – Rome,
A Spain - Marseilles (*Bounce*).

Russia: A Budapest – Serbia, F Gulf of Lyon - Marseilles (*Bounce*), A Kiel - Denmark (*Bounce*),
A Moscow – Livonia, A Munich - Burgundy (*Fails*), A Paris – Brest,
A Rumania Supports A Budapest – Serbia, F Sevastopol - Black Sea (*Fails*),
F St Petersburg(sc) - Gulf of Bothnia, A Trieste Supports A Budapest – Serbia,
A Tuscany Supports A Apulia - Naples (*Fails*), A Ukraine Supports A Rumania.

Turkey: F Black Sea Supports A Serbia - Rumania (*Cut*), A Bulgaria Supports A Serbia – Rumania,
F Greece - Ionian Sea (*Bounce*), F Ionian Sea – Tunis, F Rome - Tyrrhenian Sea,
A Serbia – Rumania (*Dislodged*, retreat to Albania or OTB).

PRESS

London - Ankara: See, all worried about Tunis for nothing.

What can I get you today?"

(Somewhere on a foggy mountaintop) - "Morning!

The woman scowled at the store owner. "Chocolate. Lots of it, Mr. Drucker. I'm having a bad day."

"What seems to be the problem?" Mr. Drucker asked as he opened the bin with the milk chocolate stars.

"Dark chocolate Hershey minis," the woman ordered. "And use the big scoop." She sighed. "The last episode of Law and Order: Criminal Intent just aired. No more Goren and Eames. Best damn cop show on TV and they cancel it!"

Mr. Drucker clucked as he filled an empty five-pound sugar bag with dark chocolate Hershey mini-bars. "Oh well, there'll be something else." He ignored the woman's rolling of her eyes.

"So where's the Sheriff?" the woman asked. "Haven't seen him around since the Parade."

Mr. Drucker leaned forward and whispered. "Nobody's seen him since the Black Widow of Bunnell Run took a hold of his arm and led him off down the street."

The woman slowly smiled. "You know, Mr. Drucker, my day suddenly got better. Give me a pound of those sugar-coated orange candies."

Mr. Drucker frowned. "That's an awful lot of sugar," he pointed out.

The woman winked. "I think I'm gonna need the energy."

People walking past the general store were startled at the sound of laughter from inside the store.

Autumn 1909 Results

England: Has A Belgium, A Burgundy, F English Channel, F Holland, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F North Africa, F Skagerrak, F Western Mediterranean.

France: Retreat A Brest - Gascony.. Has A Gascony, A Picardy, F Portugal.

Italy: Has F Adriatic Sea, A Naples, A Rome, A Spain.

Russia: Has A Brest, F Gulf of Lyon, F Gulf of Bothnia, A Kiel, A Livonia, A Munich, A Rumania, A Serbia, F Sevastopol, A Trieste, A Tuscany, A Ukraine.

Turkey: Disband A Serbia..Has F Black Sea, A Bulgaria, F Greece, F Tunis, F Tyrrhenian Sea.

Supply Center Chart

England:	Belgium, Denmark, Edinburgh, Holland, Liverpool, London, Norway, Sweden=8, Even
France:	Paris, Portugal=2, Remove 1
Italy:	Marseilles, Naples, Rome, Spain, Venice=5, Build 1
Russia:	Berlin, Brest, Budapest, Kiel, Moscow, Munich, Rumania, Serbia, Sevastopol, St Petersburg, Trieste, Vienna, Warsaw=13, Build 1
Turkey:	Ankara, Bulgaria, Constantinople, Greece, Smyrna, Tunis=6, Build 1

PRESS

Ankara - London: Never did fear anything, especially since you never sent an e-mail. BTW, did you expect Russia to contest W,Med, if not, why the support? Did Don and Melinda just ask you to stay out of French centers?

Ankara - Rome: Who is running that show, you or Don? (support A Apu-Nap? I don't care who you are, now that's funny!)

Fall/Autumn 1909 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

Well that was interesting.

You know, it actually was kind of interesting.

England continues to honor his pledge to never take any French centers. I guess it was more important to have North Africa than Brest. For some reason that escapes me...

Now, of course SOMETIMES it is a good idea to "reach out" as far as you can as fast as you can, knowing centers (like Brest) always can be picked up later. Maybe the idea is that England is supposed to take the Turkish home centers? But here, it was clear that Don did the "I'm soloing and going to take the sure things, you take the risks" thing. It was

pretty obvious that move on Paris was at best a 50-50, and probably far, far less than that, maybe 5-95? It still does need to be said though, Russia can't hold Brest in the long run without English support.

Russia is in Brest and that doesn't make much sense. We did see a little bit of coordinate between France and Italy to keep Russia from taking either Spain or Marseilles. Of course, that might have just been luck. Or maybe Russia and Italy were protecting Marseilles from the English?

I think Russia was "engineering bounces" so he could lock down units and determine optimum play for other units. Most players underuse the tactic of the arranged bounce. If you arrange a bounce where you know "player X" cannot afford to let you get into the province you're bouncing over, YOU know where he's moving. You can then start to figure out more of what the board is doing. It also lulls allies to sleep as you set up stabs against them.

I'm going to assume Italy, at least, is still working with Russia. If Don had wanted to stab, the thing to do was to take Venice, not to write a useless and irrelevant void support. The builds should tell us more. If Russia builds F StP(nc) and Italy builds F Ven, then I think they're on track.

That poor English fleet in Skag is overtaken if Russia builds in StP.

That's right, we're about to find out as "one decision point" if Russia is going to push immediately for the

win or not. I actually think perhaps not, as long as the board is wrapped around Don's little finger, why not keep it there awhile longer.

I continue to be stunned that France still has 2 SCs. Pic - Par was his obvious defense. (It was his only defense.) And it was easily foiled.

But not if the play was to deny England that build. It doesn't REALLY matter that France gets to keep two units for the moment. Do you really think England gets even one of the centers? Well, probably one.

I really wish we'd seen something like England not helping Russia into Brest. France would have avoided losing a force. That would have been neat.

Agreed, but that's not what was going on.

PRESS: We have what presumably is still Mark Fassio writing a triple and quadruple entendre continuation of the Mr. Drucker/mountaintop series of press releases. Great stuff in here, really great stuff. Then we have the briefest of exchanges between the witches, ending with some deep sarcasm from Gary Behnen. Everyone is just letting Don manipulate the game away.

I think I'm betting we don't see F St.Pete (NC), and see a continuation of the tortoise attack, but I won't be completely surprised if Don just goes for it now. I think he's trying to show us how this kind of solo can be forged, so that's why I think he just keeps grinding away.

FALL 1909

The Tardis returned to the 'Further Glory' and reappeared in the cargo bay. The three companions walked out of the machine to find General U'til waiting for them, with all tentacles entwined in the sign of Stupendous Victory. He rushed towards them and embraced them all. The Doctor and his two human comrades hugged him back and laughed.

"Doctor," said the old soldier, "that was indeed a wonderful victory. I admit I had my doubts but, as usual, you were proved correct." Then he turned to Brooklyn. "And you, young man, have the thanks of the Fndili Empire and the entire galaxy for what you have done." Brooklyn was smiling so much it looked as though his face would split. Then Merlin gave a little cough.

The General twisted three tentacles in the sign of Deep Apology. "Merlin," he said, "I apologise. Without your spell this would never have been achieved. We are of course as much in your debt as we are with Brooklyn, and indeed The Doctor."

The old magician just smiled. "No General," he replied, "it was indeed a team effort but the greatest praise should rightly go to the boy." He tousled Brooklyn's hair and patted him on the back. "He really did do very well." The eleven year old looked up at him and smiled again.

General U'til stepped back. "But now I must give my next briefing. Please accompany me to the briefing room and, after the next time jump, we have a very special ceremony planned." The three companions exchanged glances as they followed him.

All four entered the briefing room to find it in uproar. All the trainees had all tentacles entwined in the sign of Stupendous Victory and all were shouting as loud as they could. "HAIL BROOKLYN, HAIL MERLIN, HAIL THE DOCTOR!" The three companions all looked a little embarrassed as they smiled, bowed and waved.

General U'til waited for the noise to die down before he spoke. "Hail Fndili."

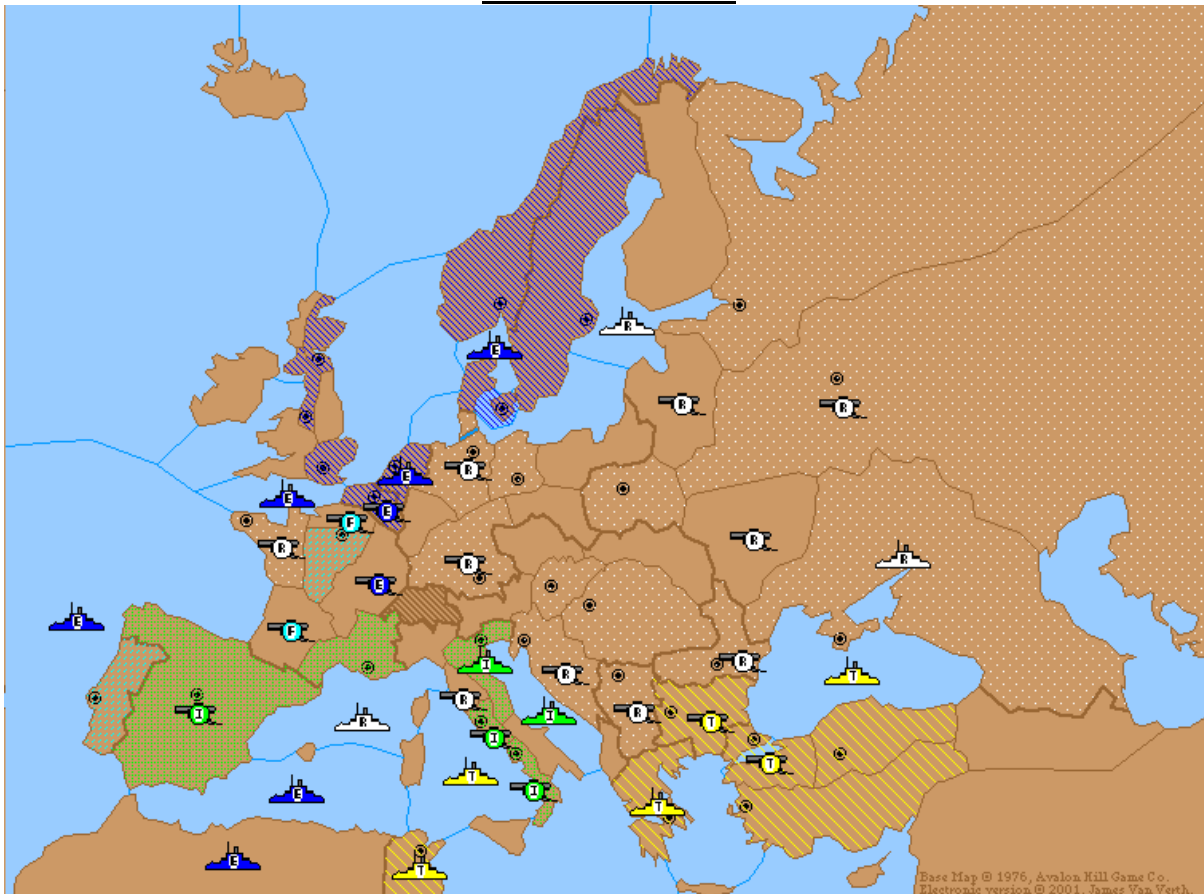
"HAIL FNDILI" came the reply, loud enough to cause some of the ships panels to reverberate.

The old soldier smiled. "Gentlemen, that is indeed an honourable response and well deserved by our

friends. But this is still a training mission and we need to conduct the next phase. I will give my summary, we will make the next time jump, and then we have a very special ceremony to conduct." The room quietened.

"England is still advancing against France and the alliance with Russia is clearly still in place. Russia however is moving ever further westward and I wonder what that means for both Italy and France? But at the moment Italy seems to be maintaining at least some territory, but probably needs Turkish help to continue to survive. As for Turkey it seems to be going nowhere, although the defences against Russia appear to be strong. As usual gentlemen, your comments by midday ships time tomorrow. Hail Fndili."

Winter 1909 Results



Get busy living, or get busy dying...

England: Has A Belgium, A Burgundy, F English Channel, F Holland, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F North Africa, F Skagerrak, F Western Mediterranean.

France: Remove F Portugal..Has A Gascony, A Picardy.

Italy: Build F Venice..Has F Adriatic Sea, A Naples, A Rome, A Spain, F Venice.

Russia: Build A Moscow..Has A Brest, F Gulf of Lyon, F Gulf of Bothnia, A Kiel, A Livonia,

A Moscow, A Munich, A Rumania, A Serbia, F Sevastopol, A Trieste, A Tuscany, A Ukraine.
Turkey: Build A Constantinople..Has F Black Sea, A Bulgaria, A Constantinople, F Greece, F Tunis, F Tyrrhenian Sea.

PRESS

Vinny to Don: What in the world are you waiting for? The entire world of Dipdom knows you have a solo. Just take it.

Winter 1909 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

General Comment: So there we go, I'm not surprised. Don marches on in classic Edi Birsan "let them hand me the solo". I could see this progressing where Don doesn't actually stab either England or Italy. Let's briefly outline what has to happen for this to happen. England has 8 and Italy has 5. Russia and Don have 13. So that leaves eight centers between France and Turkey. If they split them 4-4, that's something like 17-10-7, and Don falls just short. But would we be surprised if Don got five of them? Not really, but things look difficult unless Don gets all the Turkish home centers and the Balkans. And Don may not get those centers quickly without the help of the England and Italian fleets. Doesn't this generate some interest and excitement? I hope so. But "Vinny" likely sums up the more common view you all have. Well, we shall see. A few comments on each power as we go to the next game year.

England: Bill Quinn gets no builds this year, but should at LEAST get Portugal next year. The logical moves working with Russia are to guarantee an annihilation of the A Pic this fall (using Mid-Atlantic) and then walking into Portugal in the fall while taking Paris. And both centers should be English. But in this game, will they? That's the main question. Don didn't build in St.Pete, but he still can hit Denmark and Sweden and guarantee getting one of them. England is far from safe. Yet, if he gets the two builds, then those can be used to protect Scandinavia. Not only that, but England COULD be the one to get Tunis. Dare we hope for three builds? No way, won't happen. But stay tuned to see how Don manipulates that one.

France: David Hood took his best shot, but if England and Russia and Italy keep working together, the French cannot survive. I would expect both to be hit, so an unwanted support against Marseilles

wouldn't work. Not much else to do but try to move somewhere.

Italy: Melinda got herself knocked out of the Balkans and Don is probably the one to move to Albania, so unless Melinda is stabbing, she probably just sets up (Apulia) to push into the Ionian. Then, without a shift, Turkey is on the way out. I do not expect Melinda to stab Russia.

Russia: Don keeps plugging away. It will be interesting to see if he somehow can get Paris, without giving up Brest, with just that one army (maybe also support from Munich). On the other side, Turkey decided to try to lock up Bulgaria with the Constantinople build. But I expected Gary to set up to defend Armenia. There now is a guessing game between Black Sea and the fleet Sevastopol. Eventually Turkey loses it, and then the slow slog begins.

Turkey: I'm not sure I wouldn't have thrown everything toward England/Italy start dropping centers to Russia, and seeing if that would break the diplomatic stalemate. Couldn't work any worse that what Gary's doing now.

I am not surprised that Jim was correct about the Russian build.

France should drop to 0 this year. The tactics in France are pretty simple - E, I, & R can force an army disband with the Spring move and secure Paris, Brest, and Portugal in the Fall.

Turkey should lose Tunis and probably will lose Greece. Jim has won me over to the thinking that Don will continue to focus on Turkey and France. This doesn't preclude a solo run, once the Turk is gone (or, at the very least, F Bla is gone).

WINTER 1909

The Next briefing was due and General U'til faced his trainees, with the Time Lord and his two human companions standing to one side. "Hail Fndili," he said.

"Hail Fndili," came the reply.

He smiled at his young trainees. "Gentlemen, first the briefing and then a very special ceremony - and I think some of you may have guessed what it will be."

The whole briefing room shook with the response. "HAIL BROOKLYN!" with all tentacles entwined.

The old soldier smiled. "First, Gentlemen, the briefing. With the removal of its fleet in Portugal France has clearly given up any hope of holding back the English advance. The addition of an Italian fleet in Venice suggests that there is still hope of advancement with the help of Russia or Turkey - although I suspect that Russian help is more likely. The addition of a Russian army in Moscow will certainly keep England happy, but where will it go? And then there is the raising of a Turkish army in Constantinople, a good defence against Russia and perhaps an indication that there is still some understanding between the two. I think the next season or two will give us some answers. As usual Gentlemen I would like your views by midday tomorrow, ships time. Hail Fndili."

He turned to the side and motioned to the Science Officer, Lieutenant B'des, to approach. He did so, carrying a jewel encrusted box resting on a silken cushion.

The General turned to Brooklyn and waved him forward. Both The Doctor and Merlin patted his shoulders as he slowly walked across, rather nervous and with no idea of what was about to happen.

General U'til looked down at him and smiled. Then he looked at his Science Officer. "B'des, are the viewscreens on throughout the ship?"

The Lieutenant smiled. "That they are Sir, everyone on board will see the ceremony."

He just nodded in response and then looked again at the young boy. "Brooklyn Beckham, you have saved the entire galaxy with your heroism. As a result I will award you with the highest honour of the Fndili Empire, The Orb of The Goddess."

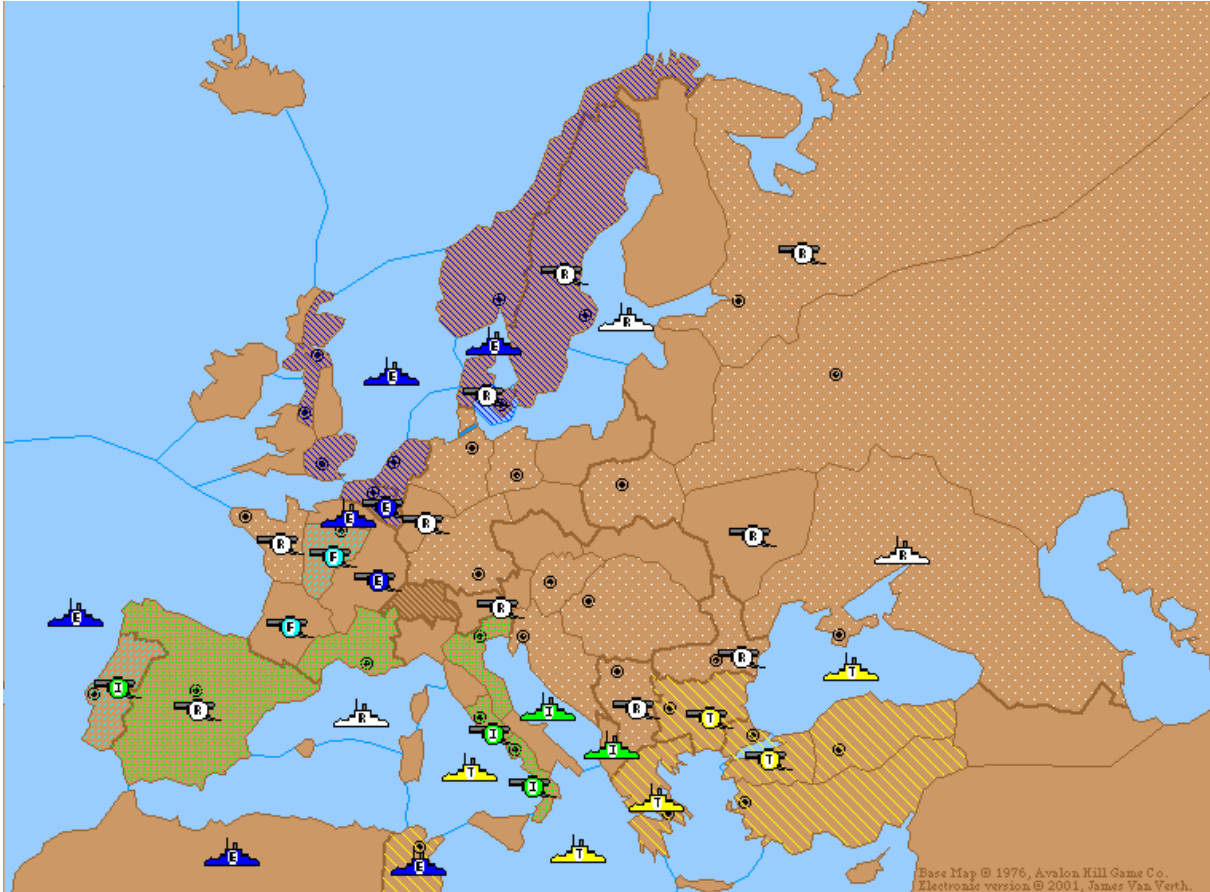
He opened the box and took out the jewel, then placed it around the eleven year old boy's neck.

The whole ship's company shouted and entwined tentacles. Merlin and The Doctor exchanged glances and smiled. Brooklyn looked rather embarrassed. "Gee, thanks General," was all he could say.

"Nobody deserves it better," replied the General. "When I return to Homeworld I will have to finally retire because no serving officer can give the award more than once. But I am delighted to have given it to you."



Spring 1910 Results



I'm hoping for some VERY detailed EOG statements when the time comes...

England: A Belgium - Burgundy (*Fails*), A Burgundy - Paris (*Fails*), F English Channel – Picardy, F Holland - North Sea, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - Gascony (*Fails*), F North Africa Supports F Western Mediterranean – Tunis, F Skagerrak Hold, F Western Mediterranean - Tunis.

France: A Gascony Supports A Tuscany - Marseilles (*Void*), A Picardy - Paris.

Italy: F Adriatic Sea – Albania, A Naples Supports A Rome, A Rome Supports A Naples, A Spain – Portugal, F Venice - Adriatic Sea.

Russia: A Brest Supports A Picardy – Paris, F Gulf of Lyon Convoys A Tuscany – Spain, F Gulf of Bothnia Convoys A Livonia – Sweden, A Kiel – Denmark, A Livonia – Sweden, A Moscow - St Petersburg, A Munich – Ruhr, A Rumania - Serbia (*Fails*),

A Serbia - Greece (*Fails*), F Sevastopol Supports A Ukraine - Rumania (*Cut*), A Trieste – Tyrolia, A Tuscany – Spain, A Ukraine - Rumania (*Fails*).

Turkey: F Black Sea - Sevastopol (*Fails*), A Bulgaria Supports F Greece, A Constantinople Supports A Bulgaria, F Greece Supports F Tunis - Ionian Sea (*Cut*), F Tunis - Ionian Sea, F Tyrrhenian Sea Supports F Tunis - Ionian Sea.

PRESS

(Somewhere on a foggy mountaintop) - The woman practically skipped down the street, singing to herself, "Sweet-talkin' people wanna run me outta town, and I got enough 'shine to float a battleship around, I'm leavin' this game one step ahead of you, You will not hear me cry 'cause I do not sing the blues. Give me back my bullets..." She suddenly stopped and stared at the man sitting in a chair in front of the Sheriff's office. She took in his wan pallor and bloodshot eyes, and slowly smiled.

"Well, hello, Sheriff. You're lookin' a mite...peaked."

"You're not singing the words right."

The woman openly grinned at hearing the gravelly voice. "I sing it as it pleases me," she assured him in a low voice.

"And I've heard you sing the blues."

The woman nodded. "At times, yes. And speaking of blues, I do see a vision in blue approaching. Why's it's the Black Widow of Bunnell Run." She raised her eyebrows. "Tsk, tsk, Sheriff. Such language from a public official."

The Sheriff slowly got to his feet, casting a wary eye upon the woman slowly walking towards them. He glanced at the rabbit-faced deputy who hesitantly approached them. "Deputy. What's happening in the clean world?"

"I got a writ here, Sheriff. Releasin' Mongo."

"Mongo? You put poor Mongo in jail?"

"He tore up the Red House bar." The Sheriff shrugged as he looked at the paperwork. "It's legal." He speculatively looked at the Black Widow of Bunnell Run who was crossing the street and smiling in his direction. "Mongo's not married, is he?"

The Deputy turned and saw the approaching woman. His face turned pasty-white and he began to shake.

The Sheriff disappeared into the jail. Seconds later, Mongo's huge form filled the open doorway. The young man saw the Black Widow of Bunnell Run and stopped.

"No! No! Mongo no go!"

"Get out there!" The Sheriff demanded from behind Mongo.

"No! Mongo no go! Mongo no die!"

"Dammit, I'll shoot you!"

"Shoot Mongo! Better than that!"

With a grunt, the Sheriff shoved Mongo in the back. The large man stumbled forward into the quivering Deputy who fell into the outstretched arms of the Black Widow of Bunnell Run.

"Oh, Deputy! My...what big eyes you have," the woman cooed.

Mongo spun around and fled back into the jail. In the process, he threw the Sheriff to one side and slammed the jail house door behind him.

The mountain woman shook her head and walked away. She began singing to herself to drown out the high-pitched girlish screams from behind her. "Dirty deeds, done dirt cheap. Dirty deeds done dirt cheap."

Turkey: 3-way, I would have never believed it! It's a different game.

RUSSIA to SULTAN LUTTERBIE: Given that I'm still between the witches in this, it brings to mind a quote from the Wicked Witch of the West, "These things must be done del-i-cate-ly ..."

MOSCOW to ANKARA: Once more, I realize you might quibble at my definition of "defensive moves". Well, so be it. I can only say that they were designed to keep a dangerous adversary honest and at home, relatively speaking. If you did as advertised, these moves will not offend you ... if you moved otherwise, they'll hopefully slow you down.

DUCK to MISS KITTY: I have finally pulled the gun from your head, but it is still pointed at your heart. No heroics, please, and everyone will get out of this alive.

WILLIAMS to HOOD: It could end up that I'll be the one player in this game that didn't lie to you. Good luck with the Battle of Paris!

DON to BILL: The draw could work and may yet be the final chapter. But as you said in your last missive, Russia has to give it one shot. This was not a failure of gentlemanly accords and understandings, as you once described it, but rather an untimely recollection on my part that the purpose of our pursuits is victory. Good luck in the trenches, my friend, and may the coldest, quickest steel prevail.

DON to DOUG: I don't really know exactly what to say to you. Are you having fun yet?

Doug – Don: No.

Spring 1910 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

Press:

Let's start with the press, always best to start with the press (with some allusions to action on the board). After a bit of a lull, there is some press front action going again, and even some "new blood" in

the press. Nine press items, might be near a record, let's work from the end. The BEST one by far was the last one, of course Dougie-poo never has any fun. But more interesting was Don (presuming it really is Don and I think it is, which also by the way proves to me that the Mr. Drucker press line is really

from Faz, since I always had a lingering doubt that it might be Don pretending to be Faz) lamenting. What's he lamenting about, and who cares what Dougie-poo thinks! Let Dougie eat it.... this is the last of a set of one liners, of course, where Don says things to all four of the remaining players, AND the one who resigned (Vince) and I guess thinks he should apologize for ignoring Dougie-poo. No need to apologize for ignoring Dougie-poo, everyone does... shame on all of you!!! What this really is, though, is Don coming out of his hole and engaging publicly. He "claims" that he only is thinking about and trying for victory now. This surely is the point where Bill is finally confronting that wicked truth. But, maybe yet Bill will be part of draw? I doubt it, but well, you never know. Clearly, Don has not and is not lying to France, France gets to keep his capital of Paris, and Don won't seek to knock him out. Paris is surely safe this fall and his good karma for the future. No need to lie to David now, although if he WERE going to lie to David, saying he wasn't in this way might have gained an advantage. Don also illustrates how tight/difficult the back and forth with Italy has been, or maybe Don is just being hyperbolic. Whatever, Miss Kitty is a loyal sidekick until she's not, and Don has just left the Italian homeland. Don clearly would prefer to be dealing with Vince rather than Gary. Well there, it doesn't seem like Turkey really matters very much and will start the slow dot by dot slide to oblivion. Don is patiently waiting his turn to join up (presumably when Italian fleets get in position -- though it is a little tricky to know what England is up to going forward from Tunis.

Then, we have what we believe is the missive from Gary, touting the absurdity of a three way in this environment. Just what three way are we talking about? Gary is still dumbfounded over the reaction he got when he entered the game and tried to start what he believed was a super-obvious stop-the-leader alliance necessity. But what is REALLY going on, fascinating press.

Then there is another brilliant foggy mountaintop installment. Yes, the hoary "Mongo" lines are easy, I sense an Alex Karras fan hiding in here. Alex is one of my favorite all-time people in the universe. He's just had a really cool life. And Mongo became a cultural icon in an AMAZINGLY short part in *Blazing Saddles*. But there are few people reading this that don't have a clear picture in their head of Mongo and

"Me fix", let's fix this game....

The Moves:

As for the moves themselves, Russia takes two Scandinavian centers now, with the other one likely next year. England may pick up Tunis instead, and then only be down one, but the long term prospects are not good. This is especially true if the "three way" we're talking about includes France and Italy continuing to help Don. Otherwise, everyone moves around as you would expect. Russia COULD have as many as 17 and even could nail down the solo this fall. Let's see what happens....

I'll leave the press analysis to Jim.

What strikes me about this move is that the factor of surprise is often far more useful when stabbing than awkward placement of stabbing forces during a build season.

Had Don built F StP he would not have done as well with this move as he did without it.

I think we can count on Melinda continuing to help Don solo. I'm less certain about Hood.

To tactics: Russia gains two SCs in Scandanavia. He may or may not hold onto Brest, but that doesn't really matter all that much. I would recommend moving A StP to Fin, to make sure he can build a fleet in St Pete. England loses only one force if he takes Tunis, but that would entail Turkey also losing a force. Turkey might lose Greece, depending on how I/R choose their tactics.

I'm trying to figure out if Don can get 18 right away. If France and Italy put all their efforts into it, he can hold Brest, take Spain, Marseilles, Venice, and two Scandanavian SCs to jump up to 18. So it's possible.

If they don't go that way, Russia can force Norway next year and R/I will eventually crack Greece and the rest of the Turkish possessions.

Do we think there's any way to avoid a Russian solo? Not given the flow of play. Usually board situations like this resolve themselves into a number of people determined to help the board leader achieve a solo. It's an interesting psychological phenomenon, in that it flies against what more simplistic mathematical models would predict.

SPRING 1910

The eleven year old had tears in his eyes as he looked down at the Orb of The Goddess hanging around his neck. "Gosh General," he muttered, "I've never been

given an award before, though mom and dad have. This is just so awesome." Then he paused. "Er, I was wondering General, would it be okay to take some of

the crew to the exercise room and teach them some soccer? I was talking to a few of the guys and they were really interested."

The old soldier entwined four tentacles in the sign of Ultimate Delight and laughed for several seconds. "Oh yes Brooklyn," he replied, "go and have some fun with your new friends while I conduct the next briefing."

He watched the young boy leave and then looked out at his young trainees. "A remarkable young human, gentlemen. Would that he could serve in the Empire. Hail Fndili."

"Hail Fndili," came the reply.

"Well gentlemen," said the old soldier, "it seems that the end of the war is approaching. England has now virtually surrounded France and the latter continues to retreat. Italy still hangs on and Turkey seems to be going nowhere. But Russia is maintaining its

defences in the south and continues to push westward - are we about to see it finally attack England? I think perhaps so. As usual I require your reports by midday tomorrow. Hail Fndili."

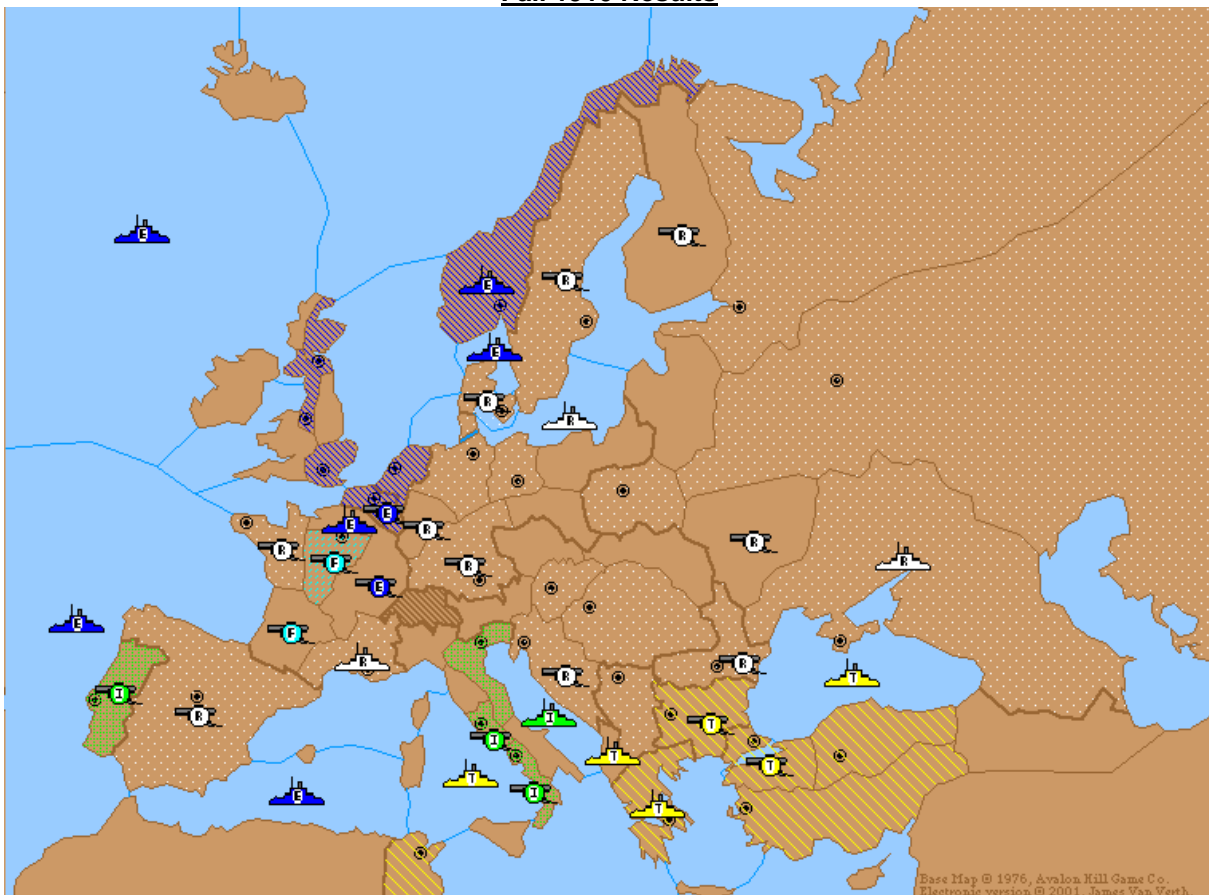
General U'til watched as his young charges left and then made his way to the exercise room. He watched from the doorway for several minutes as Brooklyn showed them how to play soccer. Then the young boy saw him and walked across.

"So," he said, "how are they doing?"

The eleven year old giggled. "Well general," he replied, "they aren't much good at dribbling but in goal they are awesome. With all those tentacles there is just no way to get the ball in the goal!"

The old soldier laughed, patted Brooklyn's head and went off to prepare for the next timejump.

Fall 1910 Results



England: A Belgium - Holland (*Bounce*), A Burgundy - Ruhr (*Fails*), F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - North Atlantic Ocean, F North Africa - Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F North Sea – Norway, F Picardy - Belgium (*Fails*), F Skagerrak Supports F North Sea – Norway, F Tunis - Western Mediterranean

France: A Gascony Supports A Paris, A Paris Supports A Gascony.

Italy: F Adriatic Sea - Ionian Sea (*Bounce*), ~~F Albania Supports F Adriatic Sea - Ionian Sea~~ (*Disbanded*), A Naples Supports A Rome, A Portugal - Spain (*Fails*), A Rome Supports A Naples.

Russia: A Brest Hold, A Denmark Hold, F Gulf of Lyon – Marseilles, F Gulf of Bothnia - Baltic Sea, A Ruhr - Holland (*Bounce*), A Rumania - Serbia (*Bounce*), A Serbia – Trieste, F Sevastopol Supports A Ukraine - Rumania (*Fails*), A Spain Supports F Gulf of Lyon – Marseilles (*Cut*), A St Petersburg – Finland, A Sweden Supports A Denmark, A Tyrolia – Munich, A Ukraine - Rumania (*Fails*).

Turkey: F Black Sea - Bulgaria(ec) (*Fails*), A Bulgaria - Serbia (*Bounce*), A Constantinople Supports F Black Sea - Bulgaria(ec) (*Fails*), F Greece Supports F Ionian Sea – Albania, F Ionian Sea – Albania, F Tyrrhenian Sea - Ionian Sea (*Bounce*).

Supply Center Chart

England: Belgium, Edinburgh, Holland, Liverpool, London, Norway=6, Remove 2
 France: Paris=1, Remove 1
 Italy: Naples, Portugal, Rome, Venice=4, Even
 Russia: Berlin, Brest, Budapest, Denmark, Kiel, Marseilles, Moscow, Munich, Rumania, Serbia, Sevastopol, Spain, St Petersburg, Sweden, Trieste, Vienna, Warsaw=17, Build 4 (Room for 3)
 Turkey: Ankara, Bulgaria, Constantinople, Greece, Smyrna, Tunis=6, Even

PRESS

Vince to Bill: Frankly, my dear, you'd better build a dam. I am surprised it took this long. Too bad we couldn't work out the MAO problem while I was in the game, the 3 way would be history, now, I think, you are out of the final solution.

Vince to Gary: I would not have had the time to do as well as you are. Looks like you and Duck are at least talking to each other (lies count as talking). I am just happy to see some sort of communication between old rivals.

Vince to Duck: About time.

RUSSIA to ENGLAND: This should be a very interesting turn indeed. I'm guessing you had lots of ideas shared with you about the best set of moves. I know what I

thought you should do to stopper up the north, and so have acted accordingly in attacking HOL. If you convoyed A BEL to NWY, that was bold move and my shot at HOL will pay off. If you didn't and covered up in HOL, I think this one will go on for a while.

RUSSIA to BOARD: It will not surprise me in the least if you didn't all bury the various hatchets and put together that proverbial last gasp stop the leader alliance, and cause a major reversal of Russian fortune. My hope is that it eluded you, but my fear is that it has not; too many veterans here not to at least have given it a try. We shall see, we shall see ... if things went ka-blooie for Russian hopes of hegemony this season, well, it was good while it lasted and I had to give it a try. Failing an end to the game in 1910, did I hear a call last season for a three-way draw?

Fall 1910 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

Well, Don could have soloed if he'd moved Tyr - Ven instead of Tyr - Mun.

There is a lack of any coordinated effort to stop a solo. Clearly France doesn't care and Italy seems to still be on board with the idea. If she turned on Don, he'd have a hard time holding Trieste, Spain, and Marseilles. I think we might be near a point where even that wouldn't matter.

Don can force Norway but clearly Brest, Spain, and Marseilles are all swinging in the breeze. He'll need to continue to have Italian help to solo, but I should think that won't be a problem. Even with that help, England could possibly force Brest and possibly force Spain, if Turkey helps.

I kind of wish Don had left Sev open for a fleet build. That would have helped him a lot against Turkey.

Well, there will only be 12 forces working against a Russian solo next year (maybe 13) but all of those fleets in the Med will be of little use.

The English disbands are going to be rough. Does he try to make a counter-attack on Spain or Brest or give up on such an idea? I think there's little England can do other than build a wall at Nth/NWG/Bel and hope. Turkey really should have told England to take Tunis.

Don's press is less optimistic about soloing than I think he should be. But we'll see. I don't think it was wise for him to broach the topic of an anti-Don alliance. Better to ignore the possibility altogether instead of pointing out to the others that they ought to work together against him.

Press: First things first, again. So, we're missing another Mountaintop installment, which really would have enlivened some less than exciting stuff. One main question is whether Russia starting to talk more now in the press is going to help, hurt, or be irrelevant. There obviously is some risk that everyone else forms a stop-the-leader alliance against him, and it seems like the press COULD instigate it. Or, it could nail down the status quo and be mostly irrelevant. So press item one from Russia refers to the guess over Holland that England got right. It hints that someone could have spilled the beans on what Don was doing in that they figured out his "feint" that he really would NOT attack Holland. Am I being clear enough? Yes, he told SOMEONE that he was not attacking Holland, and it is likely that this person figured out that he was in fact attacking Holland, told England, and England bounced it. That was the difference between 17 and 18. Also, who was that other person (or persons)? And even if that isn't the way it happened, Don will likely interpret that it did. What will happen with that? We will have to see. The other item is the "this could go on for a while, what about a draw" note? Why should this be a three way draw yet? It had better not be.

Then the other three press items are from Vince (like Faz out of the game, though with different reasons), one wonders if he had enough time to write this press why he isn't still playing. He himself realizes this and makes the defense. And he argues that England is out of the final solution? The only way that is true is if Don wins, there isn't a three way here without England, is there? Anyway, on to the orders by country.

England: England guesses right on Holland, but still is down two. And that need to remove two is Russia's best solo chance for next year. I would probably try the outside the box solution of removing the two Scandinavian fleets, give up Norway, and hope to get something back from the realization that one center is surely Russia's. In fact, with the build in St. Pete, Norway falls anyway, so keep the other units. The boring choice would be to remove the two armies. The pull back move would be to remove Wes and NAO, which also won't work.

France: France saves and keeps Paris, and possibly gets to keep it. David is pretty irrelevant here now.

Italy: Melinda has her stable "Portugal plus home" that Don seems to have guaranteed to her. It could matter if Melinda joined an attack on Russia, but I don't expect it.

Russia: The build in St. Pete ensures Norway can be taken, which is the 18th center if he holds on to everything else. The other builds? Armies, headed for Germany. Take the 18th center and try to defend what he has? Certainly if EVERYONE opposes then it is not possible to defend it all right away. The Turkish border is defensible until Melinda helps Gary. Tri-Ser, Rum-Ser, Sev S Ukr-Rum, right? Germany is defensible until the armies from Warsaw etc. get there. The fleet goes to Kiel in Spring. Spain and Marseilles are possibly defensible, working with Melinda again. Brest though, depends partly on France, but that support could be cut. This is why I think removing the Scandinavian fleets is the right move. Then Brest falls and England can advance.

Turkey: Gary and Melinda know each other well and I gather they've been talking and arguing a lot to no effect. Is this the time when Melinda listens? Otherwise, it is time for Turkey to take the risk while Russia likely has to do the moves above. Move the ARMY Con-Bul, Bul-Gre and set up a supported attack on Serbia! This is how Don's position could collapse a bit and it may take more time.

Summary: The endgame story of how England hit Holland could be the key. Otherwise, this game would be over. Or, Don may just win in a lot longer period of time.

I still wonder why, if Don was trying to grab 18, he thought Holland would be more likely to fall than Venice.

Well, we'll see how 1911 shakes out.

The Doctor took General U'til to one side. "I was thinking General, as young Brooklyn has done so well, I thought I might show him some sights of the solar system before I take him home?"

The old soldier smiled. "That is a wonderful idea," he replied, "but first I must conduct the next briefing."

"Of course General," said the Time Lord. "Please don't let me interrupt you."

The General smiled and looked out at the assembled trainees. "Hail Fndili," he cried.

"Hail Fndili," came the response.

The old soldier paused for a moment before starting his briefing. "Gentlemen," he said, "we have witnessed some awesome events, and none that were planned on this training mission. But they will be of benefit to you all and will show you what can happen in the far reaches of the galaxy. You will all be better officers as a result and that will be included in my reports. Hail Fndili."

The response was overwhelming and the whole ship shook. "HAIL FNDILI!!"

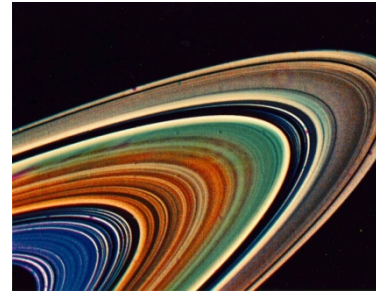
The General smiled again as he stood at the lectern. "Well, I think we see the end of this war approaching. England is still hanging on and continuing to gain ground against France but Italy and Turkey seem to have no idea what to do. But Russia is the key, it has finally attacked England and I predict it will win this war within the next year. As usual gentlemen, your reports by midday tomorrow. Hail Fndili."

As the trainees departed The Doctor called the young boy over and asked if he would like to see more of his star system. Of course he agreed. "So where are we going Doctor?" he asked.

The Time Lord smiled. "Well, I thought perhaps first I could show you the rings of Saturn. They look so much better close up than through a telescope." He pressed some buttons on the console.

"Oh wow," said the eleven year old.

It only took a few moments and then The Doctor turned on the viewscreen. "There, young man, what do you think of that?"



The young boy stared in wonder. "Oh Doctor, they are just so beautiful," he gasped.

The Time Lord laughed. "Yes they are," he replied, "and almost unique in this galaxy. The Solar System is very lucky to have them - and so is the human race."

Brooklyn just looked at him and smiled, this was just so exciting.

But then The Doctor paused and frowned. "Now that's odd," he muttered.

"What is it Doctor?" he asked.

He pointed at the viewscreen. "That little red dot on the outer ring. It really shouldn't be there. The dots on the inner rings are just caused by the various moons of Saturn, but that one really does look strange." He looked down at the eleven year old boy. "I think we need to take a closer look."

Brooklyn looked up at him and grinned, this was getting even more exciting than closing the rift. "Sure Doctor," he replied, "whatever you think is best."

The Time Lord pressed some more buttons on the Tardis console and they closed in on the strange red dot in the outer ring. Then the Doctor gasped. "Oh my goodness," he gasped, "it's a timebox!"

The young boy frowned. "What's a timebox Doctor?" he asked.

"They are strange devices left behind by a very ancient race of creatures, and nobody knows who they were," he replied. "But they can be very dangerous because they slip through time and space and can sometimes cause a lot of problems. When I find one I bring it into the Tardis and then send it into the nearest star to destroy it."

"Oh gosh," gasped Brooklyn, "are you going to do that with this one Doctor?"

The Time Lord smiled down at him. "I think I should, I can't leave it here." He pressed more buttons on the console. Then he sighed. "Got it, in cargo bay three, want to take a look?"

"Oh you bet," replied Brooklyn as he followed him to the cargo bay.

They both entered the cargo bay and looked at its contents.



"But Doctor," said the eleven year old, "it's just a box."

"Yes," he replied, "but a very dangerous box. Be very careful Brooklyn."

The young boy was intrigued and looked inside, where he saw an array of wires and machinery, packets of food and water and a very mean looking weapon. He looked back at The Doctor. "So did people travel in these things?"

"We assume so, although nobody knows who they were. But you'd better move away young man, it can be very dangerous."

"Okay Doctor," Brooklyn replied. But as he said the words he felt a strange force pulling him backwards and with a cry of horror felt himself being sucked into the timebox.

The Doctor looked horrified as he saw his young companion fall into the timebox. "Brooklyn, no," he cried as the boy disappeared inside and the lid closed with a loud click. He rushed to the timebox to try and open it but in a second it was gone.

In a state of near panic the Time Lord rushed to the console of the Tardis, desperately punching buttons to try and trace where and when the timebox had taken his young companion.



Winter 1910 Results

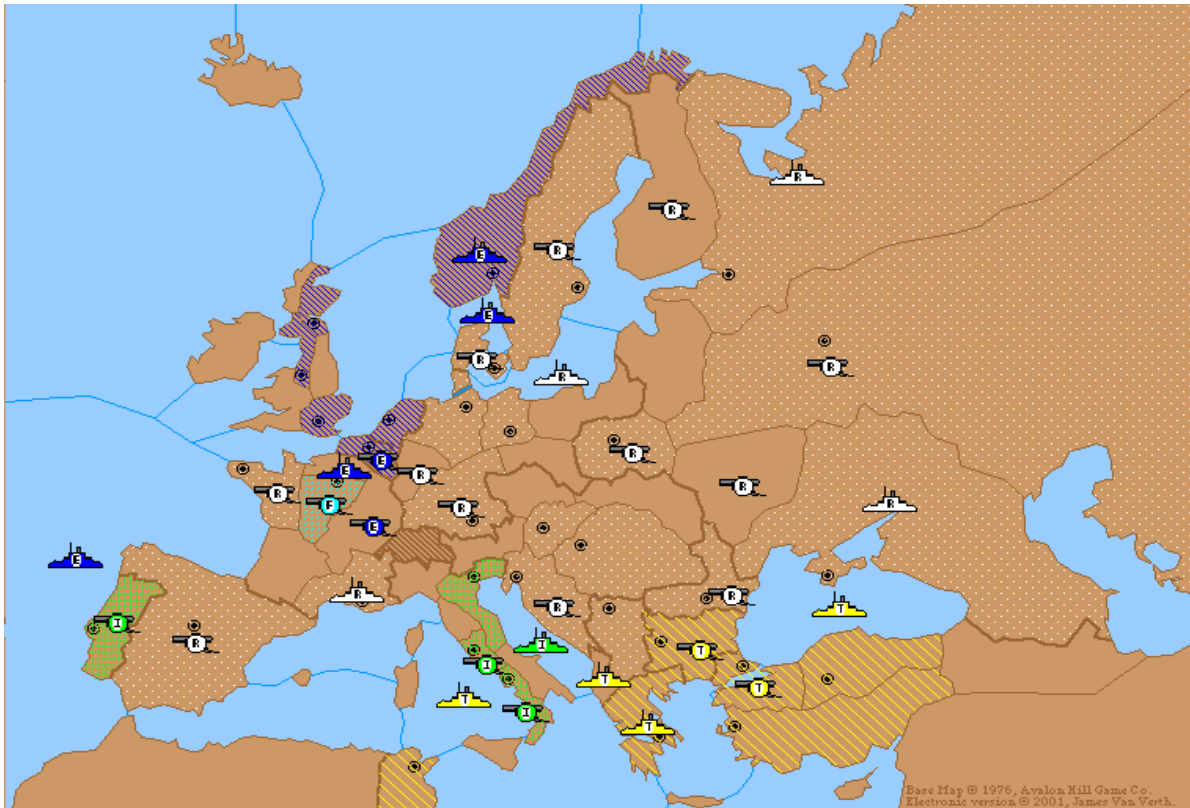
England: Remove F North Atlantic Ocean, F Western Mediterranean..Has A Belgium, A Burgundy, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F Norway, F Picardy, F Skagerrak.

France: Remove A Gascony..Has A Paris.

Italy: Has F Adriatic Sea, A Naples, A Portugal, A Rome.

Russia: Build A Moscow, A Warsaw, F St Petersburg(nc), plays 1 short..Has F Baltic Sea, A Brest, A Denmark, A Finland, F Marseilles, A Moscow, A Munich, A Ruhr, A Rumania, F Sevastopol, A Spain, F St Petersburg(nc), A Sweden, A Trieste, A Ukraine, A Warsaw.

Turkey: Has F Albania, F Black Sea, A Bulgaria, A Constantinople, F Greece, F Tyrrhenian Sea.



Is that the fat lady I see coming to center stage?

Now Proposed – Concession to Russia. NVR=No

PRESS

None.

Winter 1910 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

Well, England removed F NAO and F Wes. F Wes might have been used in an attack on Spain. But really, Spain's future is controlled by A Portugal. If Italy is friendly, Russia will hold Spain. I thought F NAO might help hold the North, but I can see where the other forces are more useful. F NAO could have gone to NWG to put three forces on Norway for the Fall, but even that would not have been enough.

This was the balanced, rational set of removals to make. I probably would have done more out-of-the-box thinking on the removals (e.g. taking the two Scandinavian fleets off) to try to shake up Melinda. But this way, the fleets can retreat to North and Norwegian Seas and Don can't break through them supporting each other until he builds another StPete fleet next year, and by then, it's possible the game will be over. Similarly, it isn't clear what F Wes could really have done, though it does back England

up toward the homeland.

Russia can force control of Norway in the Spring. Holland will be quite vulnerable once the Russian fleet in the Baltic Sea reaches Kiel.

Right, so Russia only needs one more center and has a shot at two. He gets the fleets to Kiel and Norway right away. England will be able to support F Ska-Nth in the fall after Norway retreats to Norwegian, BUT Russia may try to slip the fleet into Denmark. I would probably move F Ska-Den this spring.

The French situation is interesting. Russia can force control of Burgundy regardless of what the French do. Likewise, the English can force capture of Brest regardless of what the French do. The problem for England is that even if he takes Brest, if he loses both

Holland and Norway, he'll be facing a disband.

Right, and there is no room for this error unless Russia loses something else elsewhere. The French don't really matter, I suppose we can wonder if David wants to survive in Paris. He signaled that with his removal though.



The tactical situation in the South depends entirely on Italy. If she continues to be at least neutral towards Russia, he should keep all of his SCs down there and win next year. If she turns on him, he should lose Trieste (in addition to losing Brest) and also be in trouble with Spain and Marseilles. I don't know if that would make a difference - Russia may well be able to solo regardless.

I think eventually (with these two new built armies coming west) Russia can solo regardless. We see now if Melinda is willing to hand Don the win. He has not stabbed her yet. And he doesn't need to. Melinda seems to have what she has been promised. But for our entertainment, we hope that FINALLY we have a stop-the-leader going.

Don talked about a 3-way draw last move. It's hard to see who would be excluded in addition to France. This is either a solo or a 4-way draw (that is, depending on feelings about the French in Paris). My guess is that Italy will continue to be at least peaceful towards Russia and he'll solo.

Yes, I still don't get the three way and who it includes. Russia has to stop and help someone else take someone out (surely not Melinda, and how does he give English centers to anyone else?) if we're going to get down to a three way. My guess is the same, and even if there is four against Don it isn't clear they get to a four way (or five way).

WINTER 1910

When the lid clicked shut a light came on inside the timebox, so at least Brooklyn wasn't in total darkness. But then he heard a low humming noise and felt movement - the timebox was taking him somewhere. But where? He felt really scared and hoped that The Doctor would be able to follow him.

Inside the Tardis the Time Lord was almost frantic, pushing one button after another as he desperately tried to locate where and when the timebox was taking his eleven year old companion. Then he found a signal, very faint and very far away in both space and time. But that had to be Brooklyn. He pressed more buttons on the console and sent the Tardis after the signal as quickly as he could.

After what seemed like just a few minutes Brooklyn felt a bump and the humming noise died away. He

realised that he had arrived at the destination. But where was it? Then there was another loud click and the lid flew open. The young boy looked out at a blue sky with just a few white clouds and some sort of jungle. The timebox itself was resting on a grassy area just before the jungle.

"Oh my goodness," he muttered, "wherever am I?"

But Brooklyn, despite his young age, was a very sensible boy. He took a long drink of water from one of the canisters in the timebox and then picked up that mean looking weapon from its holder. "Best not to take any chances," he muttered as he stepped out of the box.



But on the Tardis The Doctor was getting more alarmed as the signal from the timebox was fading. It was slipping through time and space more quickly than even his machine could travel. He punched more buttons. "Come on, oh please come on," he cried.

Aboard the 'Further Glory' General U'til of course knew nothing of this. As far as he was aware the Time Lord was just showing Brooklyn the rings of Saturn. He faced his young trainees. "Hail Fndili."

"Hail Fndili," came the response.

He smiled. "Gentlemen, this war is nearly over and, with no regrets, so is my career. But it has been an honour to serve with you and I am sure what we have experienced together will make you far better officers to serve the Empire."

"Hail Fndili, Hail U'til," they shouted.

He smiled again. "Thank you all, that is much appreciated. But we are still on a training mission and the briefing has to continue. England is now desperately defending its holdings in Scandinavia but Russia is all set to attack them - and has the advantage of superior forces. France is almost finished and Italy and Turkey are going nowhere. I predict that Russia will triumph within the next year. As usual I will require your reports by midday tomorrow. Hail Fndili."

He walked quickly away from the lecture room, not wanting his young charges to see the tears in his eyes, and went straight to his quarters where he could be alone.

Brooklyn stepped out of the box and looked around. There was a huge grassy plain in front of him and the jungle behind. "Where am I?" he asked himself. "Oh I hope The Doctor can find me." The he saw movement in the distance and shrieked.

It was a dinosaur, and a very big one. "Oh no," he cried, "that horrid box has taken me way back in time. Oh Doctor, please find me." But as he watched he saw that the Brachiosaurus (for that is what it was) was only eating grass and leaves. "Well," he muttered, "at least it's a vegetarian, so it won't eat me." But he kept a strong grip on that mean looking weapon from the timebox, just in case.



But on the Tardis The Doctor was getting more and more frantic as the signal from the timebox continued to fade. He pulled out some wires and rearranged them as he desperately tried for more speed to get closer to his target. It seemed to have some effect as the signal was no longer fading. "Yes, that's it," he said, "come on, come on, I need to get there as quickly as I can. Oh Brooklyn, if anything happens to you I will never forgive myself."

Brooklyn watched the big Brachiosaurus feast on the grass and leaves, and then saw two more join it and eat in a similar fashion. He felt much calmer now, knowing that they were no threat to him but still hoping The Doctor would rescue him soon.

Then there was a roar from behind him. He spun round and screamed.