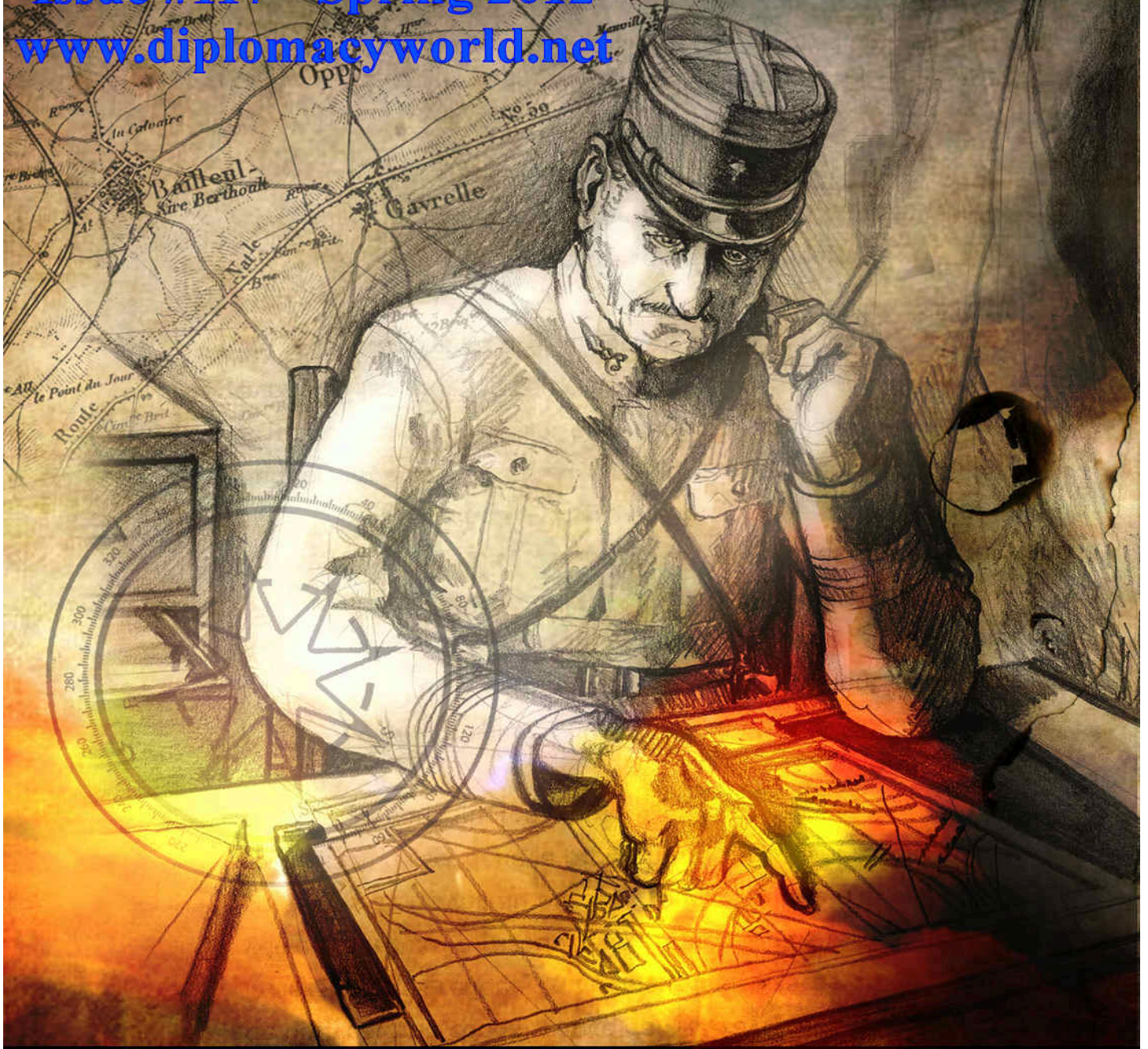


Diplomacy World



Issue #117 - Spring 2012
www.diplomacyworld.net



Notes from the Editor

Welcome to the latest issue of **Diplomacy World**, #117. Whether the three months seem to go by quickly or slowly, they do go by. I do take some pride in the knowledge that for the past five years we've been able to produce some tremendous issues (and at the very least some pretty darn good ones) and release them on a consistent basis.

During my two stints as Lead Editor of **Diplomacy World**, that's one thing I have found crucial to the success of the zine. Whether it comes to loyal readership and circulation, or encouraging submissions from contributors new and old alike, a fixed schedule you can count on makes a huge difference. As I write this, Diplomacy World #116 has been downloaded over 16,000 times from the www.diplomacyworld.net website (and an unknown number of times from the **Diplomacy World** Yahoo group). Certainly some of those are multiple downloads, where readers log on to enjoy it a piece at a time, but the point is we have managed to build a sizeable audience that cuts across various sections of the hobby: on-line, face-to-face, zine play, new players, old Diplomacy dinosaurs...there should be something in every issue that any potential Diplomacy fan can enjoy. Obviously nobody is expected to enjoy the entire issue from cover to cover, but in such a diverse hobby it's good to know you can please all of the people some of the time. That's better than some of the people all of the time, in my opinion.

With World DipCon in Chicago this year, I am hopeful that Diplomacy World #119 will be chock full of WDC reports. Some may disagree, but I find the real enjoyment when I'm reading about a Diplomacy event is what takes place off the board. Sure, I want to know who the big winners were and how they did it, but the people and the personalities are what make this a hobby worth being a part of. Otherwise you may as well play solitaire against a computer, or no-press Gunboat against unknown opponents. The Diplomacy hobby grew out of sci-fi fandom, and whenever I read or experience something that reminds me this hobby has its own fandom – "Dipdom" being a word used for years to describe it – it helps give me some more energy for whatever tasks I've taken on in support of the hobby.

Unfortunately, real-world issues can often push Diplomacy off your radar screen, and that holds true for me and the Diplomacy World Staff as much as anyone. Truthfully there are some DW Staff positions that might do better with new blood. Jim Burgess is a valuable part of each issue; he does the proofing every quarter,

looking for all of my mistakes. But when was the last time we had a memorable interview in Diplomacy World?

We seem to get some variant material almost every issue, but how much of that is written by, or solicited by, Jack McHugh? Chris Babcock is almost without question the best person to hold the Technology Editor position, but how often does he have the time and the ability to put together an article?

I suppose my point is two-fold. First, please remember that just because there's an Editor in charge of a certain topic, there's no reason YOU can't submit an article that falls in that department. The Editor positions have two major functions: to provide material, and to solicit material. So don't be shy about sending me an article on any Diplomacy-related topic.

Second, there's the question of refreshing the Staff assignments a bit. If you think you have the energy and drive to take over an occupied staff position, email me and say so! Maybe that position needs new blood, or maybe you could simply work in conjunction with the current editor and help us provide more material for that section. Either way, don't be silent. **SPEAK UP!**

Even I haven't written as much for Diplomacy World as I once did, or as I'd like to. I'm trying to spend more of my available writing time on some real-world projects, but I should push it a bit and try to get something of my own into every issue, or every second issue. So don't think I'm sitting here pointing fingers at anybody. We all have our priorities in life, and Diplomacy will never be the TOP priority. Fortunately, we've been blessed with Staff and contributors who make it part of their priority list when time allows. I don't see how anybody could ask for more than that.

Oh, just a quick note that I managed to get some work done cleaning up parts of the Diplomacy World website, and I'm far from finished. It's just another project on the list. Thanks for your patience. I think that the cleaner, easier to navigate look works well. It simply hasn't been applied to every page yet.

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

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

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Daring Diplomacy

By Richard Hannon

For most Diplomacy players, particularly those interested enough to read a publication such as this one, tactics are largely set. Though clearly some players are better than others in the realm of battlefield strategy, there is a fairly consistent conventional wisdom that dictates maneuvers, especially in the opening phases. Most players probably have their personal favorite opening, but, much like chess, opening doctrine is basically predictable. For example, the Turks must not let Russia into the Black Sea. Germany and Russia must negotiate over Sweden. England certainly can't let France into the channel (and vice versa, though, I would argue, to a lesser extent—but that's another article). Germany will seek nonaggression or full Anschluss with Austria. And so on. That is not to say that there is no variance within these paradigms, but merely to point out that as an experienced Diplomacy player, you should have some idea what each power's three most likely openings are.



Because of this predictability plaguing the online meta-game, a creative thinker can carve out an advantage for him or herself. Recent issues of Diplomacy World have included some ideas of unusual openings that can get the drop on your opponents because they are expecting something entirely different. Joshua Danker-Dake has popularized the Bohemian Crusher, an opening that sees Italy move both armies into the Dead Zone north of Austria to present supported attack options on his home centers. As armies rarely go into Bohemia on turn two,

this opening carries the element of surprise. Similarly, I have pushed the concepts of the Ignorway, in which England gives up its "natural" build in Scandinavia to offer a full-scale assault of France on turn one. As almost every England picks up Norway, ignoring it can give the English player tempo otherwise unrecoverable. Though each of these openings can of course be blocked or rendered ineffective, the sheer rarity of these types of gambits presents a better-than-average chance of success.

Though opening doctrine dominates the majority of strategy talk, I think the principles utilized in sound opening strategy can be extended into midgame and, to a lesser extent, endgame strategies. There are some principles that I find sound to follow, but, as with any paradigm, strategy principles leave room for exploitation. Let's turn to a few of these and see what advantages a daring player can craft on the Diplomacy board:

1. Avoid Random Movements

Some people advocate moving randomly (or to well-known bad locations) and then into their desired landing spot on turn two. This school of thought finds some advantage in a cover of unpredictability. How can your plans be thwarted if they can't be foreseen? However, far from putting your opponents off, moving randomly will send a strong signal that you do not know what you are doing. Such a player is not one that most people wish to ally with—if you act unpredictably now, how can they count on you to act when the stakes are high? If they don't think they can, they'll look elsewhere, and you haven't gained anything. It is almost always better to stick to accepted doctrines to generate some respect for your tactics among your opponents. If you choose the unpredictable option, make sure that it is one of unpredictable aggression with a reward commensurate with its risk.

Let's look at an example. Say that as Russia you have brokered a deal with Germany to bounce in Sweden. You hope to DMZ Galicia and are content to stand in Warsaw through turn one. On your opening turn, you move Warsaw-Silesia and St. Petersburg-Finland. You hope that these unusual moves will throw your opponents off your real plan, which is stasis and slow growth, picking up a build in the south. Unfortunately, all you have done is given both Austria and Germany the impression that you don't have a clue. You might move back to the Gulf of Bothnia and to Warsaw on the following turn, but not before you have caused Germany a heart palpitation worrying about what you will do on their eastern side. Similarly, Austria may sense your weakness or your impending enmity with Germany and

take a bolder course than they had planned in turn two. Even your ally, Turkey, may begin to wonder if such a careless Russia really is the way forward for his power. In this case, unpredictability has had its downside. Be predictable and stable unless your bold gambit gains you more in position than it loses in reputation.

2. Mean What You Say

Diplomacy is great because of the combination of negotiation and tactics. Just as one can incur a reputation of unpredictability through tactical deployment, so also one can at the bargaining table. The usual tone of negotiation through the opening phases is one of seeking to accrue mutual benefit with every player. As France, for instance, you will talk to both Germany and England about an alliance and to Italy about a DMZ or some such. You will, of course, keep at most two of these three deals. In doing so, you are also hoping that your chosen alliance partner will stick with you and not your opponent. In the first turn, such deals are basically a shot in the dark. There is almost no way to know for sure if you will see your partner's end of the deal upheld.

Consider a daring and revolutionary negotiation technique: tell **EVERYONE** your plans. Use joint press, even. Do whatever it takes to make it clear who you've chosen to attack and who you've chosen to ally with. (NOTE: Please do not use both a bold negotiation tactic and a bold movement strategy. Your negotiations will alert them to be on the defensive, and aggressive opening moves rely on an unaware enemy.) If you're France, and you want to attack Germany, tell him so. Tell him you're throwing in with England and that you wish him better luck next time. Sure, you've lost unpredictability with Germany but you have gained it with England. Now, England's choice of an ally is easy—he should go with the one that he can trust, with the one bold enough to come out and state his plans, rather than hope that the anonymous emailer on the other end of negotiations holds up his end of the deal with no prior record of doing so. In the long run, this will also make you more attractive to others around the board, which is always a good thing.

Ironically, such forthrightness also makes you better placed to stab and stab effectively when the time comes. Since you've been clear and honest the whole game, they would have no reason to suspect otherwise while you maneuver in for a killing blow. Just make sure that when you stab, you put the other player into an unrecoverable position. When you trade your honesty for position, make sure that it is an equal trade.

3. Begin with the End in Mind

When you attack a country, you should have the goal of eliminating the country held in mind at all times. You should not attack or stab to gain a few neutral supply centers, but rather to gain a copious and clear advantage. Let's look once more at France's situation in the opening. Let's also assume that France has decided to assault Germany with England's help. Knowing that Germany will likely be a game-long enemy, the campaign must continue until Germany is eliminated or limited so strongly that they no longer produce a threat at all (and, in such cases, one should be certain that the ally finishes the job). To eliminate Germany, France must push as far east as Berlin. This means that clever assaults and supports designed to capture Belgium and the Netherlands will not get the job done—until German home centers are occupied, the job is not done. Therefore, a longer campaign that encircles Munich and Berlin is infinitely preferable to a long, slow slog through the Low Countries. Why not capture Munich first and use Bohemia as a route around to the east? Can England use its cache with Russia to get a unit into Silesia or Prussia to alleviate some pressure or cut support? Whatever it takes to get to Berlin, do it, and do it quickly. Too many players pick up neutral supply centers, lose interest, and stab allies for other short-term gains. Such planning doesn't win friends or Diplomacy games. Aiming for the throat always wins, but only insofar as one knows what each country's weak spot is.

Along these same lines, determine what centers you will have to occupy to win. Shoot for those distant ones as early as possible. As France, you will likely have to get your three home centers, three English centers, three German centers, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and two others. They could be Tunis, St. Petersburg, Warsaw, Austrian centers, Italian home centers, or a combination of these. Realizing that a win requires a certain set of centers can guide alliances and choices. If you deal with Turkey mid-game, for instance, don't just concede Tunis as part of the deal. You might need it to win, and it's a lot closer than St. Petersburg. Give him land in Austria; you'll never see it anyway. If you don't know where you're headed, then you likely can't get there.

Applying these three principles to your Diplomacy tactics will make you a more stable, more powerful, more effective general on the board. Why not get out there today, sign up for a new game, and try unusual boldness in your press? Why not dust out that opening you've been itching to try? Why not try a new route to the soft spots of your enemy home centers? Whatever you do, the important thing is to continue to play Diplomacy, and to have fun doing it. See you on the board.

[[If Richard promises you Belgium, be suspicious. Be VERY suspicious.]]

Convention Round-Up

By Matthew Shields

The calendar just keeps going by.

We're well into 2012, and I haven't yet done a recap of this year's tournaments, nor much of a preview of coming events. Time to remedy that.

There have been two major events so far this year, with a third coming up in a few short weeks.

TempleCon

Taking these out of order, the second Grand Prix event of the year was again TempleCon in Providence, Rhode Island. Jim Burgess hosted four rounds of Diplomacy, at what seems like it has the potential to become a regular event. Hopefully as the years go by, this will grow up to be more and more well attended. I didn't have the opportunity to attend this event, but my impression is that Phil Weissert pretty much dominated all weekend. Quoting from Mr. Burgess Tournament report:

"Phil Weissert, of course, was the tournament winner as well as Best England, Best France, and Best Germany (taking the unofficial Western Triple!!!). Robert Rousse was Best Austria (which I just delivered to him in person at TotalCon), David Burgess was Best Italy, and Rob Premus was Best Russia and Best Turkey (taking the unofficial Juggernaut)."

WAC

The first event of the year, and the one I had the privilege of TD-ing, was Diplomacy at the WAC. Adam Sigal came back to Seattle and because, if I'm not mistaken, was the second person to win this tournament twice in its now 9 year run.

The weekend really started for me when I'm heading out of Portland on I-5 (I live a couple hours away from the site) and I realized that despite Mr. Barnes' reminders, and despite the fact that I'd dug out 3 or 4 sets to bring along, I'd forgotten to actually bring any boards. Not the kind of thing your TD is supposed to forget. Thankfully I wasn't driving, so I spent the next hour intermittently calling and texting people trying to make sure we had 6 or 7 boards for the weekend. Turns out we had enough, but only barely.

We got to Seattle early, checked into the hotel down the street, and I even managed to get in a half-hearted run before heading over to the WAC, up to the 21st floor, and into the little conference room that was set aside for us. If you haven't been to the Washington Athletic Club, it's a great venue in a lot of ways. The first things you notice when you get to the room we had are: 1) a gorgeous view of Puget Sound, and 2) a cart full of free beer. Both

were appreciated. What you don't see is enough room to really hold 6 boards – which is what we had Friday night. So after some discussion we decided to stick 7 lucky participants in the hallway outside the room, where at least they were nearby.

The actual play went pretty smoothly. Not much drama, and relatively few occasions when the TD had to get involved in adjudicating anything. No huge results on Friday – the best score that round went to Nate Cockerill as Turkey who scored a 49.49 by toping a 14-10-10 draw.

Saturday was likewise a good turnout, with 5 boards in each of two rounds. The most noteworthy results, and the one that kept me up far too late in the evening, was Peter Yeargin's near solo in round 3. The game eventually ended with him topping (as Germany) in a 16-10-7 draw. Peter scored just over 60 points for that (a solo is 100) which is a monster results in this system. You'd have thought that would be the best on the weekend, but that would change with Adam Sigal's remarkable performance on the top board Sunday morning.

On Sunday we had 4 boards, including the top board itself. Adam Silverman qualified for the top board, (I think he was in 3rd after 3 rounds) but was unavailable on Sunday. That left us with these 7 gentlemen to play one last game for the title:

A	Edi Birsan	3	3.26
E	Chris Brand	6	13.04
F	Andy Bartalone	5	9.06
G	Jim O'Kelley	6	13.04
I	Nate Cockerill	1	0.36
R	Brian Shelden	0	0.00
T	Adam Sigal	13	61.23

I would first like to say that this is a ridiculous result for a Top Board. Nobody wins top boards by this kind of a margin. There were some early game misorders that certainly played a big role in helping Adam get off to a good start, but no matter how you slice when you have better than double the SC count of your closest opponent in any game, you're doing something right.

The other thing that was interesting to me about Adam's weekend was that in some ways he was lucky to have made the top board at all. He ended up on two centers Friday night, had a solid 12 center second place Saturday morning, and tied for the win in a 10-10-10-2-2 draw Saturday night. (Although as a total aside, as Italy Saturday night he did pull off one of the more impressive Key Lepanto Openings I've ever seen.) A lot of years a

tied top and a second place would not be good enough to get you onto the top board, but this year we saw a lot of the same people doing well over and over in the first 3 rounds. This had the effect of concentrating the points a bit more than normal, and making those 6th and 7th top board slots a bit more attainable.

As a parting thought I'd be remiss if I didn't mention Mr. Andy Bartalone's performance, as he was one of the main culprits of sucking up so many points in the first 3 rounds. Not only did he manage to top his board in each of those rounds, but he actually received best country awards for all 3 performances. I believe this is the first time WAC has awarded 3 best countries to the same player.

The top 7 ended up as follows:

Adam Sigal
Andy Bartalone
Nate Cockerill
Adam Silverman
Chris Brand
Jim O'Kelley
Edi Birsan

This being a good sized event, these 7 also hold the first seven spots in the Grand Prix as we head into the spring and summer events.

Upcoming Events

I'll keep this bit short, but I wanted to call attention to at least a couple of things. You can find the full schedule of Diplomacy events around the US on the NADF website here:

<http://www.thenadf.org/grandprix/2012-grand-prix-schedule>

In just a few short weeks, CODCon will again be held in the Chicago suburbs. Held as part of a game convention, this is a different style of event from the "main" Chicago tournament, Weasel Moot, but it's worth checking out all the same.

After taking 2011 off, there will again be a tournament in San Francisco this spring – which is a great development for those of us on the left half of the continent. It will be held in the same venue in Japan Town as in year past, but this time the first weekend in May. I'm looking forward to making the trek back down in a little over a month.

Of course DixieCon is back as the Memorial Day staple it has always been, and the Boston Massacre will be back in late June. Again, follow the link above for contact information.

We'll do a proper WDC preview in our next issue (or more than one if I know the Weasels) but we can't remind everyone too often that the 22nd World Diplomacy Championship is coming up August 10th-12th in Chicago. I do truly believe that this one has the potential to be a very special event. It's been a while since a Diplomacy tournament in the US has hit 100 players (2003 in Denver I think?) but this one seems to have a shot given the combination of a large local hobby base, and relatively easily accessible part of the country to get to. If you follow the Facebook page for the event (which you should if you're even considering coming) there seems to be respectable interest from overseas as well. *fingers crossed* (<http://www.facebook.com/events/237129306368896/>)

[[Matthew is the Diplomacy World Club and Tournament Editor.]]

Knives and Daggers - The Diplomacy World Letter Column

Conrad Woodring: There are a lot of custom Diplomacy boards out there. Might be nice to call people out to send in pictures of their home made boards and have a section about custom boards. Maybe location, a brief paragraph about how it was made, when and where it's used, size, pieces, other goodies.

[[Back in issue #106, Bill Coffin showed us his custom Diplomacy table/board...I would like to see more of those if people have them to write about! Especially one I just heard about with hand tooling, 24K supply centers...a true piece of art. I'm trying to get the builder to write up an article for next issue.]]

Cal White: Doug, would it be possible to put some sort of "advertisement" in ES and/or DW about my favorite web site for Diplomacy? You've probably heard of BOUNCED (www.dipbounced.com). It's been around since 1999 and the creator (Christian Shelton) won the Miller Award for putting the site up. I have been playing Dip for nearly 40 years and that site is by far the best place I have ever found for playing the game. He has had a couple of hardware issues (hard drive failures which were quickly fixed) which have led to the loss of a few players. The site needs (and deserves!) some new blood. Thanks for any help you can provide.

GENCON INDIANAPOLIS

27th ANNUAL DIPLOMACY TOURNAMENT

August 16th - 19th



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

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



"Gen Con Indy is the original, longest running, best attended, gaming convention in the world. For nearly 40 years, Gen Con Indy has been setting the trend and breaking records. Last year, more than 36,000 unique attendees experienced Gen Con Indy. The biggest complaint we hear is that there is simply too much to do, see, and experience. Get lost in a phantasm of art exhibits. Stare at jaw-dropping costumes, or better yet, wear one of your own. Meet the movers and the shakers in the gaming industry. Check out the newest games and get a sneak peek at the latest editions."

Contact Thomas Haver for details at tjhaver@gmail.com
<http://www.gencon.com/2012/indy/default.aspx>

Two-Player Diplomacy as a Teaching Tool for New Players

Joshua Danker-Dake

Here, at last, is the article absolutely no one was waiting for. An article on two-player Diplomacy? Absolutely. Bear with me and I'll explain.

Let's get something out of the way up front. We all know that Diplomacy is a seven-person game. If you aren't playing with seven people, well, you aren't *really* playing Diplomacy (alternatively, you aren't playing *real* Diplomacy).

But putting "seven players only" on the back of the box isn't good for sales, so the Diplomacy rulebook has, throughout its history, included ways to play with six, five, four, three, and yes, even two players. Generally, the more players you have, the closer the approximation to "real" Diplomacy. The obvious problems that arise are first, that the five- and six-player versions eliminate Italy, which is anathema to me (and, no doubt, to many others) and second, that the three- and four-player versions essentially come with pre-made alliances. Watered down Diplomacy indeed.

But I am here now only to speak of the two-player version, which may contain a Diplomacy-like substance. What is the two-player version good for? One answer is, of course, "absolutely nothing." And, from the playing-a-game perspective, it's hard to argue with that. But I have found it quite effective as a teaching tool for new players.

First, the rule changes (while there are numerous other fewer-than-seven-player variants out there, I'm following the ones in the rulebook). With two players, Diplomacy is a World War I simulation: it's England, France, and Russia versus Austria, Germany, and Turkey. Italy is a neutral no-mans-land the first year, and joins the winner of a coin flip in the second year. Adjustments are still done on a per-country basis.

Strategically, it's all pretty straightforward: right away, AGT must divide his forces between propping up Germany and conquering Russia, while EFR must find a balance between conquering Germany and holding Russia's lines. Whoever can obtain an initial advantage here usually wins the game, especially if he also wins Italy.

But that's really not the point. Purely as a game, two-person Diplomacy is mildly interesting at best, as a little initial guesswork leads to a great deal of front and line play in which, both players being equal, the one with more units will win every time. No, the point of all this is to see what we can teach a new player. I'm not playing two-player Diplomacy to mercilessly crush the other player (I'm assuming that your goal is the same as mine:

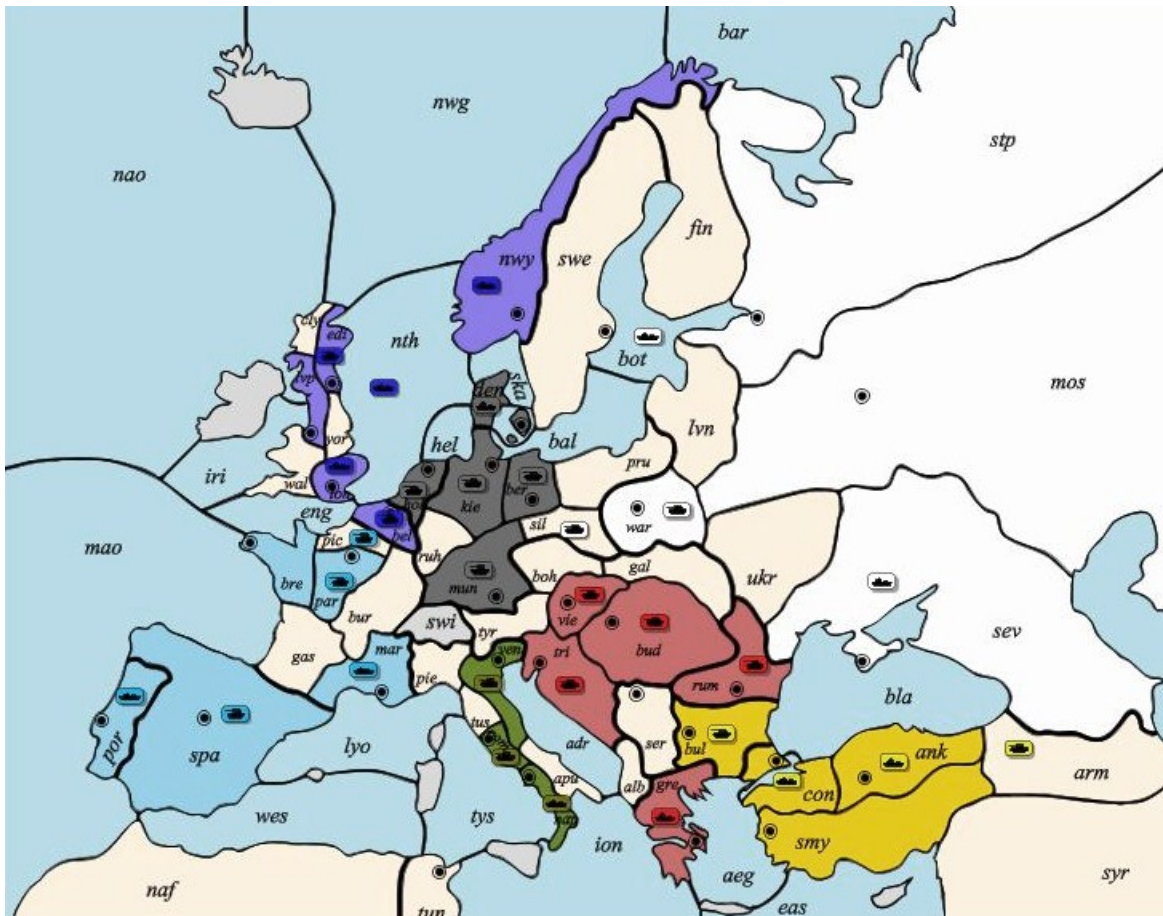
to create competent players and *then* mercilessly crush them in real games), but to work through scenarios for both sides with him (or her, of course).



With two players, the game is de facto devoid of diplomacy, negotiations, stabs, suspense, and all those other wonderful things that make life worth living. In short, two-player Diplomacy is essentially gunboat. It is purely tactical, which allows the new player to focus on the mechanics and strategy of unit movement. Allow me to outline some concepts and principles the new player can learn.

1. How best (if at all) to divide the troops to avoid trouble and take advantage of opportunities to succeed?

This is a crucial aspect of strategy in Diplomacy and pretty much every other military strategy game ever made. I won't bore you with all the moves (you can figure them out if you really want to), but here's a typical example of what the two-player Diplomacy board might look like after the first year:



The board after the first year.

Assume that Italy has gone to EFR after the first year, and assume that the new player is AGT and you, the master, are EFRI. Let's take a look at this from AGT's perspective for a minute. Germany is encircled and outnumbered; however, AGT is in good position to make progress against Russia in the south. AGT has Austrian armies waiting to reinforce Germany and mount a Russian front; however, he has to establish an Italian line first, lest EFRI's Italian armies cause him no end of trouble. Thus, let the new player consider the following.

How many units can AGT rush to Germany without compromising his position in the south? How can he most efficiently make progress against Russia to mitigate his inevitable German losses in the meantime?

2. Considering the board from your opponent's perspective

Now ask the new player to consider the board from EFRI's perspective. *What is EFRI thinking? What is EFRI going to do? What does EFRI think I'm going to do?* Clearly, EFRI is looking to take out Germany as quickly as possible and then reinforce Russia; this is fairly obvious to new players, as it's the other side of the coin of AGT's game plan. However, a new player may

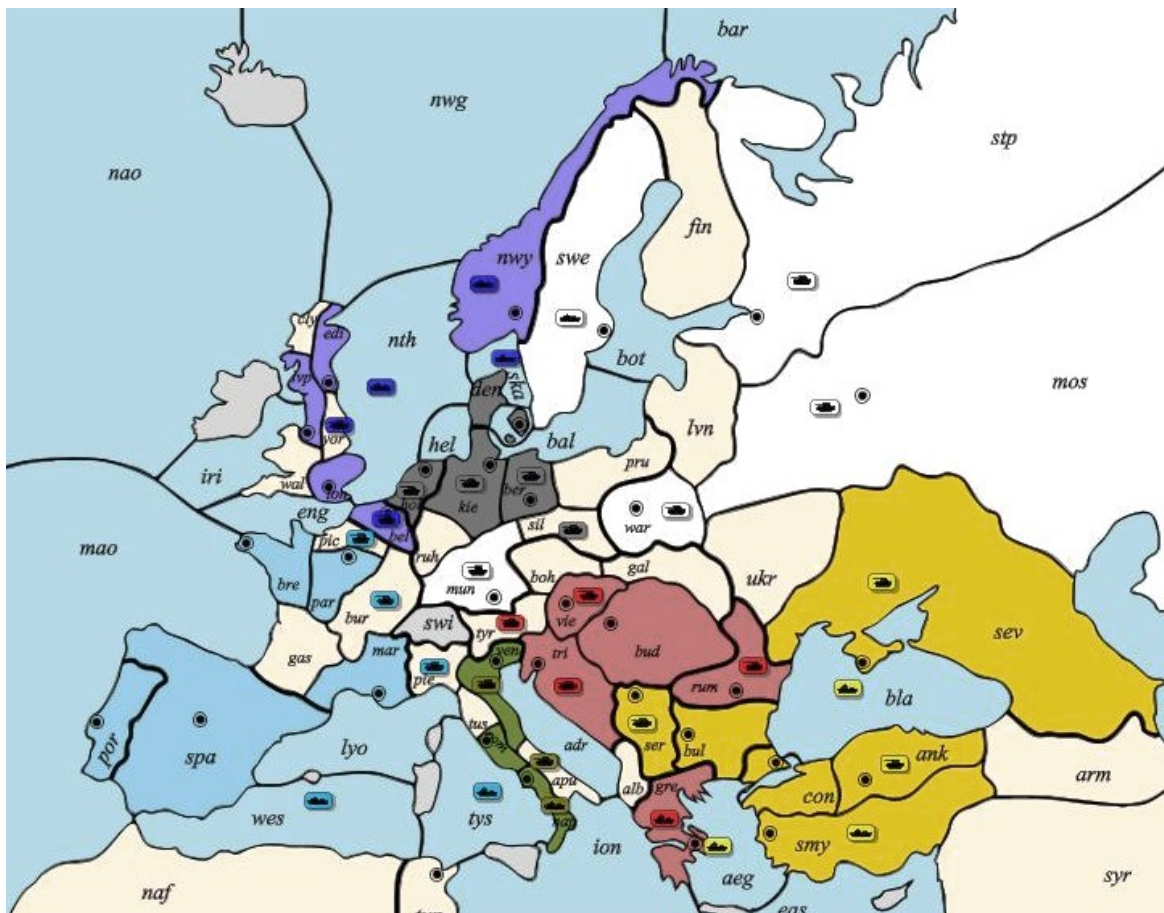
not recognize his danger in the south, particularly as Italy has been idle in the first year: AGT has only F GRE to work in the Mediterranean – assuming a supported move to the Black Sea, help from Turkey is a year away, while EFRI can use F NAP to repeatedly bounce him in the Ionian until the French navy arrives.

3. General board awareness

Similarly, considering the positions of two players using the entire board can do wonders for a new player's board awareness. Too many new players focus only on their half of the board in the early turns. Not only do they wield no diplomatic influence over their more distant neighbors, they are often utterly surprised when someone at the other end of the board starts running away with things. "Who could see that coming?" "I couldn't do anything about that." Such players have not learned that what they do affects, whether directly or indirectly, what the other players do (the ones with board awareness, at least).

4. Giving and cutting support

Let's take a look at a typical example of the board after the second year.



The board after the second year.

Diplomacy veterans will readily see where the fronts are forming and which spaces will be fiercely contested in the coming turns. This is an excellent time to work on giving and cutting support. Specific scenarios like this, in game context, can help new players grasp such concepts, from basic ones like *how can AGT be certain of keeping EFRI out of the Ionian this year?* to more advanced ones like *how many centers can Germany save this year? How far can we get into Russia this year?*

5. Stalemate lines and advanced line-breaking tactics

In the same way, note that the developing fronts will not be too far off from the game's best-known stalemate line. Many new players have no idea that such a thing exists; well, here's your chance to explain not only *what* it is but *why* it is.

Is there any way I can get through here? Is there any way I can keep my opponent from getting through here? How many units do I have to leave here to keep this front locked down?

6. Managing a large number of units

This may not seem like a big deal, but it certainly can be, especially in face-to-face games. I'm not just talking about that five-center France that needs 45 minutes to write his orders, although he's certainly included. A reasonably experienced player who's perfectly comfortable planning tactics for five or six units may have difficulty keeping track of everything when he has 11 or 12.

It can be hard for many people to visualize piece movement on the board, especially for those of us who are accustomed to playing online, where there are countless sites and programs that will give you nice, neat lists of orders, arrows showing you what's headed where, and convenient adjudication to show you where everything will end up for any given set of orders. Coping without can be dizzying, and practice is the best way to improve.

7. Developing alliance-based concepts

A common mistake made by new players is pulling the plug on a successful alliance too quickly in favor of a shortsighted stab, and often one that lets a third party swoop in and crush both former allies.

Two-player Diplomacy maintains adjustments by country rather than by player: if, in pursuit of Russia, Turkey's A SER ends up in Budapest, the new player has to be mindful of what that might mean. *Is it better for his overall positioning? Worse? What comes off the board, and where?* The new player might also, in seeing multiple countries working together in the long-term, begin to see options that aren't as selfish. In doing so, he may become a better ally.

I think many of us would agree that helping make the new player better is the social obligation of the community-minded veteran. At the very least, two-player Diplomacy can be a good way to help truly interested friends with what can be an overwhelming game to learn.

To this end, two-player Diplomacy is effective as a

teaching tool because it plays more or less the same every time, the biggest difference being who gets Italy. And even that can be a teaching aid: give Italy to the new player or take it from him based on his skill level. Scenarios are easy to recreate and work through multiple times, if necessary.

I don't prescribe two-player Diplomacy as a series of lessons to do before a new player's first real game (this is Diplomacy: there's no real substitute for going out there and getting your butt handed to you), but rather as exercises for novices to work through with veterans, as needed, to improve tactically.

Images generated with jDip 1.7.

[[Joshua is the Diplomacy World Strategy & Tactics Editor, and a very reliable contributor.]]

My Life with Ulrika: Part 6 (The Zine Poll)

by Richard Walkerdine

THE STORY SO FAR. With his beloved Ulrika now buried in her coffin Walkerdine has withdrawn almost entirely from the Hobby and is living the life of a virtual recluse. Even Diana Ross has been sent home. And the fact that the annual Zine Poll votes are now flooding in to the massed banks of his computers seems to be of no interest to him, despite it being the only Hobby award he has never quite managed to win in his long and brilliant career. But again, tales such as this can always contain a twist... Now read on...

For what must have been the twentieth time I looked at the printout of the Zine Poll results, my recently dour features now transformed by an enormous smile. "Oh my," I shouted, "what a victory, what a margin, what a totally brilliant plan! Oh I really fooled them this year, didn't I? Pretend your partner has been killed, stage a fake funeral, make sure there's nothing but grief and heartache for a month or two and then what happens? Everyone in the Hobby is so sorry for you that the sympathy votes just come flooding in! Ha – I did it! I actually did it!"

But then I thought of Ulrika, lying in that cold coffin, and rushed off to the graveyard...

...it took me an age to clear away the soil and expose her resting place. Then I pulled out the nails ...



"Oh Ulrika," I cried as I saw her lovely body again, "it worked!"

She looked at me and I could see she was much less than happy. "So, big deal," she snarled, "just bloody get me out of here!"

I pulled her out of the coffin and drove her back to my Cotswold mansion as quickly as I could – even I could tell there was much talking to do....

"But Ulrika, the plan worked! The sympathy vote was overwhelming! I've finally won the Zine Poll and my quest for total Hobby domination is finally complete!"

But Ulrika just continued to eat her lobster...



"I don't give a sod about the Zine Poll anymore."



"I was shut in that coffin for TWO MONTHS!"
(as she started on the second lobster).



"Nothing but pills to eat and a couple of bottles of gin!"
(and then she started her third)



"To hell with the sympathy vote – next year you're on your own!"

I waited a moment and then pulled her into my arms.
"Oh Ulrika, I don't know how to say this, but...but there might not be a next year!"

She looked at me in horror. "Richard, what do you mean?"

(TO BE CONTINUED)

[[I still deny that Richard Walkerdine exists. I also deny this article exists. I'm not even sure YOU exist.]]

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Deductive Reasoning Diplomacy Puzzle

By Jérémie Lefrançois

In this final table of championship of the world of Diplomacy, only the English speaking countries were represented.

Can you reconstruct the rating at the final table of the five first, namely their power played, first name, nationality and the misorder made?

- The American was upset with himself because of having made a mistake in his support order. Was this voluntary?
- Brett finished right in front of Doug.
- The English made a mistake on a movement, error of orders fortunately without consequence for him thereafter...
- The Entente Cordiale was not it as much as that, since these two powers entered in conflict right at the beginning, which was worth to them to be both the two only eliminated at the end of this memorable game.
- The New-Zealander, who played Turkey, finishes just on the podium.
- The champion won with a central power in spite of a hazardous retreat at the end of the game.
- Brett finishes just behind the player who made a mistake in a movement.
- The Canadian began the part by playing the steamroller but all did not occur as envisaged since he finishes fifth.
- The awkward conveyor comes from the American continent.
- "Fed up with playing Austria" exclaimed Chris when seeing the title escaping to him near a place.
- The Italian player comes from an insular country.
- The Australian was in the same team as the guy who made a mistake in his build.
- Alan could, during this game, implement the principles of the "Lepanto" which Edi¹, another player of the game, had explained to him one year before.

Information for non-Diplomacy players:

- ⤴ *The played countries are: Germany, Austria, England, France, Italy, Russia and Turkey.*
- ⤴ *A "steamroller" implies Russia and Turkey.*
- ⤴ *A "Lepanto" implies Italy and Austria.*
- ⤴ *The central powers are: Germany, Austria and Italy.*
- ⤴ *The errors of orders considered here are: movement, support, retreat, build and convoy.*
- ⤴ *The players of the eliminated countries are always classified behind the others.*
- ⤴ *As elsewhere, the "Entente Cordiale" relates to England and France.*
- ⤴ *The concept of team does not bring anything to the problem.*

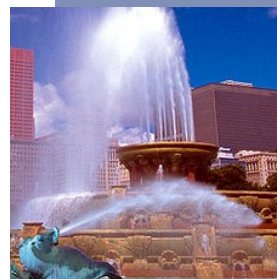
Solution:

Place	First name	Played country	Nationality	Error of orders
1st				
2nd				
3rd				
4th				
5th				

[[If you can fill out the table with the clues provided, send your answers to me at diplomacyworld@yahoo.com]]



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And What is the Deal with Scoring Systems?

By Alex Maslow

I know little and less about scoring systems, so I'm probably not the one to be writing this article. Until 2010, I didn't even know tournament Diplomacy existed, and until DiplomacyCast, I had no idea scoring was the subject of such heated contention. But I am nothing if not a math nerd, and I was thrilled to find a way to mix that enthusiasm with Diplomacy.

At first I shrugged off the debate about different scoring systems between Nathan and Eric (It's hard to recall who said what, so let's just call them Nateneric, like Lord of the Files' Samneric) as a sort of weird technical debate. Points are points, right? And solos are wins and lesser performances receive less points. The difference between scoring systems is how these differences are numerically represented. But, honestly, the difference should be negligible, because we all basically can agree that it's better to..... do better. Right?

But then Nateneric said that some scoring systems encourage working for draws, while others encourage more cutthroat play. This struck me as odd, but I honestly paid it only passing thought, casually puzzling out the differences in my head.

However, now I am playing in Diplomaticcorp's Winter Blitz, which is a fast-paced online tournament (1 week per game year, instead of per turn, which is the standard in online Dip (at least on DC)). It has a draw-based scoring system. If you are eliminated from the game, you get 2 points (I have no idea why it isn't just zero). If you survive till the end, but are not part of the draw (or if a player solos), you get 4 points. If you are in a 6-way draw, you get 6 points (and the rare treat of being in a 6-way draw). 8 points for 5-way, 10 for 4-way, 12 for 3-way. A 2-way gives you 15 points, and a solo gives you 20 points. Further, you are awarded 0.1 points per supply center, which means if you have 7 centers in a 3 way draw, you get 12.7 points. Getting a solo would net you 21.8 points.

This system is wildly different from another popular scoring system, called sum of squares, which rewards points largely on the supply center spread. That is, it doesn't give points on how many centers you have, but gives points for how many MORE centers you have than any others. 12 centers, if you top the board, might be a decent score, whereas 12 centers when someone else has 15 is significantly less points. Further, if you have 12 and another player has 15, your points are greatly affected by the distribution of the remaining 7 centers. Does one player have them? Less points. Are they divided between 2 or 3 players? More points for you (and the player with 15).

Nateneric described it best by saying "Get big and bigger-er." Being big is good. Having relatively small rivals is better. The mathematics are very simple, if a little longwinded. Take everyone's raw center count. Square each number. Add those numbers. Divide that number by the number of surviving players. Now take each player's squared number and divide it by that number. Then multiply it by 100 to get that player's score. Sounds complicated, I know. But don't worry – math symbols are here to save the day!

S_x = amount of supply centers (subscript indicates player number), squared. T = Total points. U = Subtotal I = Individual points.

$$S_1 + S_2 + S_3 + S_4 + S_5 = T, \text{ Then } S_x / T = F. F * 100 = I$$

Still confused? Let's take a sample game. Italy has 15 centers, Russia has 12, Germany has 7.

$$15^2 = 225, 12^2 = 144, 7^2 = 49. \text{ Therefore: } 225 + 144 + 49 = 418, 225/418 = .54, 144/418 = .34, 49/418 = .11$$

Multiplying each by 100 is easy – just get rid of the decimal point.

So Italy has 54 points, Russia has 34, Germany has 11 (for those of you keeping count, 1 point is lost because I did not use more than 2 decimal points. That seems fair. Italy did strongly, Russia less so, and Germany the least. But what if Germany has 4 centers and England is still alive with 3?

$$15^2 = 225, 12^2 = 144, 4^2 = 16, 3^2 = 9 \text{ Therefore: } 225 + 144 + 16 + 9 = 394, 225/394 = .57, 144/394 = .36, 16/394 = .04, 9/394 = .02$$

Now Italy has 57 points, Russia has 36, Germany has a mere 4, and England has a measly 2.

Italy and Russia get more points for not allowing the remaining centers into only one power's hand. Further, Italy w/ more supply centers is rewarded more (+3 points – Russia only gets +2)

Without showing all the work for the following examples, I'd like to point out something else interesting. If Italy has 15, Russia has 12 and Germany has 7, and Italy takes 1 from Russia, his score goes up to 60 (from 54). Taking one from Germany, meanwhile, gives him 58 points. So that 16th center is worth a different amount depending who loses it. Similarly, if Russia takes a center from Germany, Italy's score goes down to 55. If

Russia and Italy both take a center from Germany, Russia goes up to 38, while Italy goes down to 56 (or stays at 57. The actual score would be 56.88888..., so I guess it would be the TD's call). $12/15 = .8$, while $13/16$ is $.81$. So the difference of raw numbers is not important (Italy has 3 more than Russia in both) but the overall ratio. If you can't do this kind of math in your head, a quick trick is that for every 1 center your rival gets, you ought to get 2, or else your score will go down. Similarly, if you're that 12-center power, insist to the 15-center that 1:1 growth is fair and won't drastically affect the score. It sounds so logical as to be obvious, and honestly explaining how it isn't fair is so time consuming they probably won't bother trying. And it's true, a 1:1 growth doesn't affect the score much. But it does affect it, and certainly several 1:1 growths will dilute the score significantly.

Because the points are essentially a ratio of strength, the system breaks down when a solo occurs. 18 centers is hard enough, can you imagine if your points also depended on how large your (defeated) neighbors were?! In the case of a solo, the winner gets a whopping 100 points (to represent his total [100%] victory), and everyone else gets zero points

The implication of these different scoring systems is vast. Allow me to illustrate with an example: my Winter Blitz game. Because only the endgame is important, I'll gloss the details, so those in DC408, don't take offense if I ignore some of your heroic deeds.

I was Germany. I got into Burgundy in S01, and England got into the channel. France NMR'd in W01 and S02, and then collapsed. Austria got eaten, and our EG attacked Russia. Turkey took complete advantage of this and leapfrogged in centers. But Turkey convinced me he just wanted a big draw. He said a solo would result in a target being put on his back for round 2. I believed him and stabbed England. It went terribly.

Turkey seemed in position to solo. England and I made up and decided to hold the line against him. England had 9, I had 6, and Turkey had 15. England kept Turkey in the Med, and I blocked Turkey from coming north of Austria. Within a year, we had stopped him. I thought the end game result would be obvious: a 3-way draw. Turkey's in the draw for topping the board, and England and I are in the draw for stopping his solo. Turkey demanded I agree to an ET 2-way, however. I refused, saying England had needed me to stop him, and so I deserved the 12 points (instead of only 4 for surviving). Unfortunately, England stabbed me and knocked me down a center, and I agreed to end the game in a 2-way ET draw. I got 4.5 points. Had I accepted the ET draw the previous turn (assuming my no-vote was the one blocking it), I would've gotten 4.6 points. So I technically lost a point for my stubbornness, right?

Had the scoring system been sum of squares, I absolutely would've voted for the draw. Well, had the scoring system been sum of squares, the only draw possible would've been a DIAS (because points are not awarded for survivor/draw participants, so there's no point haggling over it). But had the game been scored sum of squares, I would never veto that draw. I had 6 and was in the middle of two big powers. Had England not stabbed me, I might have gained one. But that gain doesn't dramatically increase my score, nor is there any reason for England or Turkey to help me into that center. I would write orders to get that center and voted for the draw. If the draw failed and I had gotten another center, I would be glad of my good fortune and then tried to end the game before anything went wrong. In fact, as soon as my stab of England went awry, I would start proposing draws. I'm not going to be gaining a significant amount of centers, and the longer the game goes on, the more time England/Turkey have of sniping centers from the little powers.

Turkey even demanded I vote for the ET, pointing out I had no centers left to gain. I should, in his view, take my 4.6 points and move on, before I lose them. Fair enough. But we weren't scoring on centers.

Looking at WB's past standings, very few of the top 7 positions are separated by .1-3 of points (many of the bottom positions ARE separated this way, but that's because it's full of players who survived both rounds, and so they each have 8 points (two survivals) and then a few centers for fractional points). In 2010, places 4th through 8th are separated by .5 points. Other than that, the top placements for 3 years of tournaments are separated by 1 or more full point. Getting or losing one center was not going to make a difference. So why wasn't I letting the game end?

Not all provinces are created equal. 6 units all bunched around France are pretty redundant, while 6 units split into two forces of three in different areas of the board are vulnerable to a concentrated strike. I had armies in Germany, Marseilles, and Moscow. I felt my units were critical to the effort in stopping Turkey. I felt Turkey should show me some respect for my efforts, and England should be grateful for my help, and therefore I would be involved in the draw. This would hurtle my points from 4.6 to 12.6, a great leap. As the game continued, I pointed to Turkey where my units were holding crucial strategic points, and loudly explained to England how I was protecting the center/east of the board almost by myself.

As you know, it didn't work out for me. My persistence was interpreted as pigheadedness, and England stabbed me. At that point, I knew I couldn't convince them, and I accepted the draw (only a Russian NMR vetoed it, and Turkey made huge gains and soloed after all). And while keeping the game going clearly did not

work in my interest, I don't think it was the wrong choice. I was essentially gambling I could get 8 more points, and risked at most .5 points (there was very little chance I'd be eliminated, since that would almost certainly open the game to a solo (as the end proved – England took Kiel and Turkey took Munich on the final turn)). It was a reasonable gamble, though I lost. I'd surely do it again.

Looking back on the game and thinking about each scoring system, an interesting trend appears. In sum of squares, the scoring system begs players to be aggressive at the end of the game. It would be silly not to. Every center counts... a lot! It also encourages big powers to team up with small powers (ensuring centers are well-distributed) against other big powers (who are hoarding points). Small powers can capitalize on this, making an easy case to point-conscious board leaders. Meanwhile the small powers, though fighting under the banner of opposing major powers, are essentially working towards the same goal: to ensure the major powers are roughly equal. It limits the points the major powers get, preventing single player from leaping in front of the pack in points.

Draw-based systems, on the other hand, encourage stabs and draws. It encourages stabs because the penalty of being taken down a few centers is pretty minimal. Even going from 8 to 4 is less than half a point. And if your potential reward for stabbing is to be in a position to dictate draws, it is almost certainly worth it.

This scoring system also greatly requires the smaller powers to work make their case to the major powers, as the larger powers have almost no incentive to keep them around. Then again, there is little incentive to get rid of them. It doesn't matter if each power has 12 or 15 centers, a 2-way draw is worth the same. Sniping centers has very little reward. Similarly, smaller powers do little by snagging a few centers away from one of the leaders.

Instead of focusing on the raw numbers (or the spread of the centers), players should try to make themselves diplomatically indispensable. Short of throwing a solo to another player, there is no tactical threat that is dramatic enough to be taken seriously. However, having a few pieces in strategically critical places could be enough. A 3 center power could, with clever positioning and negotiating, walk away with more points than an irrelevant 4 center power because he's himself weaseled into the draw.

Meanwhile, the larger powers can force a smaller draw by threatening the minor powers with elimination. At that point, the smaller players accept their position, or try to use their remaining time to unbalance the board such to create a solo situation. In that case, the other small

powers might help out, as they will get their 4 survival points whether there is a two-way draw or solo. The difference with a solo is that, of the two leading players, one player is slightly rewarded (16.5 for 15 centers in a two-way draw to 21.8 for a solo) and one is vastly penalized (16.5 for 15 centers in a two-way draw to 5.2 for 12 centers surviving a solo).

In short, sum of squares is a system that encourages cutthroat play, and leads to a clash of titans. Stabs are executed only when they are almost sure to work, and smaller powers work with large ones, not just to buy their survival, but to ensure the supply centers are evenly split, thus dampening the score total.

Draw-based systems, however, lead to an entirely different type of play. Stabs, while no less dramatic, have less effect on the score. The end-game is fairly peaceful, with eliminations methodically executed, and usually a power being eliminated (in the end-game) is eliminated because he is seen as an unbalancing force.

If there are two or three board leaders, they will, very early in the end-game, begin setting up the draw. It is more important to be amicable to each other, and thus be able to agree on a draw, than hostile, which drags out the game for fractional points. Meanwhile, the minor powers will scramble to alarm the major powers of solo threats, perhaps even briefly helping one power get a key center, and then position themselves such that they are indispensable to the balance of power, and possibly get into a draw (thus getting a lot of points, despite having 5 or so centers).

Unlike sum of squares, the minor powers will not be able to cooperate in this endeavor. In SoS, if the smaller can even out the score of the major powers, they all benefit. In draw-based, each power is, individually, trying to get on the inside track with the major powers. Getting even more powers in the draw reduces their own points.

So we can see here how drastically a game of Diplomacy can be affected by a scoring system. These obviously aren't all the systems, but they give us a good range of what can happen. I have a preference, but it isn't important to this article. What's important to note is that WDC in Chicago this year will score using sum of squares. So, you know. Steel yourself for a brutal tournament.

[[Of course, in my case, it doesn't matter what scoring system is used. I will score a 0.0]]

EuroDipCon XIX – Your Tournament Director’s Report

By David Simpson

As one of two Brits at the WAC/EDC tournament in Paris in 2010, I attended the hobby meeting which always takes place at EDC so that plans can be laid about who’s hosting the next tournament, who should be on the EDA Committee and who is doing what in the European hobby in general. For some reason or other, there were not a lot of takers for the job of hosting the 2011 event, so having been asked about it a few hours before (and being fairly non-committal) yours truly was the only volunteer! So, unanimously voted in to the TD’s role and on to the EDA Committee, I set out to organize something a lot bigger than I had done before, without a tournament confirmed to run the event and without anyone else from the UK knowing what I had done. That didn’t last long though, I hadn’t even got back home before I met Dan Lester on the Eurostar platform and he already knew! (Yes, Dan was the other UK player at EDC, he doesn’t just hang around St Pancras Eurostar waiting to see who he can bump in to). Toby Harris also got in touch with me about it before I had told anyone else. News travels fast in Diplomacy circles, doesn’t it? Toby and Dan were both enthusiastic, so I was certain I had done the right thing.

As the above took place in August 2010, I had plenty of time to plan things before 2011 even started. This was a good thing. I’d not really thought much more about EDC before the next large UK tournament, MidCon in November, other than deciding to offer the tournament to MidCon before thinking about having it anywhere else. The offer was made, accepted and everyone seemed happy enough with the whole thing. MidCon was moving from Birmingham to Derby for 2011 as well, so any additional players drawn in to EDC would bolster the MidCon numbers and make the bargaining position for future years at the same hotel a little more favorable. Result! Suddenly, I had a lot less to think about, game rooms, hotel, all the organizational aspects were already being dealt with by the MidCon Committee, so joining that to run the Dip side of things was a weight off my mind. The good news there was that I still had a year to sort things out, which would prove to be ideal.

I was able to set up all the background details, tournament format, website info and so on in early 2011, Laurent Joly has a website, <http://eurodipcon.com> which had advertised the 2010 event in Paris, so we re-wrote that to handle the 2011 event and to give people a place to go to sign up. By the next big UK tournament, ManorCon in July 2011, a whole 5 people had signed up for EDC (including me). Fortunately I was able to take a couple of registrations whilst I was there, so at least we had enough for 1 board by the end of July. Diplomacy can be a game which works well if you are a bit non-committal and then act swiftly at the last minute with the

element of surprise, but Tournament Organizers must hate that!

As an aside, the next EuroDipCon is being held in San Marino in May 2011. You can find all the information you need at the EDC website (<http://eurodipcon.com>) or linked from there. If you are thinking of taking a trip to this tournament, please head on over to the site and sign up today! All TD’s will thank you. See you there.

Fortunately, the lure of an event like EDC is enough that a good chunk of the top European players don’t want to miss it. There was quite a rush of late sign-ups to MidCon and we had a tournament! That meant that I could also get on with ordering more than one trophy, confirm the team round and all the other small things that need to be done near to an event. Not too near an event mind, as I had the small issue of flying out to Singapore the weekend before MidCon! I worked there for a few days and flew back in to the UK on Wednesday, giving me just enough time at home to pick up the trophies and medals, before driving to Derby on Thursday ready for the tournament on Friday. That coulda gone horribly, horribly wrong. Last time I came back from Singers I was jetlagged for 2 days, this time I was OK. This time it was the trophies and medals which were not OK, quite a few spelling mistakes led to some frantic calls to the supplier who thankfully rushed out replacements by courier!

As it panned out, there were a few additional faces turning up on the day, the player contesting the award for craziest journey with me was the US dwelling Antipodean Peter McNamara who dropped in for the weekend whilst globetrotting! When the board call for the first round got underway, 22 players based in the UK were joined by 11 players from overseas in what was the largest tournament held in Britain for 5 years (since I started in the hobby).

The tournament setup itself was pretty standard for an EDC. Three rounds of Diplomacy over the Friday night and Saturday were the qualifying rounds to determine the top board, from which the winner of the tournament would come. The tournament format saw all games ending after a maximum of 7 game years, with c-Diplo scoring rewarding the player who topped the board, regardless of the gap between players. As I had no idea how many people were actually going to show up, I had set the scoring in the first three rounds to only slightly favor those players who played three rounds over those playing two. Two rounds out of three scored 100% each,

whilst 3 rounds scored 100% of best, 80% of second 40% of third.



C-Diplo is a European system, but one which has been played at MidCon before, as I had introduced it there to make sure that quite a lot of the Brits who'd not played abroad were also familiar with it. Yes, you folks from further overseas, the UK tends to play a sum of squares type system, whilst the rest of Europe does a lot of c-Diplo, so the UK stands alone outside Europe once more. There are a number exceptions to this sweeping dip scoring generalization of course.

As the Friday night saw all 33 players in attendance, your Tournament Director and the evidently insane Mark Wightman both took two positions to make up 5 boards. Not something to be taken lightly given the level of competition in the room, but sometimes you just have to do what you have to do. Thanks Mark for volunteering! The best results this round were Toby Harris (Germany) with 11 centers, Dan Lester (Austria) 10 and Peter McNamara (France) 9. All three of these players would go on to make the top board. Graeme Murphy (Germany) and Shaun Derrick (Italy) tied with 8 each on board 2, whilst board 3 saw 5 players finish on 6 centers each.

Both of Saturdays rounds saw four boards being played. In the morning, the highlights were Rene van Rooijen (Russia) 12, Chetan Radia (Germany) 11 and Alex Lebedev (France) 9. Rene and Chetan went on to make it to the top board on Sunday. Both Toby and Dan scored decent results again and the top 7 positions

looked like this...

1. Dan Lester 73.0
2. Rene van Rooijen 69.8
3. Toby Harris 60.5
4. Peter McNamara 57.5
5. Chetan Radia 53.0
6. Alex Lebedev 49.0
7. Graeme Murphy 43.5

So the debate started over whether playing a third round was a wise move or not. Dan decided that he was safe and Toby was not so sure. Your tournament director had played Agricola that morning so was wondering if it were best to share your house with a sheep or a cow. Not very useful. Anyway, it transpired that Dan decided to skip round 3 and Toby played. Who would be proven to be right?

In the afternoon, Gwen Maggi (Germany) 12, Toby Harris (France) 11, Fabian Straub (Russia) 9 were the stand out individual performances, with Gwen making the top board also. Toby had made sure that he was on the top board, with Fabian, the defending champion from the previous EDC, missing out by a small margin. The final player to qualify for the top board was Vincent Reulet, who's not got a mention up to now. Vincent did not have to finish top of any of the three qualifying boards to make it to the top board, as he was incredibly consistent in all three rounds. That's tough to do in any tournament, let alone EDC.

The top 8 positions after round 3 looked like this...

1. Toby Harris 94.2
2. Dan Lester 73.0
3. Gwen Maggi 69.0
4. Rene van Rooijen 68.0
5. Peter McNamara 63.0
6. Vincent Reulet 58.6
7. Chetan Radia 56.0
8. Fabian Straub 53.2

Each of the 7 players on the top board then earned a 15% bonus on their score up to this point to help keep them ahead of the masses (not reflected above).

The Saturday afternoon round was also the team round, with nine teams of three players contesting that competition. Some teams were formed in advance over the interwebs, whilst some teams were so last minute, that there was not really time for the team members to think up a name! (Yes, I'm looking at you, members of "Drive Faster Next Time" in which the TD exercised his prerogative to try to be funny at Manu's expense and "Too late To Make Up A Name" where the TD evidently lost any inclination to be creative). The team competition was very close indeed, the top three teams being as follows;

1st with 66 points – The Smokin' Joes (Gwen Maggi, Peter McNamara, Mark Wightman)
 2nd with 65 points – When I Reulet the World (Laurent Joly, Graeme Murphy, Vincent Reulet)
 3rd with 54 points – Saddam, Gadaffi and the Ayatolla (Duncan Adams, Brian Frew, Toby Harris)

Sunday's top board was run in a separate room, with two other boards taking place in the main room. Only the winner of the tournament was guaranteed to come from the top board, so there was still plenty to play for on those other two boards. Mark Wightman's 10 center Turkey and Igor Kurt's 8 center England were enough to win those boards and hence give them a good chance of displacing some top board competitors from the top 7.

On the top board itself, the first two years were quite cagey, then a notable development took place as an alliance between the two French Players, Gwen (France) and Vincent (Germany) steadily disposed of Chetan's England, whilst the east continued to struggle to resolve itself. In fact, the only thing that the East could agree about for the whole game was that it looked like Gwen was going to win. By 1905, Gwen was clearly ahead and he managed to maintain that advantage until game end to become the new European Champion.

Top board results...

1. France Gwen Maggi 10 centers
2. Germany Vincent Reulet 6 centers
3. Italy Rene van Rooijen 5 centers
4. Russia Peter McNamara 5 centers
5. Austria Toby Harris 4 centers
6. Turkey Dan Lester 4 centers
7. England Chetan Radia 4 centers

This tournament was also the last event of the 2011 Tour of Britain, a series of tournaments which have been formed in to an overall annual competition by ukf2fdip.org the organization which exists to encourage F2F play in the UK. This year, the Tour of Britain was dominated by one player, Graeme Murphy, who claimed his Tour of Britain victory - and the Bob Kendrick Shield, with a creditable performance at EDC, to complete a year in which he finished first at Brighton DipCon in May and first at ManorCon in July (featuring a solo as Austria).

Congratulations to Gwen, Graeme and the Smokin' Joes on their wins! Also, thanks to everyone who came along to this tournament for making it such a success.

EuroDipCon XIX Overall Results

	Player	Final	Awards
1	Gwen Maggi	128.35	Best Germany. Best
2	Toby Harris	113.33	Best France. Best
3	Dan Lester	88.95	Best Austria
4	Mark Wightman	88.4	Best Turkey
5	Vincent Reulet	88.39	
6	Rene van Rooijen	87.75	Best Russia
7	Peter McNamara	81.95	
8	Igor Kurt	75.0	Best England. Best
9	Fabian Straub	71.7	
10	Alex Lebedev	69.3	
11	Chetan Radia	65.4	
12	Brian Frew	58.7	
13	Keith Smith	46.8	
14	Graeme Murphy	43.8	
15	Laurent Joly	42.64	
16	Richard Bolton	39.8	
17	David Wigglesworth	39.5	Nicest Player

18	Shaun Derrick	39.0	Best Italy
19	Duncan Adams	34.4	
20	Emmanuel du	31.2	Best Defender
21	Tom Garretv	30.4	
22	Bernard Andrioli	29.8	
23	Francesco Conte	28.4	
24	Emeric Miszti	26.1	
25	Holger Fiedler	23.9	
26	Robin Walters	18.8	
27	Andrew Havery	16.4	
28	Rob Kinsev	12.6	
29	David Norman	7.0	
30	Steve Aaa	5.2	
31	Stewart Nairn	5.0	
32	Craig Nve	1.0	
NC	Dave Simpson	10.5	

Details of all the boards can be found on the World Diplomacy database http://www.world-diplomacy-database.com/php/results/tournament_board_list.php?id_tournament=1351

Buckeye Game Fest XIII

September 20th – 23rd
Columbus, Ohio



Tournament Details:

The Buckeye Game Fest will be held for the twelfth time this October featuring many Ohio Boardgame Championships. The Diplomacy Tournament will be three rounds running on Friday and Saturday. Best Country Awards and a Championship plaque will be awarded on Sunday following the third round. Each player who registers for the convention will receive at least one FREE boardgame. Registering for the convention is the only fee required to participate in the tournament!

Round One – 6pm Friday

Round Two – 10am Saturday

Round Three – 6pm Saturday

Scoring: Carnage

Rank: Best two out of three rounds

Hotel: The Ramada Plaza Hotel and Conference Center (<http://ramadaplazacolumbus.com/>)

Gaming: Open Gaming will start at Noon on Thursday and run until 5pm Sunday. Scheduled events will begin at 2pm on Thursday (October 13th) and run the length of the con.

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

Dealers: We've got commitments from RC Hobbies, GMT Games, Academy Games, Eagle/Gryphon Games, and Queen Games.

Contact Thomas Haver for further details at tjhaver@gmail.com

<http://www.buckeyegamefest.com/>

XENOGOGIC: An Occasional Column

Devoted to the World of Diplomacy

by Larry Peery

Milestones tend to come faster the older one gets and the numbers get bigger as the years roll by. Sigh. I've been so busy preparing this issue of XENOGOGIC that I almost over-looked one, a rather major one I suppose, at least to me. It was fifty years ago this spring that XENOGOGIC first appeared as a column in my high school newspaper, but more on that later.

It's spring and a young Dipper's thoughts turn to oligarchies, right? Well, perhaps not, but I promise you that after you this read this issue's column of Peeriblah you'll at least be aware of them. While we'll be focusing on The Oligarchs of Russia in this discussion it wouldn't be unreasonable to apply the term to similar groups in China, the USA, and even Vatican City (Are you reading this, Dan Brown?). Hopefully you can create your own comparisons between these real world mega-power oligarchies and what you've seen and been a part of around a Diplomacy board. After all, there really isn't that much difference between the two is there? They both consist of a group of individuals, usually numbering from seven to thirteen; interacting according to a more or less commonly accepted system of rules; using a variety of means: tactical, strategic, and diplomatic; with shared norms and values, commonly called power and influence; --- all with the ultimate objective of becoming winner, victor, champion, dictator, or The Great Leader.

After our look at Russia and its oligarchs, we'll take a look at what's happening in the real world of diplomacy; and there's a lot of it to look at this spring. Hardly a week goes by that there isn't at least one diplomatic event going on somewhere in the world: bilateral, multilateral, regional, global, etc. Why it almost sounds like the world of Diplomacy!

Last year's WDC is already one for the history books, but this year's event is only a few months away, and I'll give you some reasons for going besides the obvious one of winning a world championship.

Dippers often become so involved with the strategy, tactics, and diplomacy of the game that they forget the importance of its spatial relationships (e.g. a fancy term for what we commonly call variants). I've always loved the variant designing and playing side of the hobby; and I've got a couple of possible scenario ideas to share with you, one about as macro as you can get and one about as micro as you can get, but both inspired by something Russian.

My reading this last quarter focused heavily on Russia so that's where our reviews are mostly drawn from. If

you manage to read through the list I promise you'll be an up-to-date Russian Oligarch yourself.

I could begin this discussion of the Russian Oligarchs and Vladimir Putin with last month's election in Russia, or even 12 years ago when Putin was first elected as Russia's president, but that would be leaving out a lot of the story. So let's go back to the beginning, way back to 968 A.D. Russia as we know it today didn't yet exist but we can get a pretty good idea of what it was like from the original Russian Chronicles or a more up-to-date source like "Vladimir the Russian Viking" by Vladimir Volkoff. Geography then, as now, was important. Russia, as it would come to be known, was divided into vast areas of forests and grasslands with great rivers serving as highways linking the two and their powerful neighbors on all sides. It made the area a good base for outward expansion and inward invasion; and Russia's history is full of both. The local tribes eventually got tired of fighting amongst themselves and invited a Viking lord to come and be their ruler. It was he, Vladimir, that founded the Russian state and converted his people to Christianity. A string of victories on the battlefields and in the dynastic bedrooms eventually created a state powerful enough to resist attempts to destroy it, both from within and without. Christianity provided the bond that tied the areas Slavic, Viking, and Greek elements together into the Great Russian empire wannabe. Times passed. Some good. Some bad. But constantly the Russian state expanded and its wealth grew, still linked by the empire Vladimir created and nurtured, and inspired by his faith which had become theirs.

Enemies appeared and were vanquished, first the Mongols and later Napoleon; defeated by Russia's vastness, weather, and patience. And then came a new enemy: technology. Modern technology was an enemy that the Russians could not defeat with their weak military or their decaying faith, at least among the ruling class. Russia's salvation came in guise of its second great Vladimir, Lenin. Lenin's communism revived its peoples' faith. But Lenin, like Vladimir the Great before him, was wise enough to realize he couldn't do everything himself and he delegated power and responsibility to others. Trotsky reformed the military that eventually won the Russian civil war. Again, like Vladimir the Great, Lenin ruled not as an autocrat but as leader of an oligarchy. Vladimir depended on his nobles. Lenin depended on his politburo colleagues, but both were oligarchies. It was Stalin who became, in time, the generalissimo. And more time passed. Not as much as before but times moved faster in the 20th century. Some were good. The victory in the Great Patriotic War was

one. Sputnik and the race to put a man into space were others. But times were also hard, especially economically. The costs of competing with the west in the Cold War and maintaining an empire were more than the Russians could afford. Slowly at first and then faster and faster the once mighty Russian empire began to collapse.

And with it the old oligarchy that traced its roots back to Lenin and Stalin. Khrushchev, who had toppled Stalin; then Brezhnev, who had toppled Khrushchev; and then like dominos their heirs fell. Desperate the remaining members of the oligarchy brought into some new blood. Enter Gorbachev, the man of perestroika and glasnost, who knew that the past was gone, but didn't quite know what to replace it with or how to do it. And this is when it gets fascinating. The old oligarchy based on idealism and party loyalty began to morph into something younger and different based on economic reality and simple greed for wealth and lust for power, in this case financial power. The story can be found in "The Oligarchs" by David E. Hoffman, the story of wealth and power in the new Russia. Gorbachev was no certain winner in the struggle between the old and new orders. Boris Yeltsin helped him out, and then helped himself to the Kremlin. Moscow and the oligarchs supported him. Corruption replaced communism as the modus operandi of the time, but once again the times were changing faster than politicians or business magnates could keep up with them. It was time to find a replacement for Yeltsin, but who?

Enter our third Vladimir, the not-so-great Putin. But why him? First, he was loyal to Yeltsin, he would protect Yeltsin's legacy. Second, he came from Leningrad, not Moscow, so he had no personal following in Moscow that was a threat to the oligarchs. Third, he was young and healthy, potentially the strong leader the Russians outside Moscow wanted so badly. And so the battle lines were drawn. At the center of the struggle was the Kremlin, occupied by Putin and his allies from the secret service and financed by the wealth of the former KGB and Communist Party; surrounded by the Oligarchs and their cabals in Moscow, who were busy looting (legally, of course) the wealth of Russia and, more importantly, the sources of that wealth. In turn, the Oligarchs and Moscow were surrounded by the vastness of Russia, where times were not moving faster but where, in fact, standing still. Something had to change. And it did.

For the recent highlights of what's going on check out Wikipedia's entry on "Russian oligarchs." And here's the media report on what just happened.

From Associated Press, 10 December 2011
Russia's stunning protests end with hint of change
Gary Peach and Sofia Javed

From Associated Press, 24 December 2011
Tens of thousands rally against Putin
By Lynn Berry

From Los Angeles Times, 24 December 2011
Tens of thousands of Russian protestors want Vladimir Putin out. Russian activists in Moscow escalate their protests against Vladimir Putin despite promises of reform from him and Dmitri Medvedev after the disputed parliamentary elections.
By Sergei Loiko

From GlobalPost, 17 January 2012
Putin publishes a political manifesto
By Fred Weir

From New York Times, 1 February 2012
Putin Concedes He May Not Win in 1st Round
By Ellen Barry

From Associated Press, 12 February 2012
Faces of Protest, Russians bundle up to demonstrate against Putin
By Alexander Zemlianichenko

From Washington Post, 21 February 2012
Putin promises Russian military buildup
By Will Englund

From Voice of America, 24 February 2012
Russia's Prime Minister Vows Military Spending Hike
By James Brooke

From Time, 20 February 2012
How Oil Is Propping Up Putin, The dirty little secret of the Russian leader's success? \$116-a-barrel oil
By Fareed Zakaria

From Associated Press, 28 February 2012
Tank town symbolizes Putin's campaign
By Peter Leonard

From NPR, 28 February 2012
Vladimir Putin says that assassination plot doesn't 'bother' him
By Howard Amos

From Wall Street Journal, 29 February 2012
After Putin, Even the Russian leader's allies are now contemplating the once unthinkable: a future without him.
By Gregory L. White

From Reuters, 29 February 2012
Russian media genie pushing at the bottle
By Nastassia Astraheuskaya

From New York Times, 1 March 2012
Midas Touch in St. Petersburg: Friends of Putin Glow

Brightly

By Andrew E. Kramer and David M. Herszenhorn

From CNN, 2 March 2012

Will Putin be able to make Russia great?

By Allen C. Lynch

From CNN, 3 March 2012

Putin poised to retake Russian presidency

By Staff

From New York Times, 3 March 2012

For Struggling Russians, Fear of Return to Hardship of '90s Fuels Support for Putin

By Michael Schwartz

From CNN, 3 March 2012

Russian presidential election explained

By Dave Gilbert

From Los Angeles Times, 3 March 2012

Russia deeply divided ahead of Putin presidential vote

No source

From Washington Post, 3 March 2012

Five myths about Vladimir Putin

By Andrew S. Weiss

From Moscow Times, 4 March 2012

Presidential Election 2012, Putin gets 65% of national vote, 48% in Moscow.

By Ken Martinez

From Associated Press, 4 March 2012

Exit Polls: Putin wins Russia's presidential vote with 59% of the vote

By Jim Heintz

From Associated Press, 4 March 2012

A tearful Putin claims Russian election victory

By Lynn Berry and Vladimir Isachenkov

From New York Times, 5 March 2012

Medvedev Orders Review of Oil Tycoon's Conviction

By Michael Schwartz

From New York Times, 5 March 2012

Moscow Protestors Denounce Putin Victory

By Ellen Barry and Michael Schwartz

From BBC

Russian election: Police arrest 550 at city protests

No source

From CNN, 5 March 2012

Putin beats the spread: The Winners: Putin, Medvedev, The Oligarchs; The Losers: The Middle Class, Young People, the United States

By Matthew Rojansky

From Chicago Tribune, 6 March 2012

Russian protestors fear Putin will get tough

By Timothy Heritage

From Associated Press, 6 March 2012

Putin dismisses opposition protests

By Vladimir Isachenkov

From New York Times, 9 March 2012

Though One More Rally Is Set, a Protest Wanes in Post-Election Russia

By Ellen Barry

From World, 16 March 2012

Putin's Big Promises Need Fueling by High Oil Prices

No source

From The Diplomat, 16 March 2012

Putin's Grand Plan for Asia

By Richard Weitz

From New York Times, 24 March 2012

Russian TV Broadcast Besmirching Protestors Draws a Furious Reaction

By Ellen Barry and Michael Schwartz

From Washington Post, 20 March 2012

Mayor's Race in Russia an opportunity for the opposition

By Will Englund

From New York Times, 26 March 2012

Marina Salye, Politician Who Tried to Prosecute Putin, Dies at 77

By Andrew Kramer

Yes, the sword is mightier than the pen, or so it appears. Consider the following media reports:

From Washington Post, 21 February 2012

Putin promises Russian military buildup

By Will Englund

From Associated Press, 13 March 2012

Russian official: No missile deal at NATO summit

No source

From Washington Post, 27 March 2012

President Obama defends 'flexibility' remarks to Medvedev

By David Nakamura

From Associated Press, 14 March 2012

Russia to offer air base to US for Afghan transit

By Vladimir Isachenkov

From Bloomberg

Floating-Casino Bid Turned Into China's Biggest Aircraft Carrier Purchase

By Paul Barrett

From New York Times, 15 March 2012
Six Monks vs. One Warship, from Varyag to Shi Lang
By Mark McDonald

From NPR, 15 March 2012
Famed USS Enterprise Takes Its Final Voyage
Credited to Associated Press

Michael Rubin in Commentary Magazine ponders on "What Diplomats Can Learn from the Military." Note that he doesn't ask it as a question. Apparently, in the thoughts of some not enough, because the University of Texas LBJ School of Public Affairs in Austin has announced the launch of a new multidisciplinary initiative to train global diplomats.

The history of dip&Dip is constantly being rewritten. The BBC reported 19 March 2012 a story on "The British general (Alan Brooke) who planned to arm Vichy France," and kept Churchill and DeGaulle in the dark about it. A bit more recently The Daily Mail on 13 March 2012 reports that "Britain made Argentina an offer in 1974 to Share the Falklands" in a secret document, but doesn't say whose idea it was.

Mark it on your calendar: 10 February is Diplomats' Day in Russia, at least according to The Voice of Russia on 11 February 2012. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov hosted a big party for foreign ambassadors to mark the occasion. Interestingly, at about the same time US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was holding the first collective gathering for all US ambassadors to other countries.

Miscellaneous Diplomatic Notes: When Thomas L. Friedman speaks or writes the world listens or reads. On 1 February 2012 his column in the NY Times was datelined Moscow and entitled "The Politics of Dignity," addressed to Putin and Medvedev and concerned Russia and the Arab Spring. On 27 January, 2012 the San Diego newspaper reported that Japan and Russia had agreed to boost economic and security ties. The first joint project announced was a venture with James Cameron to build a tourist center on the island of Tsushima which will include a real time reenactment of the battle and submarine tours of sunken battleships, etc. Not to be out-done the North and South Korean governments have announced a joint facility at Jeju Island that will feature live nuclear weapon and ballistic missile demonstrations. Indian sources report a new word for Chinese diplomacy - 'duplimacy'. Rose Gottenmoeller, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance for the USA recently gave a talk at the University of Washington called "From Telegraph to Twitter: Arms Control Diplomacy in the Information Age." Hard as it is believe, it's been forty years since Nixon went to China. Read

about it in Kenneth Lieberthal's "Lessons of the 40 years since Nixon went to China in CNN on 21 February 2012. Dip&dip merged in a recent Pentagon wargame called "Internal Look." Details are in the NY Times 20 March 2012 as reported by Mark Mazzetti and Thom Shanker. When will the Hasbro version appear? The Guardian (UK) reports on "America's apprehensive China diplomacy" on 15 February 2012, and that was just because China's vice-president was coming to Washington.

Then and Now: As mentioned above it has been forty years since Nixon went to China. And only a few months later DIPCON V was held in Chicago. Among things I remember about that event was the RT airfare from San Diego to Chicago was \$107, my first real limo ride (other than for a funeral) from the airport to the Sherman House Hotel (a notorious Mafia hang-out in its prime), being greeted on arrival by a CBS camera crew (Edi, I was wrong, it wasn't Mao's death that they were asking about it was the Lin Biao affair), sharing a suite that had closets bigger than most hotel rooms today with Jamie Young, and sneaking into the Palmer House Hotel to see Peggy Lee perform. Oh yes, and meeting Mayor Daley. Calhamer, Birsan, and Buchanan were also there and many of the customs and rituals that became standard in later Dipcons were firsts in Chicago. Edi remembers it this way, "DICPON V was held at the Sherman House Hotel in Chicago, hosted by Len Lakofka. This was the first really national DIPCON and was a really big boost to IDA. It was held in conjunction with a game show and featured a formal Diplomacy tournament, an awards banquet, and the first appearance by Allan Calhamer at a DIPCON. Oh yes, and Gary Gygax introduced his new game called Dungeons and Dragons." You can read more about the event in DIPLOMACY WORLD #55. I love Chicago, but I can only take so much of it, so my next visit was in 1991, when I had a layover on my way to the first Canadian Dipcon in Toronto. The highlight of that visit was meeting Mayor Daley II. My third visit was in 2003 when I took a 9,000 mile cross country Amtrak trip to visit WDC in Denver and then PrezCon in Charlottesville. Along the way I got snowed in in Chicago. That visit was memorable for two reasons: having a bus stop beside me while I was walking through Chicago's Chinatown and the driver telling me to get on the bus because that wasn't an area white folks ought to be in; and my first exposure to gay Japanese pornography (Think of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales and Fielding's Tom Jones wrapped into one.) Alas, there was no Mayor Daley III to meet and greet. I mention all this because this year's WORLD DIPCON will be held in Chicago this summer. You can find the details elsewhere in this issue, I'm sure. I urge any and all of you to go, and if you're coming from anywhere in the USA go by Amtrak. It beats the hell out of dealing with TSA, the airlines, and airports.

Thought for Today: The most important thing in Diplomacy is to be liked. The second most important thing in Diplomacy is not to be disliked. And the third most important thing is not to be boring.

A dipper's dream Diplomacy game board would include: Powell, Schwarzkopf, Bush Sr., Bush Jr., Albright, Holbrooke, Hillary Clinton, and George Shultz as GM.

Dip the way it should be played: Colin Bruce of Cambridge, England publishes a postal Diplomacy 'zine called Fury of the Northmen, and has game openings. You can contact him at furyofthenorthmen@btopenworld.com If you've never tried postal Diplomacy I recommend it highly. Trust me; life in the fast lane isn't all it's cracked up to be.

Variants large and small: Check out the story and map in Wikipedia in File:Mapmetro2.jpg. And then check out the story and map in the New York Times, 21 February 2012, called Manchurian Trivia.

Book Reviews:

Vladimir, The Russian Viking****
Vladimir Volkoff
Overlook Press, 2011

Catherine The Great****
Robert K. Massie
Random House, 2011

The Imperial Cruise, A Secret History of Empire and War****
James Bradley
Little, Brown 2009

George F. Kennan, An American Life****
John Lewis Gaddis
Penguin, 2011

Berlin 1961, Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Most Dangerous Place on Earth****
Frederick Kempe
Berkeley Books, 2011

Moscow, December 25, 1991****1/2
Conor O'Clery
Public Affairs, 2011

Next Time: We'll visit The Forbidden City, both of them: the one in Beijing and the one in Rome. The fall of Bo, rumors of coups in Beijing, the "Monsignors' mutiny" revealed by Vatican leaks, Vatican besieged by leaks, conspiracies, sounds like a new Dan Brown novel doesn't it?

Selected Upcoming Conventions

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

2012 CODCon Open - Saturday April 21st 2012 - Sunday April 22nd 2012 - Glen Ellyn, IL - Contact: Jim OKelley - Website: <http://windycityweasels.org/codcon6>

San Francisco Whipping - Saturday May 5th 2012 - Sunday May 6th 2012 - Hotel Tomo, 1800 Sutter Street, San Francisco, CA, United States - Website: <http://diplomacyblog.wordpress.com/whipping-2012/>

San Marino Con 2012 - EDC XX - Friday May 11th 2012 - Sunday May 13th 2012 - Hotel Palace **** - San Marino, San Marino - Contact: [Giancarlo Ceccoli](mailto:Giancarlo.Ceccoli) - Website: <http://www.asgs.sm>

Origins Game Fair - Thursday May 31st 2012 - Saturday June 2nd 2012 - Columbus, Ohio, United States - Website: <http://www.originsgames.com/>

ManorCon XXX - Friday July 20th 2012 - Monday July 23rd 2012 - Stamford Hall, University of Leicester, United Kingdom - Contact: [Dave Simpson](mailto:Dave.Simpson) - Website: <http://www.manorcon.org.uk>

World Dip Con at Weasel Moot VI - Friday August 10th 2012 - Sunday August 12th 2012 - Chicago, IL - Contact: [Jim OKelley](mailto:Jim.OKelley) - Website: <http://windycityweasels.org/wdc>

GenCon - Thursday August 16th 2012 - Sunday August 19th 2012 - Indianapolis, Indiana, United States - Website: <http://www.gencon.com/2012/indy/default.aspx>

Buckeye Game Fest XIII - Thursday September 20th 2012 - Sunday September 23rd 2012 - Columbus, Ohio, United States - Website: <http://www.buckeyegamefest.com>

Diplomacy Timer for Mac OS X

By Brian Shelden

History

I've always been a back-end programmer. "I don't make it pretty, I make it work," has always been my line in interviews.

However, in my last gig, I was assigning away the front-end tasks to other developers (the perks of being a project manager). However, the effect of that was to make a technical weakness of mine worse.

This fall, when I between projects, I decided to teach myself something new. I decided I'd teach myself to write some UI code. My goal was to write iPhone applications, as I'm a fan of the little mac I carry in my pocket every day.

The day I got started was 3 days after Apple removed the iPhone SDKs from the latest version of the compiler. :-/ They forced you to upgrade to the new version of the compiler (Xcode 4), which, in turn forced you to upgrade to the latest OS (Mac OS 10.6 Lion).

Which I didn't mind, in general. However, I was in Australia at the time. Australian DSL service generally

gets slower with the more data you download. My browser's prediction of how long it would take to download Xcode? 2 days. My browser's prediction of how long to download Lion? 2 more days.

Going to the local coffee shop reduced the predictions to 1 day, but that would have been expensive at one \$5 coffee per half hour.

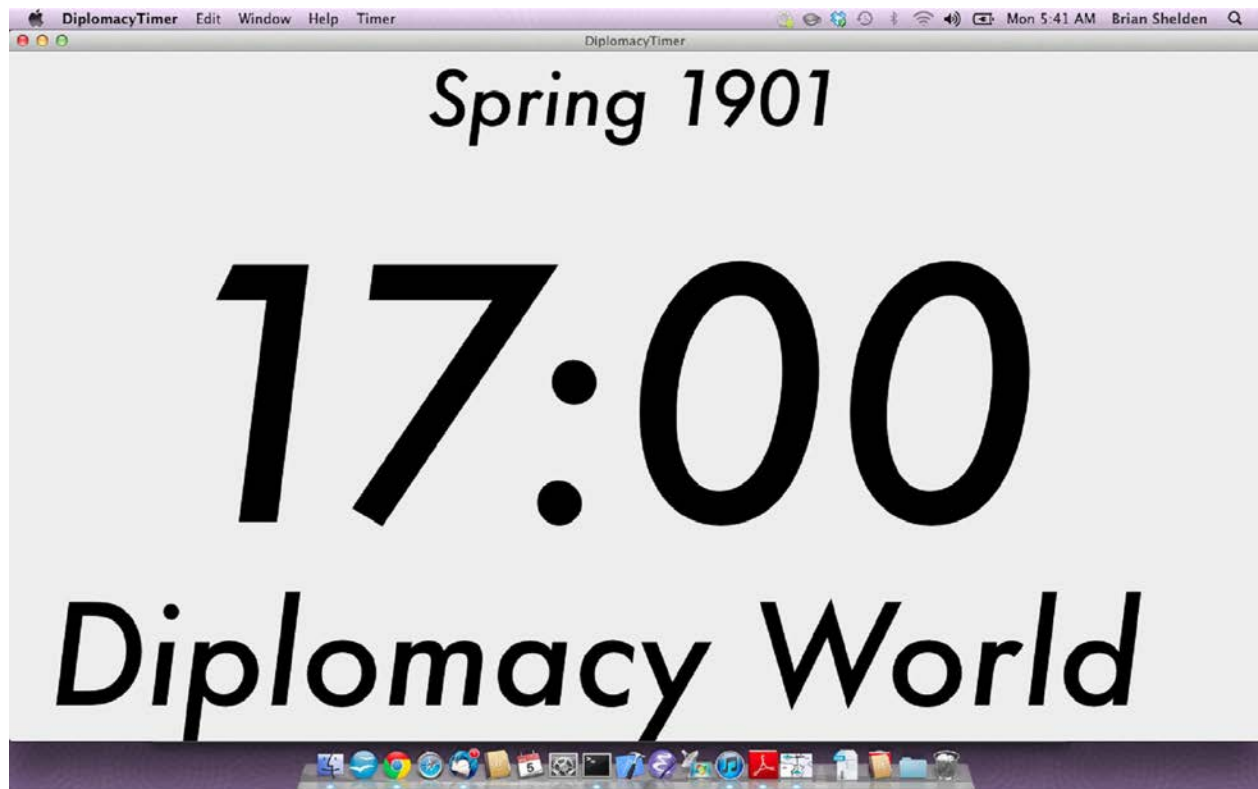
So I stuck with Mac OS development. ☺

Why Diplomacy Timer?

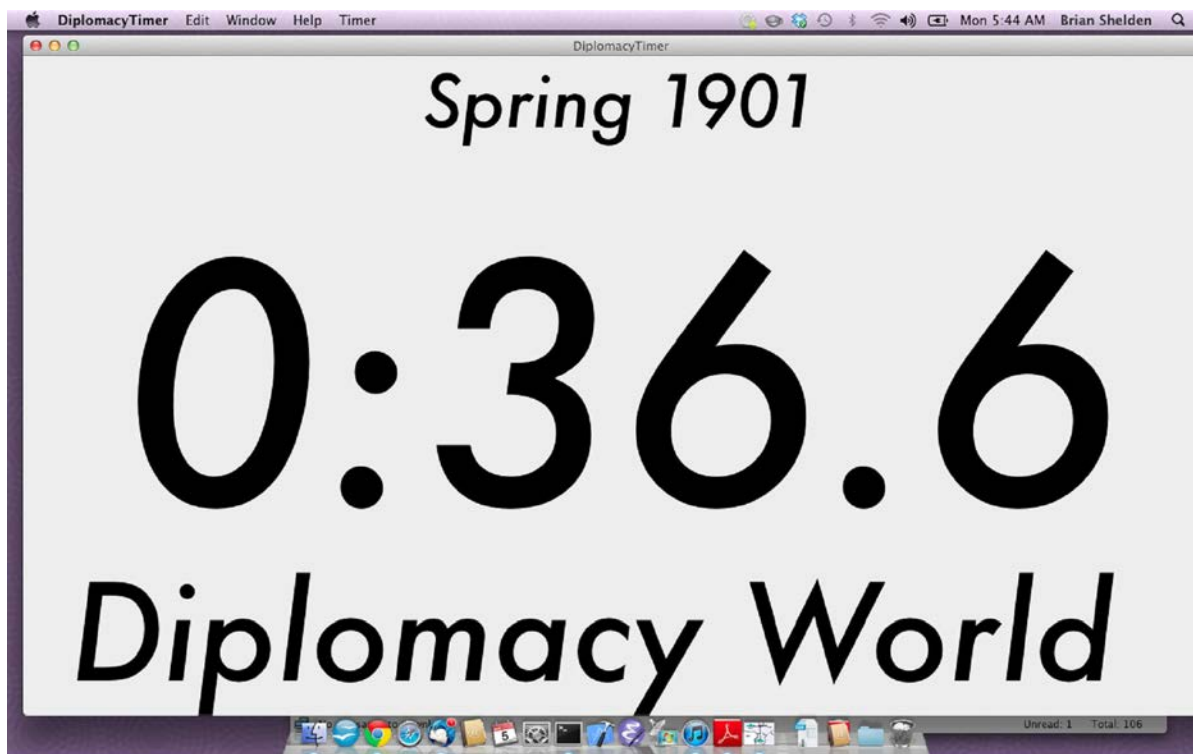
Well, as a programming exercise, it could have been anything. I have some other ideas for iPhone apps. But I needed (what I thought was) a simple GUI to write. That, and I had just gotten back from the Queensland Diplomacy Championships, so Dip Timer was fresh on my mind.

How it works

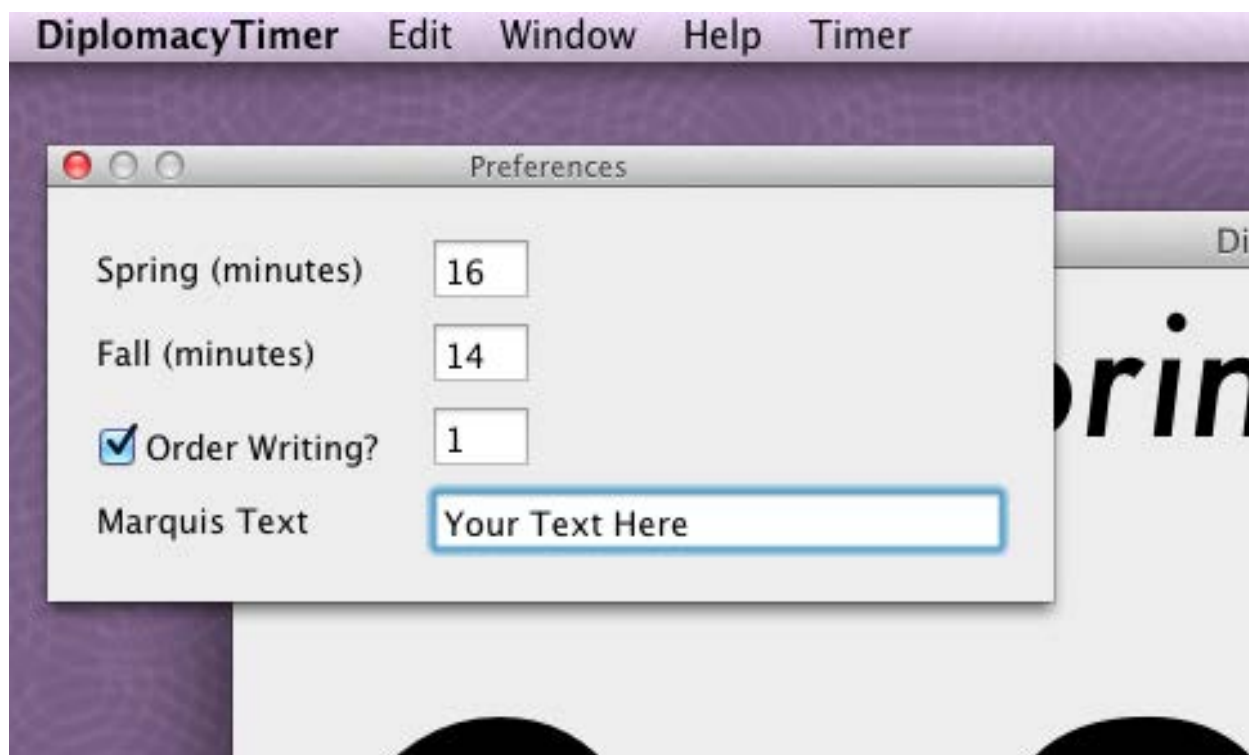
My version of the Diplomacy Timer is significantly simpler than David's. However, the main screen should look familiar to anyone who has used David's:



I did add tenths of a second when the deadline was under a minute away, just for fun:



There is a standard Mac "Preferences" panel (DiplomacyTimer--> Preferences) to adjust the minutes you want for each season:



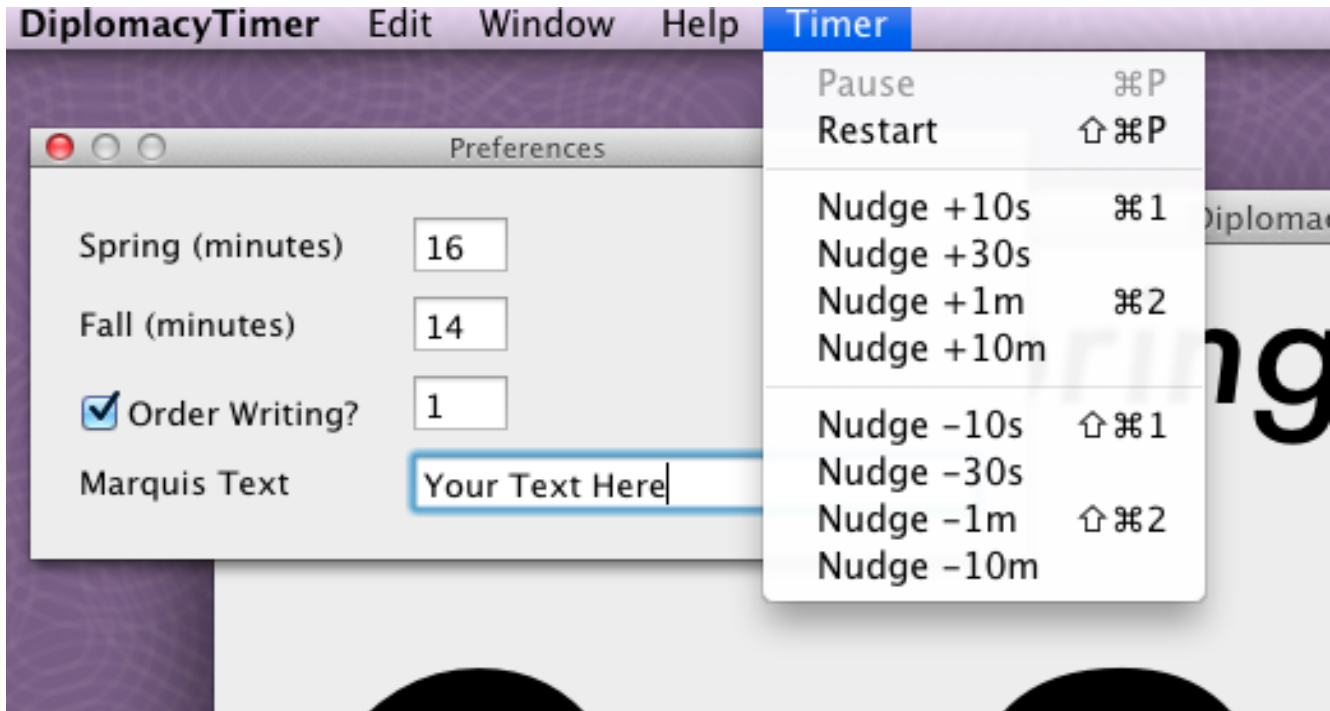
Note that while David assumes you want drop-dead timing, in mine you may have an optional order writing phase.

Sounds

Due to feedback at the Washington Athletic Club Con (WAC Con), the Diplomacy Timer does use David's sister's voice to announce certain milestones in the phase (15 minutes left, 10 minutes, 1 minute, 30 seconds, etc.).

Pausing and Nudging

The Timer menu allows you to nudge the timer up and down, and pause and restart the timer.



Features to Come

- Internationalization. I have lined up some French, German, and Australian voices to replace David's sister's.
- Different deadline lengths for later years, like David's supports.
- Optionally removing the marquis. It's a big CPU hog.
- The icon is lame.
- The installation disk image is pretty weak. It doesn't delete an existing copy if you already have one, and is pretty ugly to boot.
- Currently, DiplomacyTimer requires the use of the "Caffeine" app. Otherwise, the screen will lock and dim, even though you're not really "idle."
- iPhone port.

How do I get a copy?

The latest version is available at <http://www.shelden-associates.com/download/>



A Variant of Ice and Fire: Game of Thrones Diplomacy

A Case Study in Fantasy Variant Game Design

By Alex Maslow

Matt Kremer is a terrible person. Dirk Knemeyer wasted my time. They are both scum.

I have good reasons. Allow me to explain. Dirk wrote an article in the winter issue about variants, and it got me thinking about designing one myself. I poked around online and read some articles on variants. This quote from Stephen Agar's article on fantasy variants stood out to me: "There are several difficulties in adapting fantasy novels to this basic formula... First, although there may be a superficial appearance in the novel of a number of Powers battling it out (Elves, Dwarves, Orcs, Ents etc.) all too often the basic story often revolves round the age of Good vs. Evil storyline – a two-sided fight with restricted scope for diplomacy."

However, there is one increasingly popular fantasy series that breaks this mold: George R. R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*, which is often referred to by the name of both its first book and the HBO television adaptation, *Game of Thrones*. In this series, good and evil really don't come into play at all. The best explanation of the books I've heard is a political thriller in a fantasy world. There are several families struggling for control of the continent, and throughout the books allegiances constantly change as the balance of power tips back and forth (Hmm...sounds kind of like this board game I like to play). While some characters are more honorable than others (and some who are decidedly vicious), no character falls completely at one extreme or the other.

My mission seemed clear: try to make a variant based on a fantasy series that actually makes sense in the context of Diplomacy. Then, all of a sudden, Matt Kremer completely ruins my shot at glory.

I was quietly working on my own variant, when this smart-alec and all-around dream-stomper posted on Diplomaticcorp that he was working on such a variant, and was basically done, but was looking for suggestions if anyone wanted to take a look. So I called him a name and then offered my service. You know the drill.

Warning: there are spoilers to the books in what follows. While I am hoping our experience designing this variant will be of general interest to those intrigued by the intricacies of variant design. It would be highly impractical to discuss the board in the abstract. Also, for those who have read the books, we've fiddled with the timeline a bit, and in one instance screwed around with

the geography to make it more playable. We've taken a page out of the book of the creators of *Twilight Struggle* (an excellent board game): to sacrifice accuracy for playability. I'd rather have a variant that slightly violates the plot than give up the effort because of canon.

Matt had created a great map, and it was very similar to my own. The biggest difference that stood out to me was that my map was very dense, with *many* small provinces. Matt had divided the map more leniently, which made everything better connected, and far less cluttered. It wasn't perfect – I'll get to what we did to his original map – but it was far superior to my own.

The map, as you can see, encompasses the entire continent of Westeros, the bodies of water and islands that surround it, and the western edge of the continent of Essos. This was just one choice among many that had to be made over the course of the map design; the remainder of this discusses some of the major issues Matt and I wrestled with, knowing a successful variant would have to appeal to both avid variant players and fanatics of the series.

I'll begin with the story Matt told me of the progression of the map before I got involved. Initially, he started with a much larger map that included a greater portion of Essos (ending all the way at the Red Waste). The idea behind this was to give the Targaryens home centers in Pentos, Vaes Dothrak, and Mereen, representing the various places Dany has occupied over the course of the series. The problem here was that the Targaryens were just too separated from the other 6 powers, and too great a percentage of the neutrals would end up on Essos. Given only one power starts there, this was a great source of imbalance. Matt toyed with ideas of an 8th power, The Free Cities (home centers some combination of Braavos, Myr, Tyrosh, Lys, Volantis), and even a 9th power, Slaver's Bay (home centers Astapor, Yunkai, New Ghis), but ultimately the problem with version one is that the map was simply too big and spread out. So it was discarded for the map dimensions you see today. Further, having more than one power on Essos would result in a large struggle for control of that continent, which would violate the plot too much (while there is a large struggle on Essos, it is not really struggle for control OF Essos)



However, by slicing so much of Essos in such a way, two Targaryen centers disappeared off the map. At this point, there were three realistic choices. First was to nix the Targaryens as a power, but this didn't get too much consideration because they're just too important to the story. Second was to give them King's Landing (on Westeros) and Dragonstone (an island between Westeros and Essos). This would imply a start year sometime before the fall of the Mad King, which could be fine except the war fought when the Targaryen's controlled King's Landing was fairly simple (diplomatically: rebels VS throne). The Diplomacy-like every-house-for-itself war is more like the War of the Five Kings, so a starting time around the death of Robert Baratheon was preferable (at which point the Targaryen's had been exiled to Essos). Also, in the big-map version the Lannisters started with King's Landing and the Baratheons with Dragonstone, so then they're each down a center. All in all, option two was simply too complicated.

Therefore, Matt settled on the third option you see today, with Targaryen home centers in Dragonstone (Baratheon's compensated with control of Griffin's Roost) and Pentos only, which even he admits, from the perspective of the story, is really not accurate. We both agreed that giving the Targaryens only two home centers is fine, given their starting status as an exiled house. But when I first saw the map, the first thing that jumped out to me was the Targaryen fleet in Dragonstone, as I felt personally insulted on behalf of Stannis. We argued back and forth on this one quite a bit. His arguments centered on a few things: Dragonstone was the traditional Targaryen seat; Stannis does not always act in coordination with House Baratheon; and balance issues. My arguments focused on the canon inaccuracy of giving the Targaryen's their traditional seat (they lost it when they were exiled), Griffin's Roost's validity as a center (Matt had replaced the lost Baratheon center with Griffin's Roost, but I argued it was not important enough to even be a center, much less a Baratheon home center), and Stannis' importance in the story.

As you can see, gameplay won out. What ultimately swung me was the ingenious idea Matt had for King's Landing. King's Landing houses the Iron Throne, and lust for the Iron Throne is what drives most of the political conflicts in the series. Therefore, King's Landing truly is more important than any other center. But in the standard rules of Diplomacy, this cannot be true. Berlin is not worth more as a capital of Germany. Greece is worth as much as Belgium, in stark contrast to the real world. So how could we give King's Landing greater worth while working within the fundamental rules of the game?

Make it a double center! But it's a little more complicated than that. We wanted absolute power over

the throne to be very difficult to achieve. The residents of King's Landing have seen many families come and go. You need time to win the loyalty of the people (or time to terrify them into submission with your brutal acts of oppression). So each winter season you occupy in King's Landing, you capture one center. To capture the other, you need to be there again for the winter turn. So it is a double center that takes twice as long to fully capture.

Power is initially split between the Lannisters and Baratheons, which really does make perfect sense. I mean, even the sigil flown by Joffrey, who sits the throne when the game starts, is split between the two houses! And back to the effect of this on Dragonstone – putting a Baratheon fleet there gives them too strong of a leg up on King's Landing in the first year, so giving it to the Targaryens really does work better for balance.

There is an interesting quirk in King's Landing. If you are there at the end of the winter turn and you already own one of the centers, you get the other. Simple enough. But let us say you are Targaryen, and get into King's Landing for the first winter. You own neither center. You only get one. Which do you take? Either. You get to choose. Theoretically, Lannisters could support you into King's Landing, and then you could stab them in the winter by choosing to take their center, not Baratheon.

However, to reflect the simultaneous nature of the turns, your target supply center must be submitted with your orders. You cannot invade King's Landing in the fall, then choose which part of the city to sack after seeing how everyone else moves. If a power is not chosen, then the GM will flip a coin to decide.

One other note, as I'm talking about seasons. The world of Westeros has unusual seasons – they last years at a time. For the sake of simplicity, we're ignoring this and planning of referring to turns by seasons just like regular diplomacy. It also lets the Stark player consistently remind the others that "Winter is Coming..."

So far you might be thinking, "Maslow, all it sounds like you did is force Matt to defend his choices. I thought you said you contributed?" Don't worry, I did. First, I convinced Matt to put in the rivers. The Trident (middle part of the map) we agreed should not be navigable due its reputation as incredibly swift and powerful, and thus it is instead used to create borders and separation in the Riverlands, as it does in the series (Matt also added the mountains between Martell and Tyrell lands as a similar feature to give those powers a little extra separation, just like in the series).

But I wanted the rivers to do more than just impede army movement. In the variant of Versailles, Poland has only one coastal province, but is given another because a

river connects an otherwise landlocked province to the Baltic Sea. Fleets can be built in this province and sailed out into the sea (similarly, enemy ships can sail inland). While I don't think such a trick is needed for that map, I liked the idea, and thought it would be very applicable here. Some of the families fight primarily by sea, and the book details how they would pillage and harry towns up certain rivers. Perfect!

The Mander (south west side of the map) is navigable up to Highgarden not so much to give the Tyrells an additional place to build fleets (though they can), but more to simulate the threat on Highgarden that an enemy fleet in the Shield Islands presents. Similarly, the Blackwater (Near King's Landing) is navigable up to God's Eye, which was added as a sea space when the river was implemented. This helps the game follow the book more closely, as fleets on the Blackwater factor greatly into the War of the Five Kings. It also creates the potential for some interesting tactics using a fleet built on the south coast of Harrenhal via...

...chaos builds, another suggestion of mine that Matt instantly agreed with. Not only are they important for gameplay, as the Starks, Targaryens, and Martells would be severely hampered by supply-line issues without them, but they also align with the series' concept

of bannermen. The lordship of a new castle immediately earns one the allegiance of the lesser lords in the region, giving the ability to muster new armies immediately in those areas.

The last major game design issue I'll talk about was Castle Black and Beyond the Wall. Matt initially had Castle Black as a center, a reasonable thing to do given its importance to the storyline. But it's not so reasonable given their oath to take no sides in the wars of Westeros (and, at least so far in the series (book 5 of planned 7) they've managed to stay true despite the pressures against them). So we settled on Beyond the Wall as the center, with capturing it being akin to gaining the support of the wildlings. It also has the added benefit of helping to lure the Greyjoys north, a good thing given the Starks are a bit isolated to begin with.

So that's it, a primary source in the study of variant design. You don't realize how many little things there are that are all so important, and how they're all intertwined. The first playtest (Matt is GMing, I'm playing) is about to start on Diplomaticcorp.com, so come check it out! As of this writing, we need 1 more player – so if you've ever wanted to delve into the world of Westeros (or playtest a new variant), now's your chance!

Let's Go Postal

by Melinda “Hobby” Holley and Don “Duck” Williams

We Admit It – We Want to Wreck Social Security ... and We Want Belgium. Is that too much to ask for?



Want to restage the glory days of Diplomacy when zines were zines and mail was snail? Want to show these need-it-yesterday-internet-head-non-Boomers what treachery and snail mail experience can really do their

center counts? Want to prove that PBMs (if you have to ask you're toast) are the best ever at timing the perfect stab or delivering the game-ending double cross?

Of course you do, you've got an old grudge (or two or twelve) to settle. We know. We do, too. (And just where the hell is Greg Stewart anyway?)

We're putting out the call for all you postal-age Diplomacy old farts classic icons (like us) to sharpen those tongues and knives and invade Chicago! Chicago's very own Windy City Weasels will host WORLD DIP CON this August 10 to 12, 2012. Contact Jim "I Played PBM Too" O'Kelley at jimthegrey1013@yahoo.com. Or step into the internet world (if you're that way inclined – we still think it's a fad) and check out the Windy City Weasels website at www.windycityweasels.org/wdc.

Come connive with us in real time, postal players! Get ready to hone those lies, burnish those blades (and put away those postage stamps), and help us serve up some treachery – classic style!

The Paradox of Shaping

By Richard Stuart Maltz

"Shaping" is the practice of influencing events in a given area, zone, or theater of operations, generally outside of one's own territory, across a broad spectrum of receptors of influence (Political, Military, Economic, Social, Information, and Infrastructure (or PMESII) comprise one construct of these) to be congenial to one's own ends. This may include activities of any description (particularly Information Operations, Strategic Communication, and other activities focused on the Cognitive Domain); but such actions tends to be other than major or overt combat operations. Shaping operations and their effects may be any combination of overt or surreptitious; clumsy or subtle; lasting or transitory; profound or superficial; successful or unsuccessful, or too successful for one's own good.

Reasons for conducting Shaping operations may be many and varied; but they generally revolve around the desire to mitigate or eliminate problems or crises before they crystallize into significant threats, and to create and exploit opportunities to realize advantages for one's self. The fact that, irrespective of one's own posture with regard to the rest of the world, the rest of the world will certainly be Shaping you, militates strongly in favor of positive action in this sphere. A passive approach to Shaping appears to be an invitation to be manipulated by others.

That being said, there are great, if generally under-appreciated dangers inherently attendant to such enterprises. I refer to the presence and nature of such dangers as "The Paradox of Shaping". This paradox must be addressed if Shaping is to mitigate, rather than exacerbate, existing or potential threats and problems.

The essence of the Paradox of Shaping is that we must Shape in order to address small, emerging challenges and problems before they become large problems and crises; but if we do so as we normally do, we are likely to make the situation worse rather than better. This conclusion may be derived from a study of "Variation Theory", and is most clearly illustrated in Dr. W. Edwards Deming's "Funnel Experiment". In this experiment, the simple act of trying to shape the outcome of dropping marbles onto a target was demonstrated to routinely induce greater, rather than lesser, error; and as several different solutions were applied, each caused results to quickly careen out of control.

The reasons given, and which apply to shaping operations broadly, are that the environment in which such operations occur is usually inherently complex (in the case of the Funnel Experiment, natural "variation" induces the complexity). Our typical solutions, adjusting inputs in any number of linear increments and

templatable directions, do not reflect, or adequately address, the inherent complexity of the problem. The inevitable result is what statisticians call "tampering", which invokes the "Law of Unintended Consequences"¹, and makes matters worse, sometimes much worse.

Empires have foundered on such miscalculations; and this is generally our experience of such things. We currently lack a model of how to do any better; but "Deming Theory", notably the "Deming Theory of 'Profound Knowledge'". Offers a solution; one validated by the Funnel Experiment". Deming posited that possessed of "Profound Knowledge" (which he defined as the union of Systems Theory, Variation Theory, Psychology, and Epistemology), decision-makers can distinguish between the complex and the linear, and between related "Common" and "Special" causes of challenges, and can use this capacity to design solutions that are properly tailored to the challenges at hand, addressing complex problems, when encountered, with appropriately complex solutions, avoiding tampering and the Law of Unintended Consequences.

Accordingly, the Paradox of Shaping is that we must Shape to survive and thrive; but in so doing, we normally call forth the seeds of disaster. This suggests the desirability of passivity, which is an abdication of responsibility, almost equally undesirable. In short, we must act; but it is even more important that we not act. We are hoist on the horns of a dilemma. The only solution for this is to Shape; but to do so continuously, consciously, pervasively, systemically, and from the outset incorporating and employing Profound Knowledge.

The exercise of such Profound Knowledge, being a largely philosophical function, is very alien to our culture. As such, while it entails to capital costs; it is the most difficult of approaches to problem-solving. Failure to do this, however, invites disaster; and we would otherwise be better off not shaping at all, and simply awaiting what others have in store for us.

[[Richard's articles can be a bit intellectual, requiring more concentration when reading. But take the time to focus; they are well worth the effort.]]

¹ The Law of Unintended Consequences states that few problems have solutions; but all solutions carry with them attendant problems. Accordingly, the application of any solution to any problem (or worse still, a non-problem) is unlikely to solve the problem, but is virtually guaranteed to multiply the number and intractability of problems faced.

SAN MARINO CONVENTION 2012

EURODIPCON XX

Best Western Palace Hotel – May 11/13 2012

http://www.asgs.sm/smc/viewpage.php?page_id=5

20 YEARS OF DIPLOMACY IN EUROPE!!

20 years old: such is EuroDipCon. Thinking of it, this event is keeping us playing together since 1993; we had fun, we got angry, we laughed, ate and drank (a lot ☺) together, we saw new countries and met new friends from all around Europe and the world, as Diplomacy's not just a boardgame, but it's a sort of "lifestyle" keeping us playing together.

This is why, as a player, you shall be strongly committed in being there at the **20th EuroDipCon**, which will take place on May 11-13 2012 in the **SAN MARINO CONVENTION 2012**, (see: http://www.asgs.sm/smc/viewpage.php?page_id=5), in the little state of San Marino, at the Best Western Palace Hotel <http://www.palacehotelsanmarino.it/>.

The tournament will start on Friday at 18.30 and will end on Sunday with prize-giving around 14.30. Four games will be held, top table in the last round. Scoring system: Italia2010.

On Saturday evening we're celebrating the 20th anniversary all together with a party at the "Hostaria del Castello di Gradara" (Gradara Castle's inn):

<http://www.hostariadelcastellogradara.com/>

The nearest airports are Rimini, Forlì, Ancona and Bologna. Please advise us if you have any issue in traveling to San Marino: Italian players will be glad to help you with information and giving you a ride.

The hotel prices are: **82 €** for a twin (**41 €** per person) breakfast included; **the first 10 foreigner players registered will have a 50% discount (up to two nights) and free entrance to the convention.**

Feel free to contact Luca Pazzaglia lucapazzaglia@alice.it or Giancarlo Ceccoli gceccoli@omniway.sn for any other information/request you might need.

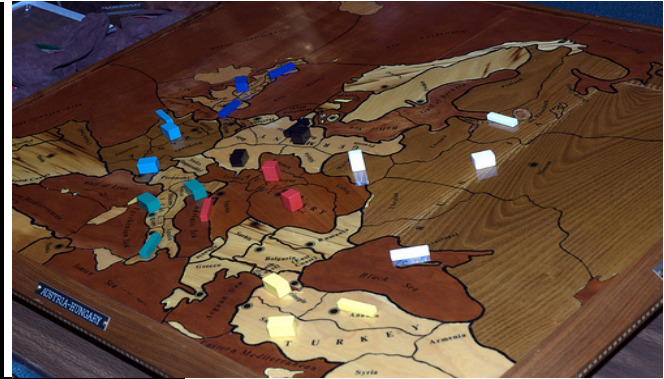
We are waiting for you in San Marino to celebrate our first 20 years!

Origins Game Fair

Diplomacy Tournament

May 30th – June 2nd

Columbus, Ohio



www.originsgamefair.com

Tournament Details

The annual Origins Diplomacy Tournament will be held for the 34th time this June featuring at one of the largest gaming conventions in the US. The tournament will be FOUR rounds running from Thursday through Saturday. Best Country Awards and a Championship plaque will be awarded on Saturday night following the fourth round. This year will feature a new scoring system and a new tournament director.

Round One – 6pm Thursday

Round Two – 6pm Friday

Round Three – 12pm Saturday

Round Four – 6pm Saturday

Scoring: Carnage

Rank: Best two out of four rounds

Convention and Hotel

“Every year Origins offers a variety of great experiences for our attendees, some are new and some are old favorites. The CABS Board/War Room features open gaming with a library of over a thousand games provided by the Columbus Area Boardgaming Society. Last year Rio Grande Games provided FREE lunch and dinner each day of the convention. The main hall features over 60 exhibitors and literally thousands of gaming events.

The Columbus area offers a variety of great hotels for every attendee's budget. Please use the following hotel information to assist you in booking your reservations. Clicking on the hotel logos will take you to their Origins reservation pages (<http://www.originsgamefair.com/Hotels/tabid/2793/Default.aspx>).”

Contact Thomas Haver for further details at tjhaver@gmail.com

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

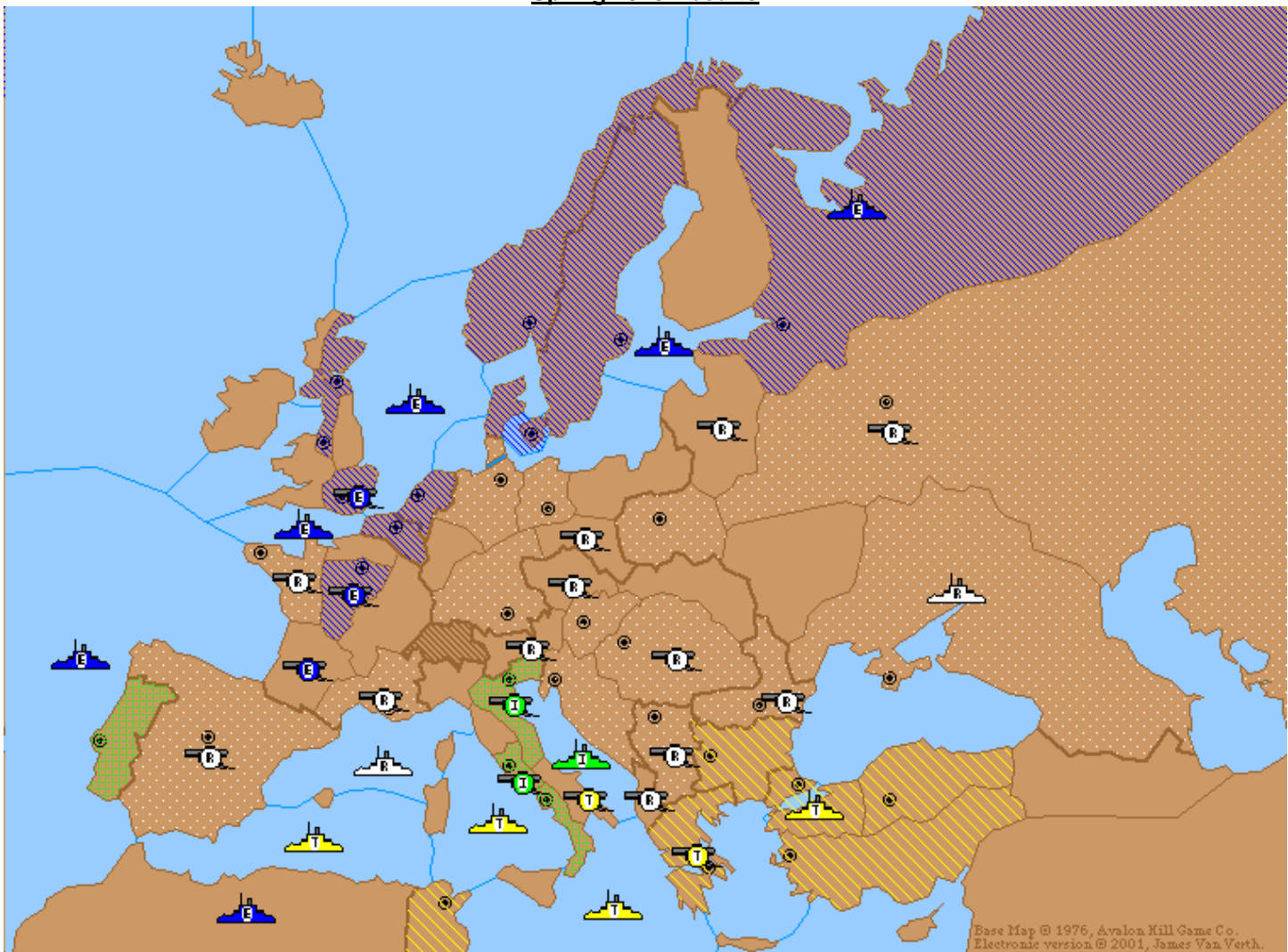
The Commentators:

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

The GM:

Douglas Kent

Spring 1913 Results



I believe I am nearing a complete mental collapse.

England: A Burgundy – Gascony, F English Channel Convoys A London – Portugal,
 A London - Portugal (*Bounce*), F Mid-Atlantic Ocean Convoys A London – Portugal,
 F North Africa - Western Mediterranean (*Fails*), F North Sea Hold, F Norway - St Petersburg(nc),
 A Paris Supports A Burgundy – Gascony, F St Petersburg(sc) - Gulf of Bothnia,
 F Western Mediterranean – Spain(sc) (*Disbanded*).

Italy: F Adriatic Sea - Trieste (*Bounce*), A Albania Supports A Greece – Serbia (*Disbanded*),

A Naples – Rome, A Venice Supports F Adriatic Sea - Trieste.

Russia: A Brest - Gascony (*Fails*), A Budapest - Trieste (*Bounce*), A Galicia – Bohemia,
F Gulf of Lyon Supports F Tunis - Western Mediterranean, A Marseilles - Spain (*Bounce*), A Moscow – Livonia,
A Rumania - Budapest (*Fails*), A Serbia Supports A Trieste – Albania, F Sevastopol Hold,
A Spain - Portugal (*Bounce*), A Trieste – Albania, A Tyrolia Supports A Budapest – Trieste, A Ukraine – Moscow,
A Warsaw - Silesia.

Turkey: F Black Sea – Constantinople, A Bulgaria – Greece, A Greece – Apulia,
F Ionian Sea Convoys A Greece – Apulia, F Tunis - Western Mediterranean,
F Tyrrhenian Sea Supports F Tunis - Western Mediterranean.

Concession to Russia Fails. Reproposed – Concession to Russia, NVR=No

PRESS

Tur-Eng: Bill, one way or another this is done.
Regardless of what Russia does this turn, this one is
done, vote yes.

take it twice, shame on me. There won't be a 3rd time. If
I have to fight all of you I choose E/I.

London - Ankara: Stop gibbering, Sister, Fight!

Tur-Ita: Take advantage of me once, shame on you,

Spring 1913 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

Welcome back, intrepid readers. As we start yet another issue of Diplomacy World with this throwback demo game it is worth another brief lesson on Hobby Eras and why, in its own strange way, this game does make excruciating sense. I'm going to comment on this from the perspective of the US hobby, since it is the strata these players come from. This whole game has been a huge déjà vu for me going back to the early to mid-1980's. It may be driving our even more intrepid GM and my fellow commentator nuts, but the number of alliances, re-alliances, stabs, make-ups, re-stabs actually is reasonably representative of the games of that era. I have to admit, even living through that era, and having my share of games played with just as much back and forth and back and forth negotiations, that the spins in this game sometimes keep catching me by surprise. Color me surprised. But this was the style of the day. With long deadlines, we would play these games postally, so to keep up on them we would then call each other on the phone when we got results and laugh hysterically as each by-play would occur. The key goal would be drive each other and the readers nuts. The press in this game generally has been disappointing since in such games it usually would go on for pages and pages. Only Mark Fassio has made even a halfhearted effort at keeping up this end (presumably, I may find out later it was someone else, but I don't think so) and now we're mostly getting some lame whining.... but I digress. The alliances have shifted yet again and we have a Juggernaut arrangement back!

Press: The press all is being driven by the attempt to call this a concession to Russia and Bill's unwillingness to vote for it. The first item by Gary asserts that the game is done, and he'll support Russia toward the west if Bill won't accept the concession. But the more this goes, the more Turkey will have some play left in his position, so how "honest" is this press, really? We don't know. On the second item, I think Gary is miscounting, Melinda has taken advantage of him in this way at least five times by now. But Gary will use his units to work with Russia against Italy and England. That makes Melinda's position precarious. As usual, Melinda is silent in the press. Bill, it seems, did not see the RT stab back coming, since he goaded Gary into the fight, and now he has it in spades.

England: Bill was flummoxed by Don's attack. He looks like he fell for what looked like a good deal in taking Iberia, I think? Maybe he was just trying those moves solo, but if he was, it didn't look like he expected RT cooperation. Brest still is hanging out there for him to take, but he didn't move North Sea toward Germany, so I'm sorry, I just don't get the English orders. And, if the attack is coming from RT, what does he do to stop it?

Italy: Melinda could keep Portugal, and then could get a build. That would make things interesting, but I think at least one home center falls (could be Naples or Venice -- I like Apu-Ven with supports cut and support from Tyrolia), so maybe Melinda's number is finally up. We do understand though, in this game, nothing can be counted on for more than

one season or so.

Russia: Don continues to be the puppet master keeping the bouncing alliances going. Maybe he switches back to England and hits the Balkans on Turkey? I do think he will re-occupy Germany and from there the Low Countries are a target (especially if Brest does fall, but Don can retreat to Picardy). The Iberian peninsula is a series of guesses that makes it possible, even likely, that Melinda can retain Portugal, but Don is unlikely to lose anything other than Brest.

Turkey: I think Turkey will take the first Italian home center, and keep moving forward. Yes, maybe Gary's just trying to get Bill to vote for the Russian concession, but the longer this goes on, the longer the odds on it just ending with a voted Russian concession. Turkey soon will be back in the game for real, and able to attack Russia again. I doubt we will keep an RT going for the rest of the game.

I'm looking forward to the revelation about how wrong Jim-Bob is in his guesses about who is writing which press. I'm claiming "the field."

The game has taken another turn. Hooray! Gary is apparently working with Russia against Italy and England. When a game reaches an endgame state like this, one has to be extremely careful in writing orders. Bill wasn't on this turn. As a result, he's lost a valuable fleet in the Med.

SPRING 1913

The three companions watched as the ripples on the surface of the lake gradually faded. They finally started to turn away but then Merlin shouted.

"Wait," he cried, "what is this?"

They turned back and saw more movement in the water. The hand appeared again, still holding Excalibur, and slowly moved to the lake edge. With a flick of her wrist The Lady Of The Lake threw the sword and it landed at Brooklyn's feet, its tip buried a few inches in the soft soil. Then the arm disappeared again and all was still.

Brooklyn looked up at the old magician. "But what is happening Merlin? Why has the sword come back?"

Merlin sighed. "I do not know boy, I simply do not know. Unless it means that your task is not yet complete and your full destiny still awaits you."

Given what England could have accomplished this year, he's getting very little. Sure, he'll pick up Brest and with the rebuild he'll get two more forces on the board. But it'll take at least two years to take Kiel and everything else is relatively easy for Russia to defend if he's not facing any pressure from Turkey.

If I were England, I'd make a point to destroy the Russian army in Brest. Sometimes the placement of forces is more important than where the forces are. He should have taken Brest with the army in the Spring. The convoy to Portugal was silly in retrospect.

Turkey should take one of the Italian dots. Which one? I have no idea. Could be any of the three on the boot. I suspect Italy will hold onto Portugal, since neither England nor Russia has any interest in letting the other have it.

If Turkey goes completely nutty in terms of throwing SCs to Russia, Don can take Gre, Bul, and Nap/Tunis. And yes, if Gary is serious about throwing the game, Don will win next year.

Another possibility is that Gary will bring Don to the brink and then cut him off, while seeing to it that Italy falls. Such a move would strengthen the Turkish position and pretty much guarantee a 3-way draw. The current season's reasons demonstrate how ludicrous an E/R two-way would be. It's very unstable.

"You are very wise Merlin," spoke a soft voice from behind them, "Brooklyn does indeed have another task to perform."

All three turned to see a beautiful golden haired woman in a long robe with blue eyes that sparkled when she smiled.

The old magician gasped and dropped to his knees. "Oh my Lady, I never thought to see you again." The Doctor bowed his head. Brooklyn just stared at the lovely creature in front of him with no idea of what was happening.

She moved closer and smiled again. "Fear not my friends for there is no danger here." Then she looked at the young boy. "Brooklyn," she said softly, "I am Galadriel, Queen of the Elves, and I am afraid that you and the sword are sorely needed one more time."



Brooklyn just stared at her with his mouth hanging open. "G...Galadriel," he stammered, "you mean like in Lord of the Rings?" Then he looked at Merlin. "Are all the sci-fi and fantasy tales really true?"

Merlin chuckled and patted the young boy's shoulder. "Most of them Brooklyn," he replied, "most of them."

Galadriel also chuckled, a sound that reminded Brooklyn of the tinkling of small bells. "Yes Brooklyn," she said, "you would be surprised to know how much is

true and how little is not. But come my friends, let us sit by the lake shore and I will explain."

Meanwhile, on board the 'Further Glory', General U'til was beginning his next briefing. "Hail Fndili," he cried.

"Hail Fndili," came the response from the trainees.

"Well gentlemen," began the old soldier, "I have to confess this has me puzzled. England is attacking Russia in the west but Russia seems to have retreated against England in the north. Italy is clearly being gradually demolished by Russia whereas Turkey is defending against Russia in the east and actually receiving Russian assistance in the west. I fear I am at a loss to understand what is happening although I still believe that a joint England/Russia victory remains a possibility. I think, or at least I hope, that the next year may provide some answers. I will read your next set of observations tomorrow with great interest. Hail Fndili."

He left the briefing room and returned to his quarters, wondering what The Doctor and his companions were now doing. Then he sighed. He really did miss that young Brooklyn.

Fall 1913

England: F English Channel Convoys A London – Picardy, A Gascony – Brest, F Gulf of Bothnia Supports F St Petersburg(nc), A London – Picardy, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - Portugal (*Bounce*), F North Africa - Mid-Atlantic Ocean (*Bounce*), F North Sea Hold, A Paris Supports A Gascony – Brest, F St Petersburg(nc) Hold.

Italy: F Adriatic Sea - Trieste (*Fails*), ~~A Rome Supports A Venice~~ (*Dislodged*, retreat to Tuscany or OTB), A Venice Supports F Adriatic Sea - Trieste (*Cut*).

Russia: A Albania – Naples, A Bohemia – Munich, ~~A Brest – Gascony~~ (*Disbanded*), A Budapest – Trieste, F Gulf of Lyon - Spain(sc) (*Fails*), A Livonia – Prussia, A Marseilles Supports F Gulf of Lyon - Spain(sc) (*Fails*), A Moscow – Livonia, A Rumania – Ukraine, A Serbia Supports A Budapest – Trieste, F Sevastopol Hold, A Silesia – Berlin, A Spain - Portugal (*Bounce*), A Tyrolia - Venice (*Fails*).

Turkey: A Apulia – Rome, F Constantinople - Bulgaria(ec) (*Bounce*), A Greece - Bulgaria (*Bounce*), F Ionian Sea Convoys A Albania – Naples, F Tyrrhenian Sea Supports A Apulia – Rome, F Western Mediterranean - Mid-Atlantic Ocean (*Bounce*).

Concession to Russia Fails
Now proposed – Concession to Russia. NVR=No

PRESS

The Setter got up; looked at the scattered shot that had miraculously missed him and began walking around the track, ignoring the fact that everyone had gone home. He had a race to finish.

(Somewhere on a foggy mountaintop) - "Merry Christmas! Happy Kwanza! Happy Hanukah! Merry Solstice!"

The woman stared at Mr. Drucker for a moment then

smiled. "Back atcha!"

"It's sure cold out tonight. Want some hot buttered rum?"

"Sure. Hold the butter." The woman looked around at the near-empty room. "Not much of a Christmas party this year."

Mr. Drucker sighed and nodded. "The Sheriff's instituted a curfew. Not many people decided to come out tonight."

Outside they heard a man scream and a woman giggle.

"Looks like the Black Widow of Bunnell Run decided to come out," the woman smirked. She saw someone else enter the hotel ballroom. "So you don't investigate a man screaming, Sheriff?"

The Sheriff shrugged. "Man doesn't run when he sees that woman coming, he deserves whatever happens to

him." He took a cup of the offered hot buttered rum and leaned closer to the woman. "Time's running out."

"Time is immeasurable. It can't ever run out." The woman smiled. "I'm in a Zen mood tonight." She sighed.

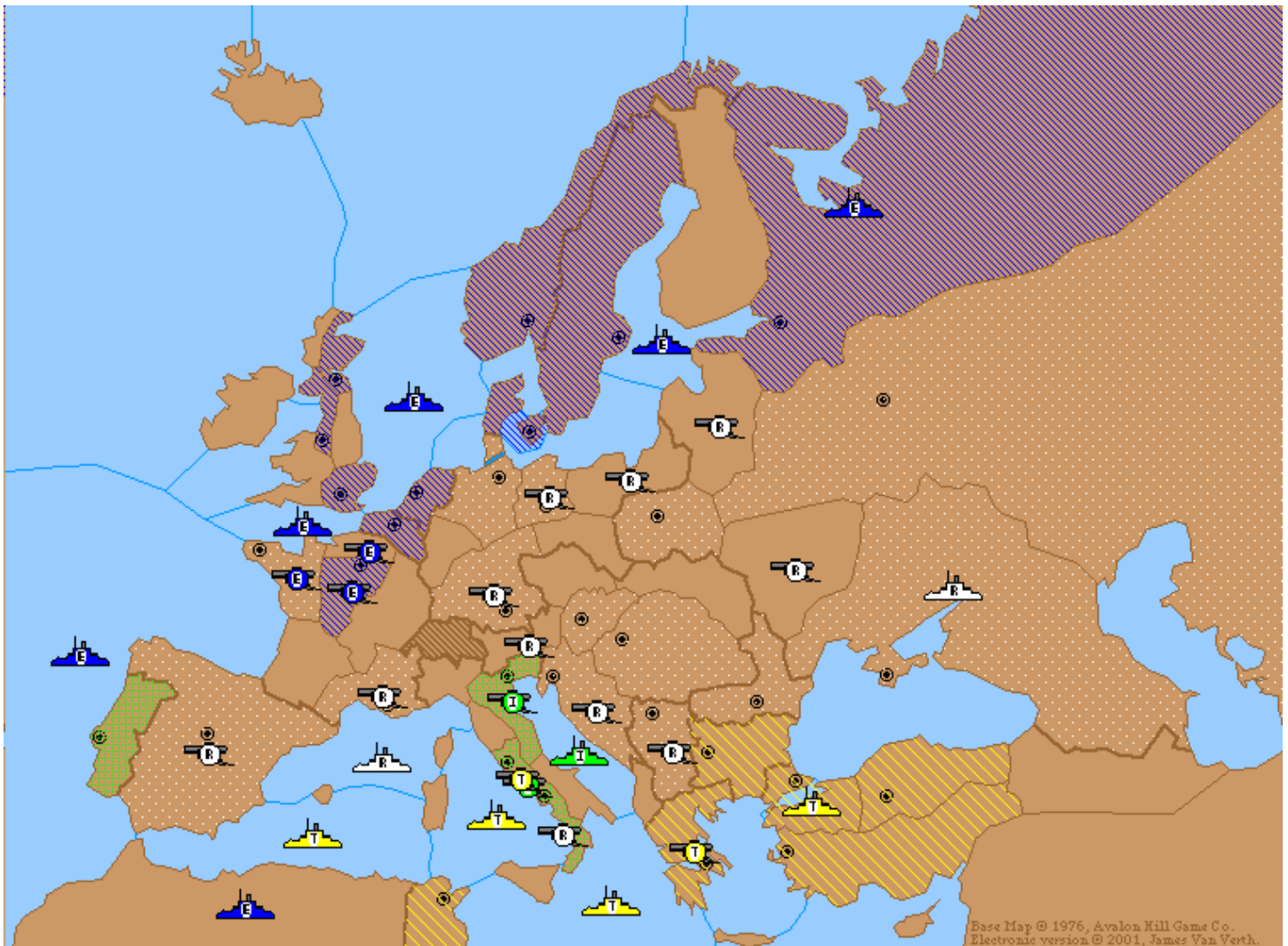
"This used to be a nice quiet town." She shook her head. "Could have been such a sweet deal between us."

The Sheriff put his mug down on the table. "Time's up," he quietly advised. He nodded to Mr. Drucker and walked out into the cold night.

Mr. Drucker nervously cleared his throat. "What are you gonna do?"

The woman shrugged. "Go live in a Lighthouse maybe?"

Turkey: Please, resistance is futile. Vote Russia the win!



I think I have found a pattern between the game and the movements of the planets.

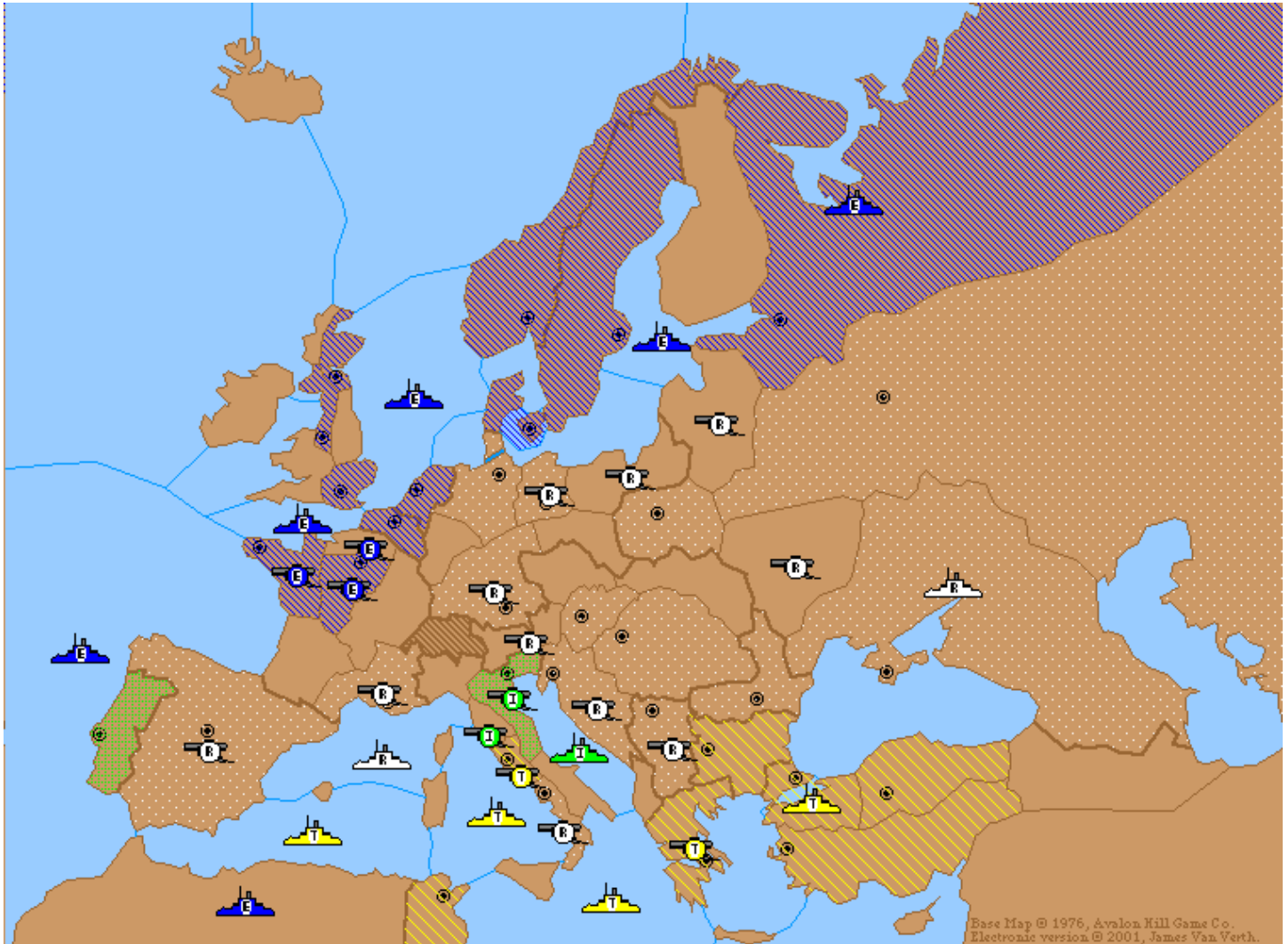
Autumn 1913

England: Has A Brest, F English Channel, F Gulf of Bothnia, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F North Africa, F North Sea, A Paris, A Picardy, F St Petersburg(nc).

Italy: Retreat A Rome - Tuscany..Has F Adriatic Sea, A Tuscany, A Venice.

Russia: Has A Berlin, F Gulf of Lyon, A Livonia, A Marseilles, A Munich, A Naples, A Prussia, A Serbia, F Sevastopol, A Spain, A Trieste, A Tyrolia, A Ukraine.

Turkey: F Constantinople, A Greece, F Ionian Sea, A Rome, F Tyrrhenian Sea, F Western Mediterranean.



Wasn't the world supposed to have ended by now?

All Concession Proposals Fail

Supply Center Chart

England: Belgium, Brest, Denmark, Edinburgh, Holland, Liverpool, London, Norway, Paris, St Petersburg, Sweden=11, Build 2

Italy: Portugal, Venice=2, Remove 1

Russia: Berlin, Budapest, Kiel, Marseilles, Moscow, Munich, Naples, Rumania, Serbia, Sevastopol, Spain, Trieste, Vienna, Warsaw=14, Build 1

Turkey: Ankara, Bulgaria, Constantinople, Greece, Rome, Smyrna, Tunis=7, Build 1

PRESS

Humans - Borg: Resistance is not futile. We will not be assimilated, as you have.

Ita - Tur: Resistance may be futile, but it can be fun! Hey, when there's only one game in town, that's the game you play.

Fall and Autumn 1913 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

Press: The Fall press features another installment of the Foggy Mountaintop, as our intrepid correspondent forecasts the winding down of the game, supporting Gary's claim that the game is up, perhaps? He also seems to indicate that no one may be paying attention any more. Are we? Are we?? Meanwhile Gary himself leaves no doubt, he claims the game is over. And the Setter, whose dog tales do come from Don, I believe, notes that he has dodged the bullets and is back on track. The Autumn press comes from Melinda, probably, and she puts some challenged fatalism on the table.

Let's see...the Foggy Mountain is not from Gary or David, since it's been with us since the beginning of the game. It would make the most sense if it were from one of the three players who have been with us since the beginning and are still playing, though I suppose it could be Faz or Steve. I think it's Melinda, and Don is writing the Dog press.

Analysis: But the question is: is this view correct? England can't win, but it seems quite problematic to see how RT breaks through the lines on either end, St. Pete is safe and the Mid-Atlantic can be made so. Plus, England can get one more army on the continent and it is unclear how Germany will be held. Turkey can of course give his centers to Russia, but we don't see that's the way it's going. Thus, unless they just take Melinda out and then call a three way, there seems to be much more play here. I think it could continue to have the back and forths that we saw before, even though Gary has held with his "Russia is going to win, friendly to Russia" stance for what seems like forever.... only a few seasons though.

Well, Gary is either throwing the game to Russia or we're going to find out soon that he's not throwing the game to Russia. There's no practical way for this to end in a two-way draw. The MAO line is a bit comical at this point.

I don't think Don threw away the promise of a two-way E/R in favor of a promise of a two-way R/T. Surely Gary has offered a Russian solo here. "You could get a 2-way with me instead of with England!" isn't much of an offer.

England: I think England needs to build an army and a fleet, fleet in Liverpool to defend the Mid-Atlantic. The army could go to Norway and then put an army in St. Pete to force Russia to defend Moscow, but that doesn't seem like the best course, forcing

Germany would seem to be best, convoy the army then follow in with the fleet to Helgoland Bight. In the Fall, England did ensure final annihilation of the forward Russian army, and now has three armies in France to push into the Low Countries. I also would support Gulf of Bothnia-Livonia, to try to give Don some things to think about there. Turkey presumably now will force his fleets West and it isn't clear if just letting Russia have Portugal might be better, since this fall North Africa probably will be annihilated. I would probably keep going with the current plan, once F Liverpool comes up to Irish Sea, then there is the one support needed to keep Turkey out of the Mid-Atlantic while bouncing Portugal. So, England needs to do that and keep vetoing the solo. I'm not sure what happens if Portugal stays Italian with no unit (where we might be after this year) since it is unlikely they will agree to a four way draw.

Tactically, England doesn't have much to do. He can slug it out over Germany, but his real task here is to make sure Turkey doesn't actually throw more centers to Russia. And that's more of a diplomatic task than a tactical one.

Italy: I think that there is little Melinda can do except slow things down. Keeping the Fleet will hold F Ionian for a while and ensure that England can get into position to try to advance successfully into Germany. The two armies cannot hold and will be annihilated. So how much resistance really is futile will be determined by the removal. Can Melinda perhaps yet again make up with Turkey and survive? Possibly, in this game, we can't rule it out.

I don't think Italy is long for the world.

Russia: Don needs to try to hold on to Germany, but if Russia moves well (including pushing Livonia back), then I don't think he will be successful. As England locks things down, what will be interesting is seeing what Gary does. Maybe very soon, perhaps this turn, Gary will start attacking him again. I would keep bouncing over Portugal, but I'm not sure I want Melinda retreating to Piedmont, I think I would move there with support from Marseilles.

I wonder if Don is every going to try to force a solo using his tactical advantage.

Turkey: Gary keeps insisting Don wins. Gary can ensure that, but not by taking those centers from

England. As that reality dawns, how will this play out? The on-going endgame remains dynamic. C'mon Gary, make up with Melinda, attack Don, and make things interesting again.

FALL 1913

The three companions and the Elf Queen sat by the edge of the lake as Galadriel began her story. "As you know, the Elves, plus Gandalf, Bilbo and Frodo, left Middle Earth a long time ago through the Grey Havens, thinking that it would then become a time for mankind to flourish. But although we are now in a different realm we still keep an eye on what is happening there, and it is not as we expected."

Brooklyn looked confused. "But I thought, from the book, that after you all left it turned into this world?"

Galadriel just smiled and looked across at the Time Lord. "No Brooklyn," he said, taking his cue from the Elf Queen, "there are many realms in the Multiverse. You experienced a rather nasty one when you and Merlin sealed that rift. The Elves sailed off to the west to a different realm and Middle Earth exists in yet another. Travel between them is possible although not easy."

The young boy sighed. "Gee," he muttered, "it sure is a good job I like sci-fi and fantasy because this is just getting more and more weird."

Merlin laughed and then looked at Galadriel. "But my Lady, you need to tell us what has happened on Middle Earth."

She paused for a moment as she collected her thoughts. "It is the Orcs. After Frodo destroyed the One Ring and Sauron was finally vanquished we thought all would be well. But the Orcs, and many black Uruks, were swarming all over Mordor and building up their strength. Now they are attacking the lands of men and the fight is not going well for the defenders - there are just so many attacking. Araborn, the son of Aragorn and now the king, is doing what he can but his forces are being slowly pushed back by sheer weight of numbers. I fear the worst."

I'd like to see somebody move to the Black Sea.

She paused and Merlin spoke quietly. "But what of Gandalf and your fellow Elves, can they not help as they did before?"

The Elf Queen gave a wry smile and brushed away a tear. "Dear Gandalf, although he returned to us as Gandalf the White I fear that fight with the Balrog took more out of him than anyone realized. He passed away some years ago." She looked up and stared at Merlin. "They have no magician to help them now."

Merlin looked into her blue eyes. "My Lady it would be my honor to help in any way I can."



"Thank you old friend," she replied softly. "Your offer is greatly appreciated and certainly accepted." Then she sighed. "As to my fellow Elves they are in their new realm and very happy there. They have no intention of returning to Middle Earth." She sighed again. "That is why I am here, to find more support for the fight."

Brooklyn looked at her lovely face. "I'll help too Queen Galadriel," he said. "I'll use Excalibur to kill as many of those Orcs and...er...the other guys as I can."

She laughed, such a lovely sound. "Thank you Brooklyn, those 'other guys' are the black Uruks and your sword would be of great use as they are more powerful than ordinary Orcs and have some slight magical powers. Your brave offer is greatly welcome." Then she turned to The Doctor.

The Time Lord looked a bit embarrassed. "Well, I'm sorry Galadriel," he said, "but the trouble is I don't actually do fighting."

"I know that Doctor," she replied with a smile, "and I would never ask you to." Then she paused and her eyes sparkled again. "But I believe you have a friendly General with a big spaceship? The weapons on that ship would be of enormous value in the coming battle."

The Doctor stared at her for a few seconds as her words sank in. Then he threw back his head and laughed. "Oh yes, of course, and he owes us a few favors for saving the galaxy! I'll go back to the Tardis and go and have a word." Then he paused. "But Galadriel, I can use the Tardis to navigate to Middle Earth but what about you?"

Another laugh from the Elf Queen, another lovely sound. "Don't worry Doctor," she replied, "I have a way."

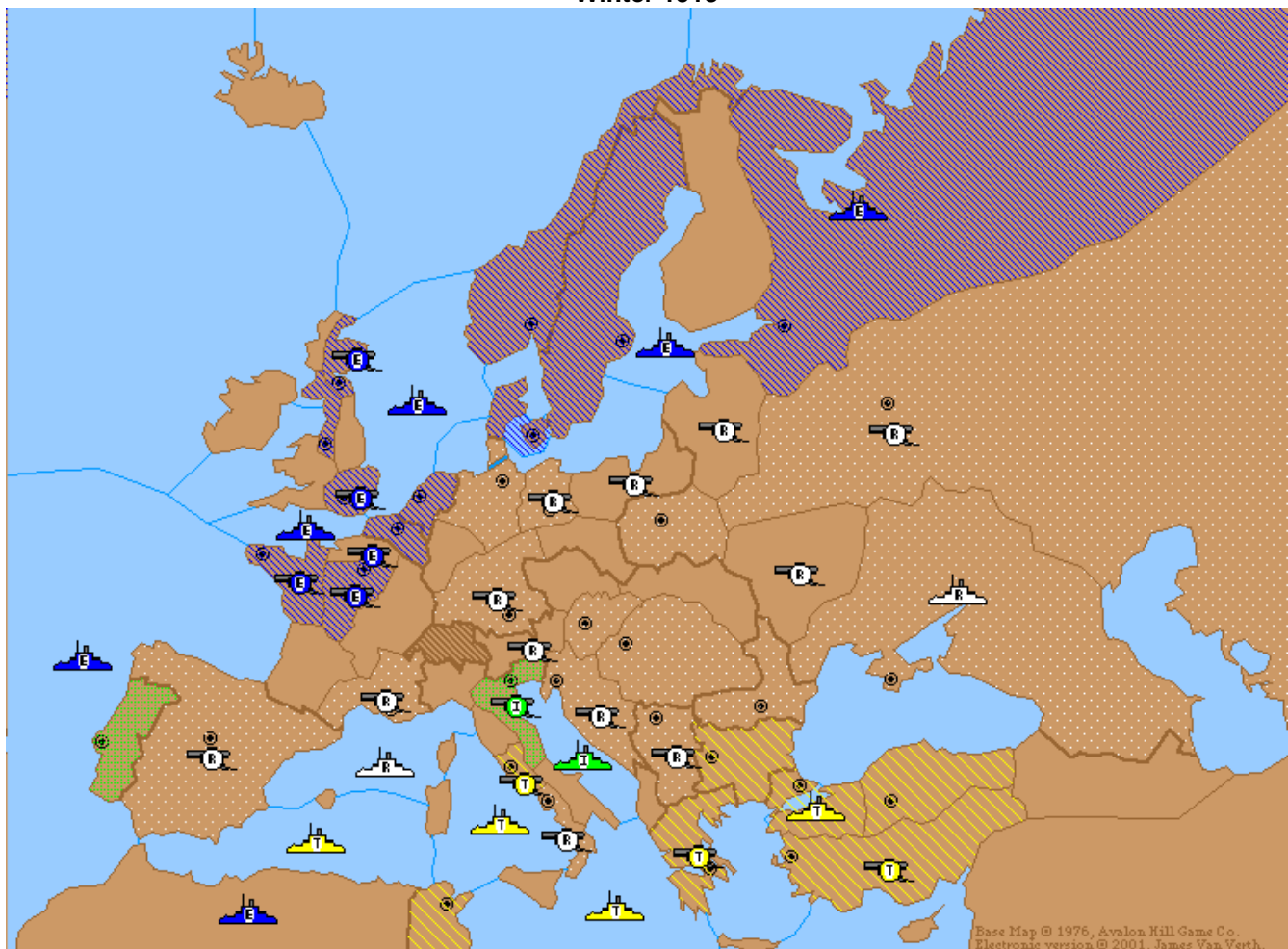
Now it was The Time Lord's turn to laugh. "Yes, of course, I should have known shouldn't I? See you on Middle Earth." He turned and ran back to his craft.

On board the 'Further Glory' the old General was beginning the next briefing. "Hail Fndili," he cried.

"Hail Fndili," came the response from the trainees.

"Gentlemen," began General U'til, "this war gets more and more strange. England continues to attack in the west and Russia appears to have conceded all its northern territories. Italy is clearly soon to depart and Turkey seems to be doing nothing. What is happening here? I still believe that a joint England/Russia victory is likely but they seem to be taking a long time to achieve it. I will be very interested in your observations tomorrow. Hail Fndili."

Winter 1913



Suddenly there's a run on armies. Somebody must have worn one at an awards show.

England: Build A London, A Edinburgh..Has A Brest, A Edinburgh, F English Channel, F Gulf of Bothnia, A London, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F North Africa, F North Sea, A Paris, A Picardy, F St Petersburg(nc).

Italy: Remove A Tuscany..Has F Adriatic Sea, A Venice.

Russia: Build A Moscow..Has A Berlin, F Gulf of Lyon, A Livonia, A Marseilles, A Moscow, A Munich, A Naples, A Prussia, A Serbia, F Sevastopol, A Spain, A Trieste, A Tyrolia, A Ukraine.

Turkey: Build A Smyrna..Has F Constantinople, A Greece, F Ionian Sea, A Rome, A Smyrna, F Tyrrhenian Sea, F Western Mediterranean.

Winter 1913 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

Not much new here. England builds two armies, Russia builds one, and Turkey builds one. It's not like there's any meaningful naval fighting left to be had. Turkey/Russia have the Med and England has the Atlantic.

I agree, I thought England would build one more fleet, but this suggests that Bill will keep the two fleets supporting on the northern line and convoy these two armies across and then support on the

WINTER 1913

On board the 'Further Glory' General U'til was beginning the next briefing. "Hail Fndili," he cried.

"Hail Fndili," replied the trainees.

"Well Gentlemen," began the old soldier, "all the nations seem to be raising new armies rather than fleets. It looks as though this will become a land war rather than a naval one, and certainly in the west and north and possibly the south. This is indeed a fascinating campaign and one well worthy of study. Your reports tomorrow will be most interesting and will certainly help decide how much progress you make in the service of the Empire. Hail Fndili."

But as he turned to leave the Science Officer, Lieutenant B'des, rushed into the room. "General," he shouted, "the Tardis has returned to cargo bay 4. I think you should go there and talk to The Doctor."

"By the Goddess," replied the General, "I didn't expect this. Come B'des, let us go."

They rushed to the cargo bay and saw The Doctor standing in front of his machine. He smiled and the General wrapped three tentacles around him in the sign of 'welcome dear friend'. "But Doctor," asked the

southern line. If Bill keeps trying Naf-Mid, Mid-Por to tie up Portugal, it is theoretically possible that Russia and Turkey could move quickly to annihilate Naf and try to force the Med with three fleets before England can get two fleets supporting Mid. If RT are still together and Gary wants to make the "Russia win" happen, expect to see that. BUT, the Turkish army build suggests that we may have another shift and Con-Bla, and Ank-Arm could be next? We'll see, won't we.

General, "what has happened? I didn't expect to see you again."

The Time Lord smiled. "There is a big problem General and we need your help, and most especially the weapons and soldiers on your ship. Let's go to your cabin and I will explain it all."

"Anything Doctor," replied the old General," after what you and your companions have done you can have anything you wish." They walked to the General's cabin with B'des following behind. The Doctor gave a wry smile as he started to explain.



Back on Earth Merlin looked at Galadriel and bowed. "My Lady, you said you had a way to get to Middle Earth?"

She smiled again. "Yes old friend," she replied, "and you almost found it when you and Brooklyn retrieved Excalibur. Come, let us make our way to that secret chamber under the LA Galaxy stadium and I

will show you."

It was daylight now and many workmen were around, preparing for the next match. But she waved her hand and, with some Elvish magic, all three were surrounded in a cloak of invisibility. They made their way down to the basement and, with Merlin lighting the way with his staff, then to the hidden cavern underneath. They walked steadily across the cavern floor and onto the crystal bridge that Merlin had created with the spell of Making. Galadriel looked at him and smiled. "A nice construction old friend," she said softly, "I cannot think of anyone who could have done better."

The old magician bowed again. "Thank you my Lady."

They continued to the cave where Brooklyn had killed Morgana's serpent and retrieved Excalibur. Galadriel laughed again, such a lovely sound, "You were actually quite close Merlin," she said, "just another hundred

yards to another cave entrance." They walked on and then saw the second cave. Galadriel led them inside through a narrow passage and down a short slope. At the bottom it branched into three passages and with the light from Merlin's staff they could see further branches down each one.

"My Lady," gasped Merlin, "what is this?" Brooklyn just looked around in awe, beginning to hope this adventure would never end.

The Elf Queen smiled. "It is a labyrinth old friend, there are several on Earth and several more around the galaxy," she replied. "Each branch leads to a different realm, some of which it is better not to visit, but one of them leads to Lothlorien. Come, I know the path so just follow me."

They did.

