

Diplomacy World



#119 - Fall 2012

www.diplomacyworld.net



Notes from the Editor

Welcome to the latest issue of **Diplomacy World**, #119, the Fall 2012 issue. In the process of downloading the pdf this time around you probably noticed that the file is a bit larger than usual. In fact, once you opened the file to begin reading, you may have realized that we have over 100 pages of material for you to enjoy.

In the case of Diplomacy World, as with many other written products, length is not a determining factor when you're deciding how much of the material is of interest. Truth be known, under normal circumstances we would have taken some of the material in an issue of this size and held it back until next issue. However, for reasons that will become clear, we chose not to do so.

Diplomacy World #119 - while it has some articles on other topics - is really a focus on three distinct subjects. The first I will mention is the conclusion of the current Demo Game, "Rotary Phones and 8-Track Tapes." Also with the final game year, you'll find the ENTIRE End Game Report, which includes end game statements from every player involved (save one, Buz Eddy) and the commentators. If you've spent any time following this game, I believe you'll find the statements very enlightening and entertaining. A few are truly "no holds barred," which as Lead Editor I encouraged. We wanted the players to say what they really felt, and express their true opinions. There's no reason to sugar coat it. Whether you use it as a learning tool or simply for fun, the game itself and these statements together form a powerful dialogue.

The second subject that receives major attention in this issue is World DipCon in Chicago. We managed to harass a number of participants into writing about their experiences, including the champion himself, Doc Binder. Whether you were fortunate enough to attend, or (like me) planned to and were unable to make it work out, by the time you finish all the WDC material in this issue you'll feel like you had been there...or at least be very sorry you weren't! As an added bonus, at the very end of this issue, we have an Appendix which was compiled by Rick Desper, containing the entire Top Board game move by move (including maps) so you can see how Doc Binder won his trophy. Take advantage of Rick's hard work (and Jim Burgess', who put a lot more energy into this issue than I think I was able to) and read those articles!

Last, and most significant, we say farewell to our good friend Richard Walkerdine, who passed away on September 6th after a brief illness. I hounded Richard for a few months, but it honestly didn't take a lot of prodding before I was able to get him to begin contributing to Diplomacy World and my dipzine Eternal Sunshine, even after leaving the zine publishing world for so many years. Whether it was his magical combination of commentary and epic storytelling in the Demo Game, his humorous off-topic pieces in Eternal Sunshine, or his hobby history pieces like his "Life with Ulrika" series, there is nobody with the same humor and point of view as Walkerdine expressed. He's also the only contributor I've ever had who sent me articles for the current issue plus the next two future issues all at the same time. Clearly when it came to storytelling, Richard liked to plan things out. Numerous times we discussed how much longer the Demo Game might go on, because he didn't want to begin a story arc without having time to finish it. As things happened, both his commentary story and his Ulrika series were wrapped up in this issue. He left nothing unfinished...perhaps he knew there wouldn't be much time to contribute more. I'm just happy we were all fortunate enough to experience one of the great hobby writers and zine publishers in his golden years, especially because I know first-hand how much pleasure Richard was getting from writing again.

I will truly miss Richard. We exchanged a lot of emails over the past 18 months on some very personal topics, including depression, politics, religion...and death. I'll certainly lose some of it to time, but particular insights he gave me will stay with me for a long time, or the rest of my life.

Richard's death is one of the reasons we chose to include the rest of the Demo Game material in this issue, instead of breaking it up into two or three pieces. And you'll also find a good number of tributes to Walkerdine in these pages, from some those who knew him longest. A special thanks to all of you who took the time to memorialize a special man and a great friend.

I'll close by reminding you the next deadline for Diplomacy World submissions is January 1st, 2013. Remember, besides articles (which are always prized and appreciated), we LOVE to get letters, feedback, input, ideas, and suggestions too. So email me at diplomacyworld@yahoo.com! See you in the winter, and happy stabbing!

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

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My Life with Ulrika: Part 8 (Moving On)

by Richard Walkerdine

THE STORY SO FAR. With the Zine Poll finally won, total Hobby dominance assured and the lovely Ulrika back in his arms it had all looked so good. But Walkerdine has to admit that the evil Piggott has finally got the advantage. The only solution is to dance the Time Warp again and timeslip into the future, to a time when the foul Piggott has finally left the One True Hobby. Surely then the two of them could finally live out their lives in peace? Well, perhaps not.... Now read on...

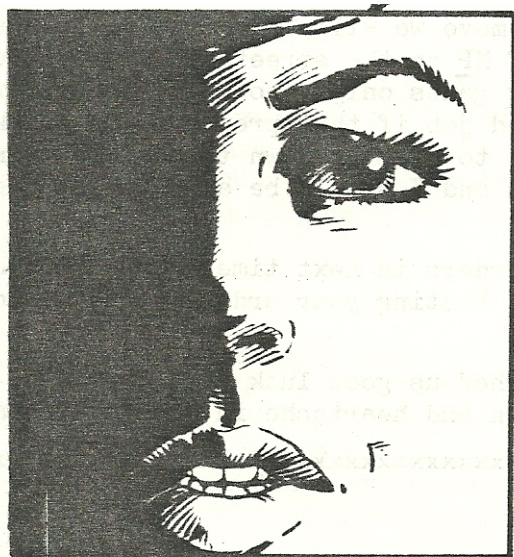
The other Time Warpers had all returned to their own timelines. Ulrika and I had simply slipped forward to 2008 and were still in my Cotswold mansion, although it had certainly got rather dirty in the intervening years. But I set the cleaning robots to work and then turned on the computers, looking through the Hobby history archives.

"Hah!" I exclaimed. "We've done it! That wretched Piggott has been out of the Hobby for several years. We never need to worry about him again."

She smiled her lovely smile and rested a hand on my shoulder. "So that's it?" she asked quietly. "It's all over at last."

I patted her hand and smiled back. "I guess so Ulrika, but it was exciting at times."

She gave another little smile but then her face changed and looked a bit concerned.



"Look," she said, "that may be fine for you Walkerdine but when am I going to get some more action?"

I sighed as I remembered that this lovely creature was also a cold hearted psychopathic killer and assassin. "Don't worry Ulrika," I replied, trying to sound reassuring, "I am sure your skills will still be needed. Oh my goodness!"

"What?" she asked.

"I was looking at my emails. There's one here from some guy called Doug Kent. I've never heard of him of course but he seems to be the editor of DIPLOMACY WORLD and he wants me to write articles for the zine."

She laughed. "But of course you will refuse?"

I shrugged. "I don't think I can. He also says he knows what you were doing in Area 51 and if I don't do what he wants he's going to publish everything."

"Give me the address and I'll take him out," she replied.

"No Ulrika," I said, "that's not a good idea. He says he has sent all the details to several lawyers with instructions to publish them in the event of his death. My god, this man is worse than Piggott!"

"Oh shit," she muttered as she sank to her knees.

I sighed again. "Oh good lord Ulrika, it's even worse. One of his co-editors is Jim Burgess!"

She frowned. "But who in hell is he?"

"Another American," I replied. "He turned up when I organised World Dip Con 4. At the end of the convention he came to my room to congratulate me on organising a superb WDC, as so many of them did."

"But so what?" she asked.

"Well, you remember I got those special WDC4 sweatshirts made by the guy in Bristol who told me to make out the cheque to 'Beast' (**authors note** – that is totally true, he was a real weirdo but a great guy and he didn't charge too much)?"

"Yes of course I remember, but what of it?"

"When Jim came to congratulate me I had just two sweatshirts left. After he got his flight home I found I had only one. The ratfink had stolen one! All I've got left now is this last remaining example."



"Oh I am so seriously going to take him out," she replied as she took out her mean looking blaster.

"Hang on Ulrika," I shouted. "There's something else. Another email, from the CIA, and with your name on it. They've finished the reverse engineering of that crashed spacecraft at Area 51. They have a special mission, and they want you to handle it." I looked at her and smiled. "Well, you did say you wanted some more action?"

She giggled. "Book the flight."

I did so and she left a few days later, almost bubbling with excitement at the prospect of doing who knows what?

But I didn't see her again for nearly three years. Oh I got some emails and sometimes a phone call but she always made it clear that whatever she was up to was so top secret that she couldn't tell me anything. But I guessed that she was putting her special talents to good use. In the meantime I wrote some articles for Doug's silly zine and made sure the cleaning robots did a proper job of restoring my Cotswold mansion.

Then in late 2011 she finally returned. "Oh Richard," she cried as she fell into my arms, "that machine they put together is just awesome. And I got the full set!"

I held her tightly for some time before kissing her sweet lips. Then I pulled back a bit. "The full set of what Ulrika?"

She grinned and took up her usual pose with the blaster. I backed off a little.



She grinned again. "First it was Saddam Hussein, then bin Laden – and boy it was tricky in those mountains – and then finally Gaddafi. Oh I so enjoyed it! They are talking about Iran and North Korea, but I think that's quite a way off."

I grinned back. "So for now I've got you all to myself?"

"Of course you have Richard," she replied.

Hand in hand we headed for the bedroom.

(THE END (WELL, MAYBE...))

[[And for us, the readers of Diplomacy World and the Diplomacy hobby in general, it is the end. Richard Walkerdine passed away in September 6th after a short illness. But for Richard, who knows? He believed the end was the end. If he was wrong, he knows it now.]]

By Brian Creese

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sell me an airplane – ‘any color, we’ll spray it for you free!’

Walkerdine was the first – and perhaps only – close friend I have ever had who was a proper Conservative Party supporter. Although originally I assumed it was all part of his humor. For years we carried round a Party 7’ with the sticker ‘Not to be opened under a labor Government’. Yet despite the political rows, the hobby spats and his being a generally awkward sod, I don’t recall ever falling out with him. Neither of us took any of this seriously. He was simply too nice, and too humorous to take seriously for too long.

Walkerdine was a game player. His involvement with the hobby was a game, zine production a game, and I suspect most of life was a game to Richard, not to be taken too seriously. In fact, despite this semi-public life he played out, I think Richard was a deeply private man, and the only things he took seriously were Claire and their life together. Back in 1977 they arrived as a close married couple, and when I last saw them a couple of years ago they were as close as ever.

So, a eulogy if you like. An awkward, cussed, augmentative, very funny, rather private devoted husband who played some games, wrote some articles, wound a few people up and spent most of his life with the airplanes he so deeply loved.

Richard J Walkerdine – A Memory

By Steve Doubleday

It’s with very real sadness that I have to report the death, after a brief illness, the death of Richard J Walkerdine on Thursday 6th September. My thoughts are with Claire, his wife, at this time.

RJW as he was popularly known in the UK diplomacy hobby was one of the founding fathers of the UK hobby. His ‘zine, Mad Policy was one of the foundation and seminal zines of Diplomacy, first published in August 1972, he went on to publish more than 150 issues with a circulation which was international.

Mad Policy was also home of the Zine Poll for a lot of the time, eventually winning it, after a controversial change of rules in the eighties, which then resulted in RJW passing it on to John Piggott in 1986.

RJW was also one of the organisers for many years of Manorcon, which was an eminently successful games convention in the UK started in 1983 and still running.

Richard was also instrumental in formulating the idea of the formation of the IDA/UK. As Stephen Agar says: *“...interest in Britain was focused on the Calhamer Awards which were organized by the IDA in the States. Thanks to some electioneering, British zines were nominated in 9 of the 11 categories and duly went on to win all 9 awards. This feat was accomplished by the fact that 75 of the 400 or so active UK players had voted in the poll, as opposed to a mere 50 votes from the 2,000 or so active US players. The US promptly changed the rules.”* This coup was deliberately plotted it has to be said as a slightly nationalistic response to being patronised by some US players! However, RJW remained good friends with people like Edi Birsan and Conrad von Metzke, in spite of some opprobrium. It’s worth saying that Richard loved to cock a snook at any kind of pomposity or pretension.

RJW also hated any kind of mawkish sentimentality, which rather showed itself in his spare, dry wit and prose. He absolutely loved to puncture my innate tendency to pomposity. Now, I shall have to resort to listening to what he would have said, like an additional internal critic.

His Imrryr by-line in Mad Policy was from Michael Moorcock’s Elric of Melniboné series, RJW was a very avid collector of Moorcock and read a lot of Science Fiction. He was also a great fan of Star Trek, Doctor Who and Blake’s 7 and also particularly loved the film Excalibur. Besides this he was a very great fan of early 60s UK female pop singers like Susan Maughan and Sandie Shore and collected rare songs and records by such until he died. His collections, besides a mountain of SF, also included cigarette cards, which he turned into a semi-profitable hobby in his retirement.

On a personal level, Richard was my best friend. His qualities were those of a true Englishman as both he and I saw them: honourable, decent, honest and loyal. His passion as a one-time resident of Essex was for the county and England cricket teams, the latter which I shared with him, and he did so love to crow over the success of his team over mine in the county championship. But Richard’s real passion was for the football (soccer) team closest to him in his youth and to his heart throughout his life, which was West Ham.

One of the reasons why Richard became and was such a close friend of mine was that we both shared a passion for strategy board games that took a long time... Britannia, Civilization (the Hartland Trefoil game) were just two of these. If you don’t get on with someone very well, spending many hours staring at each other over a board would have been intolerable. He played to win

and was a very careful strategist, hugely capable when it came to assessing probabilities. Which was understandable as he had a gift for figures. He started his working life as a statistician with British Aerospace before progressing on to a very senior position for BAe. This involved supporting negotiations with the UK government providing statistical and financial information for BAe during these. He said that his experience in playing Diplomacy was invaluable in achieving results at these meetings!

But I would not wish to give the idea of an earnest man, as those who have read Richard's press saga in this august zine, you will know or guess that RJW was witty, charming, creative and highly intelligent in print as well as in person. A great conversationalist, some of our joint flights of fantasy and extemporisation got us into some strange situations! You will have (or can) read of the spoof which he and I perpetrated on the UK hobby in launching my zine Gallimaufry under a pseudonym, as part of which he created Selena King, a femme fatale for the hobby, and then proceeded to torment Pete Birks with her for a while, by getting people to send cards from her from all over the world!

Let me finish with my recollection of one such piece of insanity, which occurred back in the late 1970s. In those

days there was an annual holiday get-together called Eurocon, typically taking place in France. This year Richard and Claire had agreed to give me a lift down and back. In France in those days, there was nearly always spare capacity in hotels so getting a couple of rooms was not too much of a problem.

Until on the way back we found one which to our horror only had one last room left above the kitchen. So I said that I would sleep in the car, but Richard and Claire being lovely people, because the room had a cot bed, wouldn't hear of it. So we went downstairs, Claire went out for a walk and left Richard and I to secure the room. This caused some whispered conversations which we realised was caused by them thinking that Claire was une Belle de la Nuit and that we were going to enjoy a bit more than just the meal and a sleep. Madame's son, who was our waiter, was terrified by the thoughts of what we might do later on and so we regaled him with little winks and whispered "Ménage a trois!". We could not resist. Needless to say we had a fitful night as the room was above the kitchen with all the pots and pans, but eventually we got to sleep!

He was my friend: decent, honest, charming, witty, loyal and funny besides being a great gamesplayer! After 40 of friendship I will very much miss him.

Mad for Mad Policy

by Dane Maslen

Richard Walkerdine's Mad Policy was the first zine I subscribed to and when I subsequently went along to a pub-based Hobby meet in Godalming Richard was the first person in the Hobby that I met. His instructions in MP had been very clear as to the behavior expected from a newcomer, so once I'd arrived and successfully identified him, I duly bought him a Pils.

I soon joined the Mad Policy team that Richard fielded in the ManorCon Diplomacy tournament. In 1986 the convention clashed with a Saturday evening Bruce Springsteen concert in London. Richard was a great Springsteen fan and had tickets for the concert, so he left himself out of the team. When he got back to the con after the concert, he discovered that we had all clung on for draws and had thereby won the team tournament. Richard hastily made use of his position as head honcho on the ManorCon committee so that at the end of the convention eight trophies were awarded to the winning team: seven to the players and one to the non-playing captain!

MP 120 celebrated our victory with "We Won!!" written in large letters on the front cover and an article entitled "Injury-hit All Stars in Dramatic Last-Gasp Victory Shock Sensation" inside. The following issue of MP included a poem submitted by Steve Howe:

THE TEAM THAT WON THE TROPHY

The team that won the trophy was,
Without the slightest doubt,
Triumphant in the main because
They'd left the captain out.

In former years this gallant band
Were proud of how they'd done
With six top-ranking players and
A handicap of one.

You see, they'd had to let him play
As founder of the team -
Which he viewed as a useful way
To boost his self-esteem.

But now they yearned to finish first -
Not bridesmaids but the bride -
And thus they had to ditch the worst
Dip-player in the side.

They tried to tell him, gentle-like,
And hoped he'd take it well,
But what they meant was: "On yer bike,
Get lost and go to hell!"

"They must have felt remorse," you say,
"For how they'd stitched him up."
Like hell - without him in the way
They carried off the cup.

Richard's comment was "Bah!"

Richard continued to field a Mad Policy team in the ManorCon Dip tournament for several years after MP folded. In 1993 we achieved our second victory, this time with our captain playing. At last Richard had a trophy as of right, but he was gradually phasing himself out of the Hobby and two years later saw Mad Policy's last appearance at ManorCon.

In 2004 (by which time I'd been conned into being on the committee) ManorCon hosted World DipCon for the third time and I suggested that as Richard had been responsible for the birth of World DipCon we should invite him along to present the trophies. I thought, correctly as it turned out, that he would be unable to resist a brief return to the limelight.

In May 2008 I received an email out of the blue from Richard. Douglas had dragged him kicking and screaming back into the Hobby to write articles for Diplomacy World. When he saw a copy of Eternal

Sunshine Richard was surprised to find I was a subscriber, so got my email address from Douglas. He was keen to know who else was still around and was amazed by how many former MP subscribers were still active in the Hobby 20 years on.

When we realized that he was now living not far from some friends that I was going to be visiting in September, we arranged to meet up for a few hours at the end of my trip. He was still much as I remembered him from his days in the Hobby, but his earlier passion for games (and Hobby domination!) had been replaced by one for collecting and trading cigarette cards.

That was the last time I saw Richard but his regular contributions to ES led to an occasional exchange of emails, most recently in April when he wrote about the Vulcan bombing of the airfield at Port Stanley during the Falklands War. I had seen a TV program about the mission a month or so earlier - Richard was disappointed to discover that he had missed it - and was able to fill in some details that Richard had been unsure of in his article.

The news of his death came as a great shock. It had only been a day or two earlier that I had read his contribution to ES 68.

RICHARD WALKERDINE: A PEERISPECTIVE

By Larry Peery

Many years ago, in 1969 to be precise, former US Secretary of State Dean Acheson wrote his memoirs, **PRESENT AT THE CREATION: MY YEARS AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT**. Like Dean Acheson, Richard Walkerdine was brilliant and quirky. Unlike Acheson, who was present at the creation of America's post-WWII foreign policy, Richard was the creator of a good part of Diplomacy's history.

I've known Richard for so long I don't even remember when we first came in contact, but I think it was in the early 1970s. Our first FTF encounter was at World DipCon I in Birmingham, England in 1988. Richard was the stuff legends are made of, and I'd like to share a few of the ones I remember.

His contributions to the hobby were many: player, games master, writer, publisher, custodian, convention host, tournament director, drinking buddy, and all around good guy. He did it all and he did it brilliantly for some forty years.

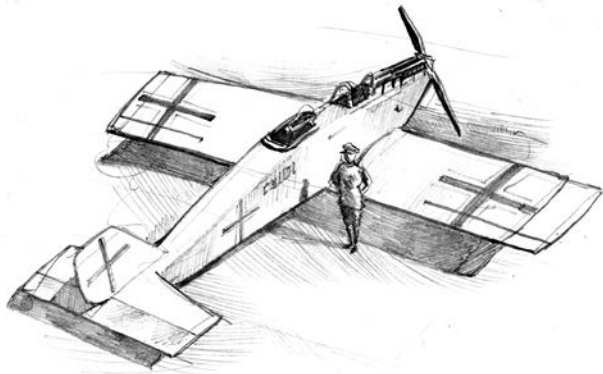
I first got to know him when he sent me an early copy of his new magazine, **MAD POLICY**, of which he published some 73 issues from August, 1972 until October of 1977. Two things about **MAD POLICY** attracted me.

First, it was more than just a Diplomacy magazine. It was filled with all kinds of other games and comments on this and that. It was also very well written, especially when compared to most of the stuff being published on this side of the Atlantic.

Over those early years I got to know Richard better and better and we worked together usually and sometimes competed with each other, but always in a spirit of good comradeship and with a mutual goal of making the Diplomacy hobby bigger and better.

There's no doubt that Richard's paramount achievement in Diplomacy was the creation of World DipCon. I often called him "the father of WDC," but he always generously gave credit to those who helped him turn his idea into a reality. You can read my history of WDC in the Fall 2000 issue of **DIPLOMACY WORLD**, and you can read his telling of the story of the birth of WDC in the Winter 2011 issue of **DIPLOMACY WORLD**. In that same issue I suggest you read his article "Diplomacy and Its Real Life Benefits," which says a lot about how Richard saw the game and the hobby.

When Richard and Fred Davis approached me in early 1988 with the idea of having the first "World" DipCon I realized immediately that this was something that the hobby had been waiting for ever since the establishment of the American DipCon years before. When Richard told me that Allan Calhamer would be their guest of honor I knew I had to go. And so I did. It was the first of many Diplomacy events I attended in Birmingham over the years and I enjoyed them all, but it was that first WDC that remains in my memory even today.



It was a bit of a culture shock to make the trip to Birmingham. I knew that from the beginning when American Airlines issued me a ticket to Birmingham, Alabama instead of Birmingham, England. The venue was also a bit different, a 16 story high-rise dormitory named, appropriately enough High Hall (I think it had to do with the height of the building, although it may have had to do with another kind of "high." You never knew for sure in those days. The building was a post-WWII dorm and compared to today's university housing it was pretty primitive. There were two elevators, some pretty basic plumbing, and students slept four in a room. I remember that because I had a room for four all to myself on the top floor; which meant I spent a lot of time hanging around waiting for an elevator. The Brits were all on the lower floors and had learned to use the stairs to get around. The cafeteria was also basic; in fact the food was horrible. The menu was the same every day. You had fish, chips, and a choice of peas or carrots. Most importantly and most shockingly to me, the dorm had its own pub, something the Brits took for granted and made good use of. In fact when the bar opened at 1000 in the morning they would be lined up waiting to get their first pint of the day. Oh yes, did I mention the paint job? The interior halls were, by tradition, painted each year by graduating students as a present to new arrivals. That year they had just been painted in bright blue, orange, and yellow. I took to wearing sunglasses when I was in the halls. The gaming was conducted in one of the dorm's recreation rooms which had a simple stage where Richard and his committee members conducted the affairs of the event and ran the various tournaments, etc. They did an excellent job and taking care of us

Americans and the other foreigners, smiling graciously as they pondered the best way to carve up this new fresh meat.

The committee had invited the local BBC outlet to cover the event and I vividly remember that Friday when Richard came up to me and said a reporter from the BBC wanted to talk to me. After a few minutes the reporter said he wanted to get some photos and he'd be back tomorrow. Sure enough, right in the middle of the one game I played where I was actually doing well, the next day the reporter showed up with a camera man, a sound tech with a recorder, and wanted to do a full interview. Needless to say my diplomacy in that game went to hell. Richard was hovering in the background listening to what questions I was asked and what answers I was giving; and all seemed to be going well. But it was 1988. Margaret Thatcher was still prime minister (1979-1990) and a very polarizing figure in the UK because although she had led the country to a victory in the Falklands War, the economy was tanking under her fiscal policies. Things were even worse in the US; where George H. W. Bush was running for president against Michael Dukakis, whose chief claim to fame was his wife, who later went on to a successful career as an actress. Somewhere in the interview I made an off the cuff remark that caught the ear of the BBC reporter although at the time I didn't think anything of it. We wrapped up the interview and I went back to being slaughtered at the game table. The next morning I walked into the game room and Richard jumped off the stage and practically ran over to me. "You were on the BBC news last night, and everybody is talking about it. "Did you really say that?" He asked. "Say what? I said. "That Margaret Thatcher should come over to America and run for president because she had more balls than either Bush or Dukakis! "He screamed at me. Well, yes, I did say something like that," I responded. And for years afterwards wherever I went in the UK or Europe that's how I was introduced, as the American who said... I'm told that when she was told what I had said on the BBC, she just laughed and smiled. Hamm.

On the last night of the event a bunch of us went out to dinner in downtown Birmingham at a Wacky Packie place. Balti was a new dish that was invented by a Pakistani cook in Birmingham in 1977 (The same year Richard stopped publishing MAD POLICY, although I don't think there was any connection between the two.) We all sat at a long table and the waiters brought platter after platter of food that disappeared as quickly as they put it on the table. Beer after beer washed it down. When we were done the head waiter brought a bill which was solemnly passed around among the Brits. "Did you order that?" one would ask the other. "Nope, not me." Well, I'm not paying for it." Came the ritualistic response. And so it went. Finally, each of them put two pounds down on the table, probably around USD 3. The foreigners present were not included in this, and when I

went to put a couple of extra pounds on the table for a tip, one of the Brits picked them up and said, "Don't do that. You'll spoil it for the rest of us next time. They'll expect it."

One of my prized mementos from that first WDC was a simple gesture that Allan Calhamer thought of. Somewhere he had acquired a fistful of color postcards with a picture of High Hall on one side. He brought them to a little farewell dinner that some of the event organizers and foreigners attended. He pulled out the stack of postcards and started signing each one, Allan B. Calhamer, and then passed it to the next person, who signed it, and passed it on. This continued until each of us had a postcard signed by every other person present. It wasn't quite as impressive as the signing of the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia in 1776, but it came close. I still have my postcard somewhere, a tangible proof of attendance and a symbol of our commitment to keep the World DipCon event going.

And sure enough we did. After successful World DipCon events in Chapel Hill, North Carolina in 1990 and Canberra, Australia in 1992, we gathered again in Birmingham in 1994 for World DipCon IV. By then things had changed considerably and the some of the British game players were upset that the emphasis on Diplomacy was spoiling "their" traditional gaming event. Others were upset that the French had turned up in Birmingham determined to win every game and every award. Not good sportsmanship the Brits said. Things got a bit testy as the Brits argued amongst themselves, but united to quarrel with "the foreigners," especially the French about the event and the future of World DipCon. Richard, disgusted by the acrimony stalked off to the bar to drown his sorrows. Things were not going well; fortunately more and more of the Brits followed him to the bar, leaving it to a few committed British hobbyists and the foreigners to salvage something out of the meeting. The major decision made was that thereafter World DipCon would be held annually on some kind of rotating basis involving the UK, Europe, America, and Australia. Ironically the French won the right to host the next World DipCon a year later. I tracked down Richard in the bar and he was, by then, well past demonstrating his prowess as a drinker. I told him that we had managed to save his baby and that although the birth had not been an easy one, WDC would survive.



But there was more to Richard than just Diplomacy. I remember one day we drove over to Edgabaston, the home of the Warwickshire Country Cricket Club. As he showed me around and told me something about the game, the venue, and the Club's history. It actually brought tears to his eyes. I saw the same kind of passion about a sport in Chapel Hill at the Dean Smith Center and at the original Camden Yards in Baltimore. One quiet night at World DipCon (There weren't many, but there were a few.) Richard and I were sitting in the bar drinking and talking about this and that, anything except Diplomacy! Our conversation ranged from Kenneth Clark's epic series CIVILISATION to the relative merits of Boeing vs. Airbus jets. Through it all Richard demonstrated his wit and style, not to mention wisdom. He was a modern Renaissance man.

Although his Diplomacy career would go on for nearly another twenty years and, as any reader of DIPLOMACY WORLD knows, his passion for the game and his skills as a writer never diminished, I will always remember his role as creator of World DipCon as his finest hour.

Move over Winston and make room for Richard.

Goodbye to Walkerdine

By Pete Birks

I think that I first met Richard at his own home, then a one-bedroom flat in Addlestone, called Cheriton. As was often the case in those days a Diplomacy player who edited his own 'zine decided to throw open a most impractical abode to all and sundry. I think that it was the summer of 1974, a summer of housecons, before the more organized conventions of later years, of which Richard would become the administrator of the most successful in terms of both attendance and profits – ManorCon in Birmingham,

The housecons of earlier days were much more informal affairs. There were far fewer games around in those days. This meant that Monopoly and Formula One would still make an appearance. That con saw Pete Swanson, Greg Ward, John Piggott, Richard Sharp, Andy Davidson, Graham Jeffries, probably Brian Yare and I in attendance. We probably just slept on the floor in a sleeping bag, if we slept at all. I certainly recall a bargaining deal between Greg Ward and John Piggott at about 2.30 in the morning during a particularly competitive game of Monopoly.

"How much will you give me for Regent Street?"

"£635".

"Give me £636."

"Are you mad? I wouldn't give you £636 for that rubbish!"

I doubt that Walkerdine would have been playing, although he would certainly have taken part in the Formula One. Speed Circuit had only just been released by 3M, so for racing we had to stick to a game that we had all been playing since the late 1960s. Walkerdine considered himself a dab hand at it – as he did at Speed Circuit after it had come to supplant the quaint English-designed game. There was an intense rivalry between him and me in the early days, before everyone else had got the hang of it and we naturally assumed that we would be finishing 1st and 2nd.

If John Piggott could be thought of as coming from the fanzine SF side of Diplomacy 'zine publishing, Walkerdine was definitely from the "get it out on time" school. Richard had his love of SF and fantasy – I vaguely recall it being more of the pulp end than quality literature. But his 'zine Mad Policy established a

reputation for efficient GMing and prompt appearance. Walkerdine wasn't the first to do this – Brian Yare ran Grafeti to a two-week deadline and often had the 'zine ready within 12 hours of the midnight deadline. But Brian's zine was mainly local to St Andrew's University; Walkerdine's Mad Policy mainly went out by post.

We would meet at most conventions over the years that we were both still involved in the hobby. He was always a joy to talk to and, when it came to running ManorCon, was one of the few administrators who never seemed to get flustered, let alone lose his temper. I think that a small pursing of lips might have been an indication that inside he was incandescent with rage, but one could never be sure.

As Brian has written, Walkerdine's crowning achievement was ManorCon. I went to the first of these, in Bristol. Pete Calcraft was the driving force. Eventually it staggered on to Birmingham University. Richard took the reins (even if he wasn't the official CEO/CFO) and within a few years it had become the busiest, largest con in Europe. By now his involvement in the rest of the Diplomacy hobby was fading, but he carried on until his crowning achievement – WorldDipCon in Birmingham. That what we recall is what went right (rather than what went wrong, because nothing did go wrong), is testimony to his powers of organization. Too many people think that you can say on a Friday night after one too many drinks, "let's have a party in July!" and then assume that by some miracle the party will happen. Walkerdine would be the guy who knew better, and he would make it happen, while all of the others would just assume that the party was organizing itself.

In all of the years I knew him, I can't recall a single cross word between us. For people who know me, they will realize what an amazing achievement that was on Richard's part (I claim no credit at all). He was a charming bloke to know and, no matter how un-charming you were yourself, he would always make you feel as if you were liked, respected, and that you mattered. I haven't known many people like that, and for that reason alone he would be sadly missed. The Diplomacy hobby would have been a very different place without him, and I for one count it as a privilege to have known him.

Ask the GM

An Advice Column for Diplomacy World

Dear GM,

I am not sure who is better for our hobby in the upcoming US Presidential election? As far as I know neither candidate plays Diplomacy nor has bothered to come to any recent Dipcons.

Do you recommend either candidate?

A Concerned Voter

Dear Voter,

As Clemenceau famously once said about war, I will say about Diplomacy, it is too important to be left only to the politicians; I also doubt they would understand the sublime beauty of our hobby anyway. In the end when you get a governmental department it is usually marks the tombstone of whatever you are trying to save.

My answer is that the Diplomacy hobby is better off as it is, having nothing to do with politics, so it doesn't matter who you vote for as far as the hobby is concerned.

*Your Pal,
The GM*

Dear GM,

Can you explain the reason why there are not more websites about Diplomacy? It would appear to me that Diplomacy is uniquely suited to being played on the web yet there are not that many sites.

Sincerely,
A Diplomacy Webplayer

Dear Webplayer,

This is mostly due to the lack of Diplomacy players who are willing to play in multiple games. Most players are falling down here and need to be in at least a dozen or so games, so get out there and sign up for more games and get your fellow players to do the same.

*Your Pal,
The GM*

Selected Upcoming Conventions

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

BerliCon 2012 - Friday October 12th 2012 - Sunday October 14th 2012 - Berlin, Germany - Website: <http://www.diplomacy-bund.de>

Italian Egg Step Como - Saturday October 27th 2012 - Sunday October 28th 2012 - Brunate (COMO), Italy - Website: http://www.signoridelgioco.it/index.php?option=com_seminar&Itemid=53

MidCon - Friday November 9th 2012 - Sunday November 11th 2012 - Hallmark Hotel, Derby, United Kingdom

French Championship Of Diplomacy - Friday November 30th 2012 - Sunday December 2nd 2012 - Paris, 60 rue de Seine, France - Website: <http://www.championnat-de-france.com/en>

ManorCon XXXI - Friday July 19th 2013 - Sunday July 21st 2013 - University of Leicester - John Foster Hall, 15 Manor Rd, Oadby, Leicester, Leicestershire LE2 2LG, United Kingdom - Website: <http://www.manorcon.org>



Diplomacy for Students

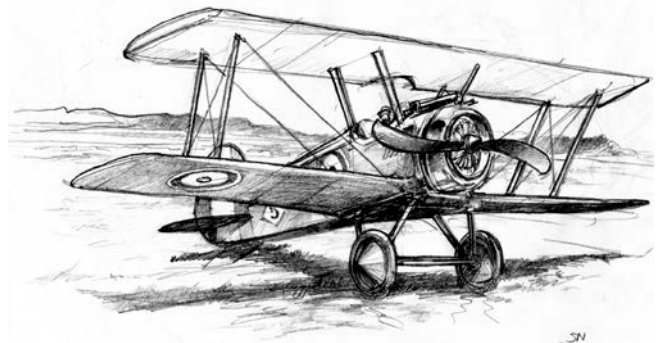
By Chris Babcock

ZAED, rhymes with "said", is now open to serve the needs of players under 18 years old. Co-moderated by Chris Babcock and Dorian Love, ZAED requires less personal information than a public judge as long as an adult registers with the player. With relaxed registration[1] requirements and an improved privacy policy[2] even players under 13 years of age can play provided that an adult monitors their email activity. Students 13 and over are eligible to play on public judges like USAK[3], but may be able to benefit from competition with peers. In addition to relaxed registration requirements, ZAED does not use the Floc utilities[4] for game maps. As a consequence, registration data is not archived and published on any third party site. These and other privacy improvements help provide a safe environment for younger players.



While play by email judges have a just reputation of being difficult to learn, ZAED also exposes a web interface like the one Chris Babcock built for USAK. If a

player can enter their email and password in a form and write game orders then he can play on USAK or ZAED. The order form[5] works exactly like an email message to the judge, but with one important difference. Orders will be processed immediately and the results will be shown on the next page as well as being sent to you by email. This is the only order form for a play by email judge that offers both immediate response and 100% command compatibility with the email interface. This makes learning to play Diplomacy on ZAED easier than a judge that has a different interface for web and email or that does not provide immediate feedback.



Diplomacy provides unique educational possibilities for teachers of English composition, history, geography and English as a second or other language. Parents, teachers and students 13 and over (with permission from parents) are welcome to register directly or contact the judge keepers at zaed-judgekeeper@asciiking.com for more information. Students under 13 should ask an adult to help. ZAED is designed to be compliant with COPPA, the United States Children's On-line Privacy and Protection Act, when used with an email account monitored by an adult.

ZAED is nominally based out of South Africa because deadlines are scheduled in SAST, South Africa Standard Time - GMT+2, and because one of the judge keepers is a teacher at the Roedeian School (SA). Students of all nations are welcome to participate.

- 1 - <http://zaed.asciiking.com/register.html>
- 2 - <http://zaed.asciiking.com/privacy.html>
- 3 - <http://usak.asciiking.com/>
- 4 - <http://floc.net>
- 5 - <http://zaed.asciiking.com/orders.html>

The Tourist's Guide to World DipCons (well, about half of them, anyway)

by Don Del Grande

London! Rome! Moscow! As far as World DipCon attendees go, these are just places on the Diplomacy map. On the other hand, when you attend a WDC, you're put right into the heart of such glamorous cities as Birmingham, England, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and Hunt Valley, Maryland. As someone who, based on some quick research, is tied for #2 on the list of WDCs attended (both David Norman and I have been to 13, behind Edi Birsan's 16), I have been asked - oh wait, this is Jim Burgess and Diplomacy World we are talking about; I have been *begged* and *pleaded* to write an article on the WDC locations.

Before I go on, let me make something clear; I am not the type of person who attends WDCs to get off the plane, play a lot of Dip, watch other people win the awards, and then fly back home. If I am going to travel somewhere, I intend on making a vacation out of it. Between this, and the facts that I live (and travel) alone (and this isn't exactly the hobby for meeting women) and am a complete and utter monoglot, I stick to WDCs in English-speaking countries. Yes, that includes Canada. Actually, I should take something from *Yes, Minister* and say, "Yes, that includes the USA." Anyway, there will be no mention of any of the WDCs held in continental Europe, which is too bad, as that would include Paris, Berlin, and Vienna.

The sites can be broken down into four types; hotels in large, or reasonably large, cities; hotels in the suburbs; university campuses; and, places in the middle of nowhere.

Here's a rundown of the sites I've attended:

Chapel Hill (1990, 1998) - it's a university town (in fact, WDC is held on the University of North Carolina campus), so there isn't really that much to do at the end of May, which is when the event is held, and the accommodations are spartan, if inexpensive, although you do have to share a bathroom, which can be an experience at 2 AM on Saturday night. If you don't have a car, you're pretty much stuck with the food they serve there, although both times there was a BBQ dinner (mainly pulled pork) on one night, and usually there's a dinner at a nearby restaurant organized after the final awards ceremony.

Canberra (1992) - this was held more or less downtown, which left the food options open, and, if I remember correctly, there was a choice of accommodation between a hotel and a university dormitory.

Birmingham, England (1994, 2004) - another university site, although Birmingham is a reasonably large city, even if the university is on the outskirts. Again, you're stuck with sharing a bathroom (unless you pay extra) and eating whatever they decide to serve at the time.

Columbus (1996, 2009) - this was held at the convention center, so there were a considerable number of hotel rooms of various price ranges available. In 1996, the downtown area was more of a business area, so the eating options weren't too widespread, although the convention center has a decent food court (except that it closes early on Sunday); however, by 2009, the city had built an arena nearby (Columbus's NHL team plays there), and the nightlife improved somewhat.

Hunt Valley (2000) - this is a suburb of Baltimore. The host convention at the time had some problems with the hotel concerning food; apparently, the hotel expected everybody to eat at the hotel's restaurant, so no food was allowed to be brought in and eaten in the gaming area. There were a couple of sit-down restaurants nearby; at one time, there was a mall within walking distance, but it was slowly being closed down, and by 2000, its food court had closed. It was near Baltimore's light rail service, so anybody who wanted to "see the sights" could get to downtown Baltimore, and could even catch a commuter train to Washington.

In 2002, WDC was held in the Australian Capital Territory, but it wasn't in downtown Canberra, but at a hotel located pretty much in the middle of nowhere; the only food available was the hotel's restaurant, with a somewhat limited menu (although a US\$20 bacon-wrapped filet mignon was nothing to scoff at) and a cafe at the gas station next door.

Washington (2005) - for those of you who don't know the story, 2005 was supposed to be in Hunt Valley; however, after 2004, the hotel had had enough with the convention attendees not spending enough and wouldn't give a nightly rate that the host convention could accept, so the convention moved to a site east of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, right on the edge of Amish country. The people responsible for WDC told the convention that they had promised the overseas players a Washington/Baltimore-area event, and had to find a separate location, which they did, at a hotel in downtown Washington. Almost needless to say, things like food choices and things to do when not playing Dip were not a problem.

Vancouver (2007) - although Vancouver is a large city, WDC was held at the University of British Columbia, which is on the far west side of the city. See what I said about Chapel Hill and Birmingham about accommodations. However, there were a number of restaurants on campus within easy reach of the tournament area.

Coogee Bay (2011) - this is a suburb on the far eastern side of Sydney, along the coast, near Bondi Beach, so it tends to attract a surfer/beach crowd. Sydney does have a decent bus service, so getting from there to downtown was not a problem.

Chicago (2012) - Chicago. Hotel. Deep dish pizza within walking distance. Enough said.

My Final Board Experience

By Peter Yeargin

This past August marked the arrival of the World Championships of Diplomacy in Chicago. I came into the event extremely excited and ready for some high quality Diplomacy. It is after all, the World Championship and at best, it happens once a year. Typically for most of us though, it's more likely a once every two to three year occurrence. There are lots of tournaments around the country and around the world to win and have a good time, but there are only a select few players who can call themselves a world champion.

That's the mindset I took into that final board. All of us wanted to win the championship. None of us had ever won a world championship and the stakes were high. I won't get into the power selection process because I'm assuming that's already been covered in gory detail. The one comical part of the entire process was when Adam chose Italy with the fourth selection. I remembered thinking to myself that I can't believe I got lucky enough to grab Germany with the sixth pick on the top board. As I dove for the black block and proudly placed it on the map, everyone started laughing at me. It was like making a diving catch of a line drive for the 3rd out in a baseball game and dashing off the field, making it all the way into the dugout, and then realizing your entire team was still on the field and there are only two outs!!

I was pretty disappointed because at that point, I assumed Matt was going to grab Germany and leave me with an Austria/Russia choice. Russia isn't terrible, but it's definitely not an easy country to play. To my surprise, Matt grabbed Austria and I was still able to get Germany. I was pretty happy at that point, because Doc was in France and Robert was in England. I knew Doc and I work very well together, and I also knew that if it came down to it, Robert and I could also work very well together.

Spring negotiations went very well. Doc and Robert broke off first and I was left at the table to stare and wonder how things were going to shake out early. Then Doc came back and his first line to me was "I love the FG!". Awesome! Instant ally! ☺ The funny thing was

he told Robert the same exact thing. Interesting piece of diplomacy, but hey, to each his own.

I tried to remain as neutral as possible with Robert because I hate making enemies early on before I've completely figured out my mid-game plans. Robert made it a bit difficult on me though as I was hoping to leave Belgium neutral with Doc's agreement already in hand. Robert demanded Belgium with Spring negotiations. He wanted to make sure he got two builds in 1901 and wasn't taking no for an answer. Doc and I had at that point agreed to a bounce and Robert was going to throw an unwanted support order in there to make sure one of us got it. Doc and I finally agreed to giving me the build. I took it begrudgingly. Getting off to a really fast start on the top board tends to make you a target more than anything else. Sometimes it works out, but more often than not, it doesn't. I waived one build.

I also agreed during Spring negotiations to give Russia Sweden in exchange for an army build STP and him supporting through to Norway in 1902. This gives me Sweden with a single unit and gets us out of each other's hair for the time being. I hate tangling with Russia early on as Germany and this is usually a good way to stay amicable. Things worked out well for both of us and the attack continued on England. I ceded Belgium to Doc in Fall 1902 as I was grabbing Sweden and Doc had no other builds. As Germany, I prefer to not own both Holland AND Belgium. When and if a time comes for a stab, those are usually easy ones to grab for either power and make for a quick bump up on the efficacy of a stab. I also wanted to make sure Doc was growing at the same time as me rather than a 7-5 split. Things were going really well in this game so far as I had no enemies and no one particularly upset with me and there was no reason to create artificial enemies.

Four were tied at 6, France, Russia, Italy and myself at this point. Adam was doing really well as Italy with 6. Russia's Austrian ally had made a supported attack on Rumania, so his friends in the East had dwindled to zero.

Spring 1903 saw a really interesting swing as Austria finally turned back against an Italian who had walked into Trieste and then Serbia. Some of it was more than likely arranged, but Adam was wide open and had waved a build in 1902. He told me he was worried that a second fleet build would needlessly antagonize France. I assumed a second fleet build would be coming to provide some sort of deterrent to Doc or at least an army to solidify a shaky Austria position. Even the most trustworthy Austria would find it hard to avoid the temptation that Trieste and Serbia presented. Turned out that the entire thing was arranged as the AI crashed back into Turkey in the Fall and grabbed CON from the unsuspecting Turk.

At this point, England was down to two centers and France's next obvious target was Italy. Adam was hoping to direct France towards me with his army build, but it ended up hastening the French attack. A quick look at the board position showed three Italian armies and three Italian fleets. Not necessarily a bad composition, but considering the armies were Tunis, Bulgaria and Venice and the fleets were Ionian, Aegean and Eastern Med, he was badly out of position. Unfortunately, Adam's downfall would turn out to be my downfall as well.

France did pull into WMed while Don's Turkey made a couple of solid tactical moves to keep Adam from picking up a build. In addition, Adam convoyed Tunis to Greece. I think Austria and Italy decided to get a little too clever in the South with a tricky set of orders in Fall of 1904. AI had worked out a trade of Serbia and Greece with Austria getting Serbia and Italy getting Greece. That piece was perfectly reasonable. However, they also tried to pull off a trade of Con and Bul. The only way for this to happen was to convoy Bulgaria around Con while Con walked to Bulgaria. It's clear the general point was to consolidate their positions and unit locations. However, the Turk had a fairly clear move of supporting himself back into Smyrna. Italy simply needed Aegean to support Smyrna to pick up an additional build and solidify his position against Doc. Unfortunately, Aegean was the convoying unit for Bul-Con and Adam lost an easily defended Smyrna to remain even.

Doc grew to 8 and dropped down F Marseilles at this point. While Tunis was obviously gone, a F Naples would have done worlds to blockade Doc while they finished off the last Turkish center. With England dead, I had no real alternative but to attack Peter in Russia. Doc was at 8 to my 7 and I had no real position to execute any sort of attack that would lead to even a single center gain. If the opportunity was there, I would have had to consider it as I knew it was a matter of time before Doc grew out of hand. I'm not sure I could have played the game any differently and been successful, but this was the one point where the board dynamic could have changed. Though I had no obvious center

gains, I did have a pretty stalwart Russian ally at my back and an Italian itching for some help against Doc. Had I thrown my 7 units full force at Doc, I probably could have stalemated him enough to stop his growth.

While it wouldn't have helped my position specifically, there is a chance Adam could have consolidated while the Russian left me alone long enough for me to hold the line. At this point, I could probably make up with Doc as neither of us would have been gaining while Adam started to pick up momentum. I still don't think this strategy would have worked, but at least it would have thrown the board wide open. However, I was still holding out hope Adam could finish off Turkey in time to throw up some sort of roadblock on Doc.

Adam had another guarantee in Smyrna for Fall of 1905, just as in Fall of 1904. His only question was whether he could pick up Ankara as well to finish off Turkey and actually pick up a build (thanks to the Tunis loss). Adam only had to hope Russia would find something better to do with Black Sea other than cutting CON support of an attack into ANK.

Unfortunately, one more set of disastrous orders ended any real hope of an Italian defense against France. Adam needed only order Aegean to Smyrna with EMed support. He instead chose to cut Syria with EMed-Syria. Of course, Syria being the obvious mover, came crashing into Smyrna with ANK support, which was uncuttable from Smyrna. Smyrna was dislodged and Adam was down to five centers. With his retreat from TyrSea to Ionian and his pull of army Tuscany, he happily declared he was throwing dots to Doc as quickly as he could.

Doc ceded me Belgium and I was able to start making up ground on Russia, but there was just no way to keep up with Doc's out of control growth at this point. We went to 8-8 and then 10-10. Doc's fleets stood in Ionian, TyrSea, Tunis and GoL with two more in the North as defense.

At some point in the next few seasons, Austria jumped on board the Doc Binder train as well. At this point, I had to turn everything I had back on Doc as the game was out of control and my only chance for a board top was to slow Doc down by taking his western centers. It was too little too late by then as Doc was able to make a couple of solid tactical moves to hold the West while picking up his last 4-5 centers off the remaining Austrian and Italian dots as they suicided into Russia and myself in the middle of the board. A tactical mistake cost me Munich later on in the end game, but that likely only served to hasten the inevitable.

By game's end, France's 19 were home for 3, Spa/Por for 5, Italy and Tunis for 9, Turkey and Con for 13, Austria and Greece for 17 and Lon/Edi for 19 after a

good guess on London, growing from 14 to 19 that final year, including picking up Bulgaria, Trieste, Vienna and Smyrna for the 18 and the unexpected London for 19.

It really was an extremely fun game and I have to say that Doc is a fantastically enjoyable person to play Diplomacy with. That invariably probably led to his victory on the final board of this year's championships.

As Edi had told Doc prior to the round, the top board is more of an election than anything else and Doc's diplomacy was superb the entire game. Even I hated attacking him when I did. I felt like I was betraying my best friend. How does he do it?

Congratulations, Doc Binder, World Champion!! You definitely earned it with a great all around game.

Wdc 2012 Chicago - 100 Diplomacy Players and 4500 Harry Potter Fanatics

By Grant Steel

My flight from Auckland to Chicago was a total transit time of 30 hours from the moment I woke up at 4am on the Wednesday morning to the time I was picked up by Dan Burgess at 8.30pm on the same Wednesday. The plan was to have a nice quiet flight and get a bit of sleep so that i would be fresh and ready for the coming weekend's activities.

So off I go and things are good... Nice quiet 3 hour flight to Sydney, nice relaxing 3 hour rest in Sydney. Then things started to go all wrong... Now most people who know me also know that I only drink seldom and only a small quantity at any one time....

Well actually no...

Met a lovely chap on the plane who was on his way to the USA for the first time as well. We got chatting and then 16 hours later, 2 bottles of wine and about 20 Bourbons and cola I was in LA and feeling pretty seedy. No sleep, too much alcohol and straight into a blast of heat... Couldn't sleep, and afraid I was going to miss the next plane, I walked up and down the transit lounge. The next 3 hours were a bit more uncomfortable than the previous 3 I had spent in transit. Plane arrives and then off to the final destination.

Before I go much further... much of the weekend was a blur so if I am historically inaccurate I apologise now... Dan Burgess was there to greet me and it was great to see him again, this time in his town. I had met Dan when he came down to WDC last year and he did a great job to convince me to come up to Chicago. Dan hadn't eaten and I realised that I hadn't either for about 12 hours. So we wandered off to a place called Goose Island where I demolished a fantastic burger and sampled a couple of divine in- house brewed beers.. Things started to look up again as I got my second wind and Dan dropped me off with a group off fellow early arrivers at a sports bar where we had a couple more beers. We wandered back to the hotel and I had a few more at the hotel bar till it shut at about 2am. There we find that the four of us drinking there resemble some sort of Rock Band. I think I

was the drummer. We also find out that the weekend is double booked with a Harry Potter Conference – Leaky Con to be precise. My roommate Goffy was asleep and I didn't want to wake him and give him the great news.

So, to recap.. Lots of alcohol with good people... good food with Dan and no sleep for about 36 hours. Nothing planned for Thursday so I could sleep in and feel refreshed for the coming weekends activities.

Well, actually, no...

Up at 7am the next morning as jet lag hadn't kicked in. Off to find a coffee. There are more Starbucks and dunkin donuts in Central Chicago than Harry Potter fans yet I still wandered for half an hour trying to find a coffee.. Get one at last and when I get back to the hotel, who do I see but Doc and his lovely wife. Goffy arrives at the same time and we all go for breakfast at a classic Chicago diner. I have no other plans so I have the opportunity to go to the Chicago Art Museum which is quite amazing.

So, with the weekend's culture sorted we have plans for a trivia evening planned at a local pub.

Dan again comes to the fore and ran a great competition. I did manage over the weekend to give him a couple of good questions to use at a later date. Hope he does as they are doozies.

I have to say now that the pre tournament quiet get together would be close to the best part of the weekend.... Trivia first, plus beer, where I got to meet some of the prospective challengers, then off to a karaoke bar called Blue Frog. I remember laughing to myself about it being close to in name to the blue oyster club from Police Academy fame - if only I knew what was to come.... I sang my 1901 song after spring moves 'Should I Stay Or Should I Go' by the Clash, went to get another drink only to find that we were leaving to the next place.. So, we all followed Jim O'Kelley who lead us to many places in the dark and seedy part of the city.

The call was for more karaoke so we head to this great place, that turns out to be a gay karaoke bar... Hmmm.. Quite a blast - especially when we had our own golden shower in the form of a torrent of water pouring out of a light fitting in the ceiling. The DJ just wandered out back, got a bucket, and said it happens all the time when someone in the apartment above takes a shower....

Out of there after that and back to the hotel. Nathan Barnes invites myself and Bernard up to his room for nightcap which consisted of a bottle of Gin I believe. We have to wake up Matt Shields as he was sleeping, and then there was a strange incident with a chair getting in the way of someone and it being thrown across the room – just like a real rock band..

Bed at 4.30am
Up at 7.30am
Into the room and then off we go.

Round 1.

I won't bore you all with the moves for each round (mainly as I can't remember them all), will just focus on the things I remember.

I get Turkey. I attack Russia in 01 (Don Del Grande – sorry Don). Eric Brown brings a bottle of Whiskey for us to drink. I sit in the corner of the board and don't stab my allies of Italy and Austria as they stop England and Germany. I end on 5.

Elsewhere – Edi stops on 15.
For dinner Beer and Burger

Round 2 – aka board of death.

I get Austria, Yeargin - England, Maletsky – France, Buffalo – Russia, O'Kelly J – Germany.

Move to Rum in the spring at the advice of Turkey (another Grant) and get bounced. From there I am on the back foot for the entire game. I was lucky that there was a major shouting and gnashing of teeth on the other end of the board of I would have been gone. I end on 4.

Elsewhere 2 German Solos

Off to Bar.
Bed 3.30

Up at 8am

Round 3

Warmed up now.. Get Germany have an awesome alliance with Don Williams (France) which sees us top the board with 13/12 we were going to go for 17/17 but Matt Sundstrom played great and deserved to keep his 9. I was also feeling a bit seedy and needed another beer to get the spirits up.

Elsewhere, 2 more solos.

Round 4

I get France and decide that it is best to do an EFG – roll the board – finish quickly and then get a beer. Well that didn't happen as the rest of the board rallied and we found ourselves locked up. My best play of the weekend was convincing Chris Brand not to continue into all of my centres when he moved Mun – Bur. I had everything hanging out and he walked back to his home. Finished on 7.

Elsewhere, another solo.

Off to the Bar for some more refreshments. Then, when that closed off to another late night dive where we waited till almost the sun came up, before retiring

Bed at 5.30
Up at 8am

Final round...

Got well and truly done... I was England, Aash was France and I just kept listening to his lies. Over and over again.. Got knocked out pretty quickly, while Aash went on to a well played 16.

However, it did give me the chance to watch the top board in action. It was absolutely great to see Doc win the title. We first met in Den Hague and then again in Australia. This was the 3rd WDC we had been to together. It was a pleasure to see him get a well deserved victory.

So then it was over. Somehow, my exploits leaked out and I received a mug for having good times at Chicago – as if that was ever going to be in any doubt. Finished my time in Chicago in the bar before heading off to NYC for a bit of rest and relaxation – well that didn't really happen. Then headed to Husky Con... Will save that for another time.

Thanks to Jim and Dan for organising and hosting a fantastic event. Your enthusiasm for ensuring that everyone had a great time succeeded. I really look forward to coming back to Chicago again.

Fighting over Europe 4,000 Miles Away from Europe, or: How I Spent my Summer Vacation

By Bernard Andrioli

I am writing this article partly because Jim Burgess twisted my arm to do so, but more importantly to tell all the people I met in Chicago and at Huskycon a little about my experiences over the rest of my vacation and to say to those I didn't: where were you?? I've been asked by several people if I went to the U.S. specifically for WDC and my answer is yes and no. I've been wanting to travel through the U.S. for a couple of years already, but all the advertising by Jim O'Kelley and the guys from Diplomacycast certainly sparked my enthusiasm to do it this year in August and build my vacation around it. By writing this article I hope to encourage others to do the same thing in the future, because the number of overseas players could have been better. I won't go into my games too much because a) I understand many find blow by blow accounts of games rather boring and b) to cover up the fact that I didn't do particularly well in some of them, although I think I had a valid excuse, more on that later.

I departed from Schiphol Airport on Wednesday, Aug. 8th. I had heard about American security levels being strict, but I get questioned rather thoroughly by this Dutch security officer who apparently finds me travelling alone and flying to and from different airports somewhat fishy. I decide to not answer his question "what are you going to do in Chicago?" with: play a boardgame. In the end my blue eyes work wonders for me and I'm on my way.

After about a 20 hours journey I arrive in Chicago but not yet bedtime for me. Kevin O'Kelly has organized something of a pre-welcoming party (the one on Wednesday) down at a sports bar close to the Congress Plaza Hotel. I got to meet my first fellow players: Doc Binder (and his plus one Amy), Matt Shields, Dan Burgess, my roommate 'evil' Phil Weissert and Grant Steel (this would not be the last time I'd see him at a bar).

Afterwards Grant and I decide to check out the Hotel Bar and run into some housewives turned barflies from Indiana who had just attended the Coldplay concert. My recollections of that is that the one could just not stop telling me how much she liked me, mixed up with tales about her husband, while the other mainly kept herself busy with watching in disapproval that her friend was chatting up some strange guys.

The next day I am slightly hung over (but hadn't seen anything yet); luckily the architecture tour I took was a good way to walk that off. The rest of the day I do some other touristy stuff, like visiting Chicago's Art Institute.

By the way, let me take this opportunity to thank the Weasels for picking a location with more to offer than a conference room and a hotel bar.

Thursday night is the first 'official' event, the welcoming party at the Exchequer restaurant and pub. About 40 people show up for some reasonably priced food and drinks, but probably more importantly the social gathering, the coming days will be pretty fully stacked with Dip. After dinner, we hold a trivia contest put together by tournament director Dan Burgess. Being something of a sucker for all kinds of trivia contests this was something I really looked forward to. My team included Jim Burgess, the two Frenchmen Laurent Joly and Emmanuel du Pontavice, German national Phil Weissert and myself (I may be forgetting someone, apologies for that). Despite Europeans being somewhat overrepresented in a quiz which we feared would be slightly more America-centered we don't do too badly coming in third and do get a prize (which turned out to be a scratch lottery ticket not winning anything, oh well). After that, the much anticipated karaoke pub-crawl. The first place we went to was apparently too heterosexual so we moved on, after that we went to another place where we stayed somewhat longer. I remember Christian MacDonald putting up a solid performance. Still, probably not gay enough. The last place we went to fitted that description a lot better, judging from the bar crew at least. We were the only guests. This might have been because Chicago locals were familiar with the fact that the ceiling has a habit of turning into a good impression of Niagara Falls. Apparently it does that sometimes when someone takes a shower upstairs. Someone explained the event by saying the building started crying with shame after hearing Grant Steel sing, which might have been closer to the truth. After that we get back to the hotel (I believe this was somewhere around 3:30 am) where Nathan Barnes invited Grant and me to try out his gin & tonic stash in his room. His fast asleep roommate Matt Shields must have been delighted by this. Supposedly there was also something of a chair throwing incident that night, the poor chair being blamed for standing in the way, but you will have to ask someone else for the details.

Friday finally play starts. After two nights of pretty heavy drinking and only something like four hours of sleep, I feel less than perfectly prepared but let's try to make the best of it. I try something a little more aggressive than I usually do by suggesting Russia doesn't allow himself to be bounced out of Sweden but actually let the German in, thereby allowing my army Yorkshire to convoy to Denmark. Alas, it doesn't work and I find myself at the

receiving end of an F/G and subsequently an early bath. Friday night's round doesn't go much better, I still have some trouble thinking straight after the night before, at least that's my excuse and I'm sticking to it. At least I did get a lot of positive response about my Mad Hatter Hat and am optimistic about winning best hat. I had bought that off Amazon shortly before I left, figuring I should put my eggs in the basket that suited my abilities best, and I probably rightly chose in hat wearing.



Where it all happened

Saturday morning I play Turkey which is my least favorite country to play. I am once again eliminated fairly quickly and although I'm having a good time with other people at the event, start to feel I am just not cut out for this tournament thing. This was the board Doc Binder soloed on as France, which was actually the very first time I have been soloed against. I like to think that wasn't really my fault as he was only up to 7 or so when I died. The plus side is that this does give me a bit of time to meet the Great Man Himself: Allan Calhamer, who has been so kind to make a visit. I'm sure other people will cover this event also so let me just limit myself to once again thanking him for signing my board.



The man himself



My board signed by Allan C.

Luckily Saturday night's round goes better and I get a decent result as Austria, a country I actually kind of like. Apart from the result, this was by far my most enjoyable game in large part because of my shifting relations with Turkey (from enemy to ally, back to enemy and finally ally again). And finally there was glorious round 5 which I topped as France. By the way, apologies again to the esteemed Jim Burgess for borrowing your centers. These last two results get me to 38th place out of 80 players, which is more than I had ever hoped for after the first three games, so all in all I am pretty content. As an added bonus, I do indeed win best hat, but I feel somewhat bummed out that the title 'hat guy' still went to someone else, namely some guy who threw up in his. Listen to Diplomacycast's episode 18 for more (not a whole lot more) details.



EOG position of my glorious round 5

The tournament is finally over and people are leaving Chicago, unfortunately the train I intended to take towards New York City is fully booked but luckily I am able to crash at Aash Anand's place. This is something of a blessing in disguise because he takes me to see a bit more things in Chicago's south side (the world famous Robie House by Frank Lloyd Wright for one thing), which I hadn't had time for yet.

I am able to take the train towards NYC the next day, I've been asked a couple of times why I didn't just fly to New York, well the thing I like about train travel is that while the scenery is not necessarily particularly interesting, you just get to see more what a country actually looks like. And meet some people on board. I was sitting next to a gentleman from Utica, NY who had just been visiting his son in Chicago. He told me his life story which I am sorry to say is somewhat sad: His first wife and daughter had been victims of a serial killer and he didn't have very good relations with his son, who apparently had been convicted of domestic abuse. Nevertheless it was nice to meet him and we played some cards and had a beer in the diner car.

I was supposed to get off in Schenectady, NY and meet a guy I know from the world of online diplomacy, he's the guy that's been topping the rankings for the last decade or so on a site where I occasionally play: dip2000.com. Unfortunately because I am running a day behind schedule we have to take a rain check, well maybe I should play a game with him first anyway. I travel on to the town of Hudson, NY which is small but picturesque. I stopped there to visit the home of President Martin van Buren in nearby Kinderhook, because I liked doing something with a Dutch connection. I had read about this place in a blog by diplomacy player Manus Hand who has something of a hobby of visiting all the US President's graves and that sparked an interest. Mr. Van Buren wasn't buried at the site, so at this point I am still at zero.

The next day I arrive in New York City, I have been there once before as a teenager but didn't really like it because I mainly just followed my parents around. This time I can follow my own interests more and the city absolutely did not disappoint. I visited a lot of the famous art museums; I won't bore you with details. Apart from that I also rendezvoused with a New Yorker I had met at WDC: Robert Premus. He took me to a bar in the East Village and I questioned him somewhat about his progress in setting up a local hobby, I would advise you all to keep an eye out for developments down there, because the growing New York scene sounds promising. After playing regular housegames they are going to hold something of a try-out tournament in September and if that works out a "proper" event next year. I myself would certainly consider going, since New York is definitely a place I haven't had enough of yet.

The next weekend I was attending HuskyCon on Long Island. What to say about this great event? I think most attendees will agree that what is nice about HuskyCon is that the playing of the game is somewhat secondary and the focus is more on just having a good time barbecuing, or the Saturday night family style-dinner, playing some other game,s etc. The house right by the Long Island Sound is great and I am simply amazed by the Woodring family's hospitality. As it turns out, Don and Christine

used to live in the Netherlands for a few years in the eighties, only a couple of minutes' walk from my own family's home in Voorburg. It's a small world. A nice touch was the Saturday night 'double gunboat' game: two games being simultaneously played on the same board and you have to guess who was playing each power after the first elimination. I do all right in the game itself, my 'little England' sharing the lead with (as it turns out) Andrew Goff's France at 9 on our board. Sadly though, although I more or less correctly assume who had been doing well and who not so much, I get them all mixed up and didn't guess a single (!) other player correctly. Anyway, a fun game that only took about an hour or so. The tournament itself was won by Peter Yeargin, with Chris Barfield a pretty close second. Chris's Italy in the final round was stopped at 17 centers while a solo would have given him the tournament, so excitement till the last whistle.



HuskyCon award ceremony

After Husky is over I say goodbye to a lot of new friends, among others the two antipodeans Andrew Goff and Grant Steel I take the train back to New York with. I still have more than a week ahead of me with a bit more time in New York, DC and finally Boston. I could describe all I went to see down there but I suggest you just buy an eyewitness guide instead. What I would like to do instead is thank Chris Barfield for showing me around along some of the nicer establishments in the DC Dupont Circle neighborhood and Jim Burgess for having dinner in the Boston Back Bay Area. I had a good time with both of you.

Finally, I would like to thank all people I met over the summer and gave me a great experience. I hope to see some of you next year at WDC in Paris, where I'll most likely go. Or at some tournament in North America again. To you readers, thank you for making it this far, and apologies for wasting so much of your time. I hope some of my enthusiasm about taking a summer vacation built around Diplomacy events has rubbed off and will encourage others to do the same. I think you'll have a great time, I did.

Final Board Endgame Statement from the World DipCon Champion

By Doc Binder

I have been asked by the editors of Diplomacy World to write an end-of-game statement regarding the final board at the World DipCon in Chicago. Before I begin, I would like to thank both Dan Burgess and Jim O'Kelley for running a wonderful tournament. You guys did a great job.

Before we even got to play the game, there was the matter of seating. We had the opportunity to pick our countries. I saw this at the WDC in The Hague in 2010 and I thought it was a pretty cool idea at that time. Seeded 3rd, I opted to place my card at the front of the pack. There are certain countries I think I play better than others and I wanted the opportunity to pick one of those. The top 2 seeds opted to place their cards somewhere behind me, giving me the first pick of countries. Although this had the disadvantage of losing any tie, I was pleased with the 1st choice. I quickly chose France. I had already soloed an earlier round game as France. That win ensured that this would be my 3rd Best France Award in my last 4 tournaments, dating back to the WDC in Sydney, last year. Robert Rousse picked next and he chose England. We were the 2 oldest players in the game and we were going to be sitting next to each other on the board. I think everyone thought that we had prearranged an alliance. Germany would not be picked until 6th by Peter Yeargin, ensuring an interesting Western Triangle (WT).

I have always looked at Diplomacy as a game of alliance building. I look for someone with whom I can make a strong alliance, sticking to it for as long as possible. I have certain favorite alliances, with the FG topping the list, but I will usually choose an ally with whom I think I can work, regardless of the power he plays. In the FG, the 2 nations can work together to take down England, then head in opposite directions around Switzerland. We leave enough forces to protect our mutual border. This combination makes it hard to stab each other. It is how I played my earlier win as France, setting up a Sea Lion at the start of the game. At DixieCon earlier this year, Peter and I set up an FG, which had given me a Best France for that tourney. Peter and I opted to set up the FG again. No Sea Lion this time. We would take it a little slower.

The potential for a split winner of the World Championship and the North American Championship was intriguing. I had mentioned to Peter that we could tie for the top of the board, which would give him the World Championship and probably give me the NA one. I had told Peter it was something I was willing to accept,

should the fates see to this type of finish. He seemed interested, as well.

I also spent a great deal of time in Spring '01 talking to Robert who was playing England. He seemed interested in working with me. We agreed to DMZ the Channel and talked about putting his army in Bel in the fall. I also talked to Adam Sigal who was playing Italy. We agreed to DMZ our mutual border.

The Spring '01 moves were pretty standard. Only Adam played an unexpected move, Ven-Tri. Attention was now turned towards the negotiations about Bel. Robert wanted my support in. Peter proposed a 3-way bounce, which I suggested to Robert that we accept. Robert threatened to support one of us into Bel should we go for the bounce. I opted to offer Peter my support for him to take Bel. I knew that Russia would be getting 2 builds. I thought the need to help me with England and also possibly defend against Russia meant to me that he should get the extra build first. We both agreed to keep our forces close in numbers. If needed, we would trade dots back and forth to do so, with Bel being one of those dots. He would start with Bel. Robert opted to put an army in Nwy and move Nwg-Bar. I thought these moves put Robert out of position to defend his homeland well. We would start the invasion of the Isles in '02. Peter agreed to waive a build.

In '02, my main goal was to take the Channel. Peter was going to get Swe, while Russia moved to Nwy. It was time to trade Bel, which would keep us even at 6 apiece. All of that went very smoothly. I also noted that Adam was getting 2 builds in the East, while the rest of the East looked a bit disorganized. To keep me happy, Adam joined the Waived-Build Club, although I wasn't sure that was the best decision on his part. An army build in Ven may have been more useful and would have appeased me just as much as the waive.

The play went methodically and perfectly, with an NMR for Iri in spring '03 assuring that the convoy to Wales would succeed. Peter also took Nth that turn. By the end of '04 when England was eliminated, I was at 8 and Peter was at 7. Russia was still at his 6, with 5 forces in the South and only one fleet in Scandinavia. Italy was also out of position to defend against me, with all but 2 of his 6 forces East of Ion. Turkey had survived the coordinated attack and was still at 2. In '04, I had started to move fleets into the Med, with one in Wes and one in Naf, plus one build available for a fleet in Mar. Italy had no builds, having used his waived build in '02 for A Ven in '03. Peter was in reasonable position at the end of '04

to attack Scandinavia, as well as building an army in Kie to move armies in Russia's direction.



Instead, Peter decided to work with Russia against Austria. Italy would help Austria, and Russia would help Turkey against the AI attack. I was able to take Tun in Spring '05 and Tys in Fall '05. To keep Peter even with me, I gave Bel back to Peter. At the end of '05 and having made no gains against the Sultan, Adam had a disband. He opted to disband Tus, leaving his forces in the East. My best guess as to why was that he didn't have the forces in position to defend against my attack and opted to take as much of Turkey to offset his home losses, hoping to gain things back later. I look forward to hearing what Adam has to say about that disband. It was clearly, to me, his most interesting move of the game.

1906 was even more interesting. Peter saw I would take 2 from Italy. He convinced Russia that he should take Nwy and Stp from Russia, while they could still work together. This kept him even with me at 10 apiece. Austria would take Ven and Gre from Italy, while losing Ser and Bul to Russia, getting a rebuild, which he put in Tri. Turkey would be eliminated, and Russia gained one of those, as well, giving Russia a net +1 and an army build in War (around which Peter had placed 2 armies). Adam was actively helping me in the South, allowing me to also move into Ion, but he was net -4 and down to 2 pieces. Peter built a 4th fleet, as well as another army,

and Russia still had a fleet in the North. I, however, was in the North Sea, at Peter's request (if my memory serves me well), but I was not thrilled to see so many fleets in the North that were not mine. The 4th fleet was built with the idea that we needed that fleet to eliminate Russia's northern fleet. I wasn't sold and built another fleet in Bre, as well as a needed army in Mar.

1907 continued as planned. I took Ven from Austria and Peter took War. Adam supported me to Gre in the Spring and I supported Adam to Bul in the fall, as he lost one of his Turkish dots to remain even at 2. Peter and I were now at 12-11, my advantage.

It was either in Fall '07 or Spring '08 when the meta-gaming began. I cannot explain why, but Matt Shields, who was playing Austria, opted to join the "help France win" side. Perhaps it would have something to do with final position in this tourney or the standings for the North American Grand Prix. Either way, I had 2 people trying to help me solo the game. I mentioned this to Peter in Spring '08 and hoped that he would continue to work with me. He had much to gain against Russia and Austria, should he choose to do so. I did not have to accept the solo and would have much rather seen my ally finish 2nd in the tournament (perhaps even first if he moved quickly) than see Matt or Adam do better than Peter. I thought Peter had 3 ways of looking at this:

1. Peter could feel comfortable with a 2nd place finish and we could continue as planned
2. I may not have been clear enough in stating that I had no need to solo, so Peter could have attacked me to try to stop me from winning
3. Peter could have decided that his best chance to top the board was to attack me.

Peter opted to attack and I look forward to hearing his side to this story in his EOG statement. The next 3 years would now be a race. I needed to defend my home dots and my holdings in England, while I tried to take as many of the Austrian and Italian holdings that I could muster. Taking Mun in Fall '08 forced Peter to disband, which helped my Eastern front greatly. Some good guesses in England and being allowed to retreat to Edi kept me a factor there longer than I should have been. In 1910, I would lose Edi, but would gain 6 dots, including the rest of the Turkish and Austrian home dots not already under my control, as well as returning Lon and Lvp to French possession. I ended at 19, even though I had German armies in Bur and Gas.

Anyway, that is my story and I am sticking to it. It was certainly a game I will never forget.

How I came in last place at WDC (but still had a blast):

The inspiring story of an average Diplomacy player overcoming his own mediocrity to have fun despite getting eliminated in 4 of his 5 games and only that because of a clutch misorder that was better than his intended order or:

How I learned to stop worrying and love the journey.

By Alex Maslow

I wanted to write this article weeks ago, but I didn't. I was busy. My memory of WDC is very faded at this point. But I'm here at Senshi-con, Alaska's original anime convention (I guess they emphasize original because there are so many imitator conventions?), with two hours until we're let inside. I don't even like anime except I guess I used to like Pokemon, and The Boondocks if that's considered anime. Yoshimitsu was a good character in Soul Caliber. What am I doing here? Who cares. I have 2 hours to kill. Let's go! Make Jim and Doug proud.

What do you like about Diplomacy? I hope it isn't winning. You're going to be disappointed much of the time. Even more so, if you take the strict definition that only a solo is winning and everything else, even getting to 17 against 3 other players who all have less than 10 centers each, is substandard. So I hope you don't play Diplomacy because you like winning, because otherwise you're going to be a very, very angry soul.

Do you like the personal interactions in the game? That's better. Win or lose, it's exciting to have the conversations inherent in the game. Trying to decide if Russia really will leave Galicia open S01, or if England is suddenly less committed to your alliance than last turn, did Turkey really lie to you last turn, or did he tell you the honest truth but just was wrong. Maybe you enjoy the detective work of the game.

Maybe you like the "tabula rasa" phenomenon where every game is new and completely unpredictable. Could anyone have guessed, in game 4 of WDC, that as England I'd end 1901 with a fleet in MAO, fleet in the channel, and an army on the island? No. Not Steve Cooley (sorry) not Christian (very happy!) not Jim Burgess (perplexed) and not the guy who eventually solo'd as Turkey (Whose name I forgot, but I suppose we can call Sultan-zilla). **[[ED NOTE: That would be second place finisher Don Scheifler]]** Not even me. I still can't explain why I did it. It just felt right. And even though I (obviously) lost, it's a fun memory for me.

Unlike game 5, where as Austria I got slaughtered. Sometimes you're the bug, and I hear that sometimes you're the windshield, though I'm not sure what that feels like. Game 5 was awful, and never bring it up again.

Then there was game 3, where Doc Binder (who won the tournament) and I had an FG that worked pretty well. During the lunch break, we went to get some chow nearby, and it was fun and relaxing. Then something went terribly wrong and I got eliminated. I don't know how that happened. Brian Sheldon was England and we had in 1902 eliminated his fleets and he had 3 armies on his island, so we left him alone and moved eastward. And he managed to outlive me. HOWWWWWWW?!!?!?! I don't know. Luckily, I don't care about winning.

Game 2 I'm sure was amusing, I forget what happened. I chose a country, talked with my neighbors, and I was eliminated at some point. That happened. Everything else is a haze.

Game 1, when I was just off the plane and fresh-faced and innocent, was a comedy of errors. I was Turkey, and Russia misordered causing me to grow too fast for my Austrian ally's comfort, and so we battled it out for..... The rest of the game. The true highlight was when I kept bouncing him out of my home territory for about two years, and then his orders were read and I sighed loudly, knowing I had not defended correctly against him. BUT WAIT! I wrote my orders wrong, and in fact defended against his incursion. Victory!!! I ended the game with one center. That's a win!

But those were the games. They're like the chocolate chips in chocolate chip cookies. Without the cookie aspect, it's just chocolate, and that makes you feel fat and indulgent, instead of balancing your chocolate intake with pastry goodness. So what is the pastry goodness at WDC?

The people. You should interact with the people outside of the game. First, especially if you lose (you will lose 90% of the time, and the other 9.9% are not-wins), you should get drinks (always drinks) with the other players to debrief about the game. Blow off steam from your loss, but you should listen to those who performed better than you for pointers about how to improve your game. They will be able to tell you precisely why they did what they did. I have solo'd one game, and I can still explain precisely what happened to cause me to stab certain players instead of others. It is never random. If they stab you randomly, they probably didn't win, either.

Lunch with Doc was one of the highlights of my weekend. So were the various drinks I shared in the bar downstairs. And the times I went to Subway with a variety of people. The games were enjoyable, sure, but that isn't why I went to WDC.

If you just want to play Diplomacy, you're doing it wrong. Diplomacy is a game of personalities, and as such being friends with fellow players logically follows from the set up of the game. Stabbing a friend is easier than you think. Also, it's more fun. Losing to strangers isn't enjoyable. It's only frustrating. When you lose in Diplomacy, it's worth talking about. It improves your game, and gives others insight into what happened. Also, Diplomacy is a pretty emotional game. Honestly, you need a way to vent your feelings. That's an extra layer of the game. Otherwise, the frustration can fester inside of you. I was very upset when I was eliminated as Austria in my final game. Russia and Italy both attacked me in S01. How does that happen???

Well, Russia told me he wasn't going to Gal, and I believed him, and told Italy of my intention so he'd know I wanted to fight Turkey. Italy talked to Russia, and quickly convinced him to attack me. He told me Russia was going to attack me, and I refused to believe him. He was appalled at my lack of simple defense. So he decided, if I was going down, he was going to get some of the goods.

This kind of insight helped calm me down after that particularly frustrating game. It was still frustrating, but at least I now knew what happened. Becoming frustrated is part of Diplomacy. Dealing with it is part of, well, I guess the healing process. And learning.

So you should go to conventions (Diplomacy conventions, not Anime ones, unless that's your thing.), and you should enjoy the WHOLE convention, not just the games. Hang out with the people after the games. We're a pretty cool bunch. Trust me, you won't regret it.

World Diplomacy Championships Recap

By Dan Burgess

The Windy City Weasels hosted WDC 2012 at Weasel Moot VI over the weekend of August 10-12, and the apparently-unanimous consensus is that the tournament went well and everyone had a great time. I was proud to serve as Tournament Director.

As most readers will already know, Jim O'Kelley founded our club with our first house game in September 2005. I was happy to play in that game, and that day Jim expressed a desire to build a face to-face Diplomacy club, with the eventual goal of hosting the World Championships.

He did exactly that.

Creating the club and building the momentum that we have required countless hours of effort by Jim, and probably tens of thousands of emails over the course of those years. It cannot be over-exaggerated how much work he put into everything to build the club; his tenacity and determination should serve as a model for us all.

Our club has a charter, over two dozen dues-paying members, and an elected group of leaders called the Sneak. I believe that much of the history of the creation of the club has been documented in a previous article in Diplomacy World, which all prospective organizers should read. He continues to create a weekly email to our club (The Weekly Weasel) recapping recent events, announcing upcoming games, and sharing newsworthy items of club members participating in the face-to-face hobby.

While the Sneak met several times to plan when and where to host WDC 2012, Jim led the discussions, and even paid the deposits on our hotel meeting space out of his own pocket. He created a budget for the event and calculated how much we would need to charge players based on projected expenses. Then yet again he spent many hours making phone calls and sending emails to prospective attendees in order to maximize the attendance, which totaled 73 unique players.

With most of the larger matters in place, as the tournament approached the Sneak met several times to plan some more minor items, including the welcome party on Thursday night, a list of local museums, parks, and attractions for attendees to enjoy when not playing Diplomacy, a list of nearby eateries and watering holes for everyone, and a guide indicating where to park for the local players. Many of the players expressed gratitude for these efforts, especially the welcome party the night before the tournament began.

The tournament proper went off extremely well. At Weasel Moot V the year before we had a tournament software breakdown during the final round, but at WDC 2012 the program worked fabulously. Using a microphone and PA system from my trivia entertainment company we were able to make announcements within the room so all could hear, and using some 23-inch LCD computer monitors we were able to display a central clock counting down each of the deadlines. All the supporting equipment operated smoothly.

All the players in attendance were seasoned face-to-face players, which added to the level of play in the room. While some misorders were inevitable, to me it felt that the play was robust and strong. Most of my involvement was to conduct draw votes, and on the occasions where I had to interpret written orders or make a decision on rule interpretation, only twice did my ruling received a verbal objection.



The highlight of the tournament was the Saturday afternoon appearance of Diplomacy's creator, Allan B Calhamer. When I stopped the clock after a deadline to

announce his arrival, everyone stood up and gave applause, which some players told me was the highlight of the weekend. Accompanied by his wife and daughters, Mr Calhamer signed a number of boards, posed for photos, and shook hands around the room and during the lunch break. Before the tournament I had a crystal award etched, which thanked him for creating our favorite board game; over the weekend many players contributed \$5 donations to offset the cost. After the lunch break we presented the award, and Mr Calhamer spoke a few words to the attendees.

In addition, local player Peter Lokken created a wooden board by hand for club use, and it was debuted for the top board, on which Lokken played as Russia.

To honor Jim O'Kelley's efforts in creating the Windy City Weasels, some of the club veterans and recent regular players kicked in \$10 or \$20 toward a fancy crystal award, which I presented during the final awards ceremony. My personal attachment and admiration of the club and Jim's efforts resulted in my getting a little choked up while making the presentation, but I managed to finish and then regain myself before awarding the top board plaques and trophies. As was reported in the previous issue, Michael "Doc" Binder won the tournament with two solos as France, and received a spinning globe that is powered by light entering the crystal base. We are proud of the awards that our local engraving company created for us.

It was an honor to have two players make the trip from France, one from the Netherlands, one from Australia, and one from New Zealand for an international travel contingent. Also about two dozen people traveled from across North America to attend. It was a wonderful event, and I encourage all readers to do their best to travel to WDC 2013 in Paris, or WDC 2014 at DixieCon in Chapel Hill, North Carolina to continue the additional momentum that the hobby now enjoys.

MY WORLD DIP CON EXPERIENCE (or how I spent my birthday)

by Melinda Holley

As usual when flying from Philadelphia to Chicago, my flight was delayed. Previous delays were blamed on the weather. This year, we pulled away from the gate then sat on the tarmac for about 90 minutes. For some reason, the airspace around Philadelphia was closed by the FAA. Planes were landing about every 60 to 90 seconds. I know, because I was bored and watched them.

Finally on our way! I was met at the airport and did an interview on the drive to the hotel. (I felt like such a celebrity *g*). Actually the interview was more along the lines of a friendly conversation, which is so cool. Checked into the hotel then traded text messages with Don Williams to find out where everyone was meeting for the trivia game.

I met Don (and others) outside the restaurant and we all walked in to meet the others. Then my good friend, Don, casually announced to the entire room that it was my birthday. This is probably the best serenaded 'Happy Birthday' I'd had in a long time (I could swear I heard harmony). Thankfully, no one asked 'which birthday is it'. I would SO have hated to start the bloodshed prior to the actual Diplomacy tournament. By the way, the team I was on won the trivia contest.



After that some of us split off to go karaokeing. Our first karaoke bar was a VERY small place. Actually, I don't think we all were able to get inside the place. So we took off for the Blue Frog. Actually I wound up riding there with a couple of guys while the others hiked. I liked the Blue Frog! With the exception of the karaoke, it reminded me of a couple of out-of-the-way bars in rural West Virginia. I don't drink but as designated driver, I've seen more than a few of these places. Oh, and by the way, Dave Maletsky is a GOOD singer.

Then we left to go on what I flippantly called the Bataan Death March. I was so very lost *g*. Let's face it...those of you who have met me know I'm NOT built for long hikes. When we got to the next destination, we found out they had a *gasp* dress code! Which allowed none of us to get inside. At that point some of us hailed a cab (don't know about the others but I'd run out of steam) back to the hotel while the others persisted in their quest for a piano/karaoke bar.

I really don't remember much about Rounds 1 and 2 except that I got eliminated.

Round 3 was the team round. Myself, Jim Burgess, and Rick Desper formed the team of 'Foggy Mountaintop'. This is a reference to the Demo Game being played and reported in Diplomacy World. I remember this game the best since I had a very good shot at winning. Didn't do it, but I had a good shot. I drew France and allied with

England. We had a great alliance although I was warned by the other players that I was going to get stabbed. Well, since I'd planned on stabbing England and I knew the other players only had a chance if the E/F alliance broke up, I was playing for a little more time. Unfortunately, England stabbed me first. So I conference with the other players and told them I was throwing everything at England. They allied with me but we couldn't stop the English juggernaut. My fault entirely. I should have stabbed sooner.

But I DID have a very nice conversation with Allan Calhamer's daughter as they made their way around the room to look at the boards and talk with the players. She said she was happy that there was a woman playing the game. I'm glad she saw the board while I was still a strong viable player and not after the stab by England *g*.

Round 4 saw me as Turkey playing between Russia (Chris Martin) and Austria (Jim O'Kelley). How did I do, you ask? How do you think I did? (Pause for a few seconds of contemplation...) Yes, that's right! I didn't do well at all.

The first words out of Jim's mouth was 'We have to kill Chris'. Germany said the same thing. Mind you, neither Austria (Jim) nor Germany were going to immediately attack Russia (Chris). In fact, Germany allowed Chris to take Sweden in F'01. So, like Don Quixote tilting at windmills, I open against Russia all by myself. I get stabbed in '02 by Austria and pretty much puppeted afterwards. And, like all good puppets, I got my strings snapped when Austria took my last center. I couldn't understand that move since I was in a great strategic position with my last unit (a fleet) to give uncut defensive support to both Austria & his ally (Italy). Plus Austria couldn't build. But Jim admitted the next day it had been a mistake. Oh well, c'est la vie; c'est la guerre. (And that pretty much sums up my ability to speak French.)

I flew home the next morning. Thanks to the lovely Mrs. O'Kelley who graciously drove me to Midway airport with young Master O'Kelley blissfully sleeping in the back seat.

Basically, I went to World Dip Con because (1) the Windy City Weasels do an awesome job with their cons; (2) I'd never been to a World Dip Con and it was fun listening to all the different accents; (3) to meet up with old friends and meet new ones; and (4) just to have fun.

I didn't do well in the tournament *sigh* but them's the breaks. But in the words of frustrated sports fans everywhere...Just wait until next time.

World DipCon 2012: Reflections

By Jim Burgess

World DipCon (WDC) 2012 turned out to be a great success on numerous levels. Most obvious to you all here will be DW's coverage of WDC 2012 in this issue. We are presenting the game results of the Top Board, there are commentaries and reflections from a number of other people in this issue, more than in our previous coverage of any other FTF tournament that I can think of, and the number of players present was greater than in any WDC since Berlin in 2006 and was about the same size as the American WDC the previous year, 2005, at Tempest. But on that score, we didn't get back to the multiple hundreds of participants of earlier hobby eras, in particular we didn't get anywhere close to my publicized 330 goal. If we actually had gotten to 330, it would have blown us out of the beautiful Florentine Room on the Third Floor of the Congress Plaza Hotel in Chicago, where WDC 2012 was held, and I'm sure Jim O'Kelley and Dan Burgess (no relation) were happy about that. The Congress Plaza Hotel was an interesting venue, it's owned by some Middle Eastern absentee owner, and it shows. The staff was at times indifferent (they did a pretty terrible job of keeping our water in the room filled), they've been striking off and on for the past few years where the owner doesn't really care. I go to Chicago fairly often and most of the time there have had picket lines set up (I think technically they were still on strike during WDC, but they weren't out picketing). And the hotel was a bit seedy in places, especially in the guest rooms (at least mine was). Yet, it is on Michigan Avenue across from the Grant Park, I think the deal for the Weasels was good so they didn't lose much/any money, and none of what I just said detracted in any serious way from the enjoyment of the WDC.

The Weasels, under Jim's leadership, built up to this WDC perfectly as they have built one of the best and most active local hobbies in the world. Unlike the fictional Bangor local hobby of a recent past North American DipCon, the Weasels were all too real, came out in force and kicked butt, and I think WDC was a transformative event (both pre and post) for their hobby. I look longingly at this as the Boston area hobby has again gone through one of its periodic collapses (as Mel Call, Peter McNamara, and soon Alex Amann have all left the area in just over a year) and we desperately need another new infusion to rebuild our regional New England hobby. I will be building up to running TempleCon in Providence, February 1-3, 2013, again and I hope to find the time to run some get-together games for that. And Robert Rousse and I have been talking of some other hobby building ideas that I hope we can get off the ground, but ultimately the Weasels have done it precisely the right way and in a way that worked (check out their web site

[www.windycityweasels.org] and Facebook [www.facebook.com/chicagodiplomacy] pages). It was great to see WDC as an important coming out party on that step for the Chicago area hobby. Since I'd not been to a Weasels event before, though I know a lot of the people, it was great for me to meet people like Matt Sundstrom, who I've known remotely for decades, and Christian Kline, Ben DiPaola, Bert Schoose, Nate Cockerill, Greg Duenow, and Steven Pedlow who I knew less well but had special meetings. Steven, in particular, runs the hockey fantasy league I play in, but actually meeting him in person was another of the great side benefits for me. Nancy Irwin and Mark Frueh, hobby stalwarts from the 1980's, didn't play in the WDC, but they both also came by to say hi and this was tremendous too. I think it was great for all these Chicago area types to meet the rest of us as well. As you hear often from all of us FTF Diplomacy travelers, this hobby is really all about the people. I'm a very busy person with two jobs and lots of pressures, and yes I also spend lots of time with my family, but one of the most important things in my life is making time to see this crazy bunch of guys, and women too – I finally, after THREE decades of knowing her through the postal hobby, met Melinda Holley!!! – as often as I can. It's great that so many of us interact through the myriad of E-Mail and Web based (and what's left of the postal hobby) hobbies out there, but you have no idea what you're missing if you've not been to one of the FTF gatherings. I ran my first Diplomacy convention in, I think, 1979 and so I've been at this for a very long time, but it never gets tired, and keeping that fresh blood flowing through that is the life blood of a continuing tournament hobby.

Well, so I admit it, I did get tired at this World DipCon, more on this as I go, but across the five rounds I played six games (along with Doug Moore, we played two simultaneous boards in the first round to fill out to the multiple of seven) and they were ALL long games, as the people in my games seemed not to have figured out the Nathan Barnes concept (as he discusses in the 18th Diplomacy Cast that is a must listen.... <http://diplomacycastle.com/>) that the scoring system would reward those ending games earlier. And I played **60** total game years in the tournament, averaging 10 game years a game, by far a record for me, I think a record for WDC 2012, and possibly somewhere close to an all-time record for one tournament (though not one we'll ever have statistics on). By the end, and it showed in the last two games the most, I was wiped.... The main outcome of this is that I drank and partied a bit less than in most WDCs and other cons that I've been to. If I had tried to do that as well, I would have been even more wiped out,

but I spent lots of time talking and talking and talking.... Well, that's what you do at a WDC.

The best partying for me was on the Thursday night, August 9th as most of us arrived, and before the gameplay began Friday morning. In a great classic Weasel move, we all got together in a function room at a local restaurant, had dinner together, and Dan Burgess ran a team trivia contest. It was loads of fun, with some TRULY devilish questions, though since Dan really isn't yet a hobby historian, it didn't have the depth of hobby and Diplomacy history that it might have say had Edi Birsan, Don Williams or I ran it. It was a great idea though, so I've put that idea in my back pocket to maybe run a trivia event myself some time. There was a lot of backslapping, meeting people like Andy Bartalone, Alex Maslow, Steve Cooley, and Roland Cooke again, as well as whole host of Weasels and others. And this is where Melinda Holley and I finally met. In the day, Melinda was nicknamed "Hobby" since she WAS the American hobby in some sense, playing in the most games (as many as 50 at a time) and being a personality presence in the most places. But she hasn't ventured out to that many cons, and so I'd never met her. Thanks to Don Williams, he convinced her to show up at WDC and she and we had a great time reminiscing and catching up on old times. Also in the "meeting old postal friends" category was Don Scheifler, I remember Don as living in the heart of the Midwest (Kansas I want to say) in the day, but he now lives in Texas. They are trying to build up some hobby energy down there, and as a born and bred Texan (well, yeah, really, but sorta, you know, that's where the Jim-Bob nickname comes from!! I've actually only lived in Texas for two years in two short one year stints, and you can imagine what I remember from the first one, since I was born there), I really want to go to a WDC in Texas someday!!! So, you Texas Dippers start getting your act together and keep following the Weasel model.

So, anyway, the welcoming event was great, and went on for quite a while, but when we were done, we weren't done. So, the idea came up that Jim O'Kelley would lead us on a merry Pied Piper chase to find some Karaoke. This was quite a merry chase, but eventually we found ourselves in this great divey sort of place doing some fun Karaoke. The regulars who were there were OK, the drinks were good, and we were almost half the crowd. I was drinking and talking and not so paying attention to which Dippers were the best Karaoke artists (this is a place where taking more notes at the time might have helped), but just a reminder that much of the fun takes place OUTSIDE of the gaming venue. Next year, WDC goes back to Paris, I won't be able to go this time, but I have been to Paris for WDC before. The energy level at this WDC to go to Paris was tremendous and I hope it doesn't dissipate. Maybe if Chicago couldn't get to 330, Paris can!!! Many people complain about C-Diplo as a scoring system and structure, BUT

one thing it does is that it finishes games on time, and gets the drinking crowds out carousing together. I've described this elsewhere in my report on the Paris con I went to (if I get around to finding it, I might link it, that was Paris WDC 2001), but there is nothing like careening down a Paris street with good drinking Irishmen like Fearghal O'Donnchu, good drinking Brits like Toby Harris, and a cast of Scandinavians, along with the requisite Frenchmen. The Paris con I went to I think only had one board worth of seven Americans, including Chris Martin, Ray Setzer, Bear Barrow and Edi Birsan, as well as me. If I read the tea leaves at WDC Chicago right, there will be MANY more than that next year. Since it also will probably have more Brits (since as we realized WDC came in the heart of the London Olympics, I think we'll use that as at least the official excuse why the Brits made a goose egg for the 2012 Chicago WDC, no room on flights, incredibly expensive), Paris could again be one of the most cosmopolitan WDCs and maybe the largest in a long time. GO TO WDC!!!

Ah, where were we though, still on Thursday night.... So, after the Karaoke, things got a bit scattered, we wandered around and one place wouldn't let us in since we weren't dressed well enough, and finally I headed back to the hotel and up for Round 1.

So, Round 1 was good, but a bit of a blur, since that's the round I played two boards. It is worth a little background on that. So, some of you who haven't been to tournaments before, you might wonder how do we get everything balanced out into multiples of seven for the rounds? Sometimes you "dig people up", sometimes people sit out rounds, but these are problematic approaches. For the most part, there are two sources of players within the tournament to balance out boards, which can be combined. The Tournament Director, in this case Dan Burgess, could play and not count for tournament awards (but I believe they decided that Dan was not going to play, at least I'm pretty sure he never played). Remember the "not counting for tournament awards" since this tends to be slightly contentious in some quarters if you ever do this.... But what we did, and we only had to do it in Round 1 of the five at this WDC, was to fill out the two extra positions with two people playing two boards simultaneously (as previously mentioned, this was Doug Moore and me). I've done this quite a bit, though never in a five round tournament, so this is the first time I've ever played six games in a Diplomacy Tournament. I think I've done the two board thing at least five or six times in the past, most likely most of you reading this have never done it. So, I think I'll describe the process a bit. When you do it, to an extent, you're sacrificing yourself for the good of the tournament. You're simply not going to solo one of those two games (at least I've never heard of anyone doing that), and even if you're going to do well, you very seldom are able to keep up doing well on both boards

simultaneously. There's a school of thought that you blow yourself out on one board and focus on one board to try to do well on only one. Especially in WDC, I don't like doing it that way, I like focusing and trying to do as well as I can on both. There are some tricks to doing this. Even more than normal, you cannot waste a second, while orders are being read, be writing the units down for both boards so you're ready to hit negotiation time at a run. The general convention is that people playing two boards never read orders or push pieces, you should go with that. Bounce back and forth during the reading so you can see what's happening at each board. In the negotiations, you tend to give up on a lot of the "cross-board" negotiations and just work things with people around you, BUT it is crucial that you have an eye/ear on the other side of the board, in one of the natural pairings, to get quickly updated. FR, EA, GT, ones like that. Italy, which is my favorite country, is a bear to play simultaneously, and it is harder to have those natural cross board pals. During the negotiations themselves, you have to be efficient and focused. Again, even more than usual, know who you want to play with and talk to and get to them fast. And, keep your focused tactical hat on. Get orders correct. I view it as a good success if you get the orders right and don't make unintentional order writing mistakes. I was good at this throughout WDC this year, I made very few errors, and I didn't make them in the simultaneous first round. That's a success. Another success was that I played on one of the boards with Chris Martin, and I actually held my own with him and didn't get eviscerated by him, that's a success.

The Round 2 game started for me a sequence for Friday night and Saturday night in late night games where I contributed (you ALWAYS contribute when you're in the game) to solos thrown/taken by players in games that went long into the night. I drew France with Robert Rousse in Germany and Graham Woodring in Russia. John Gramila, one of the local Weasels, was in England, and he was steamrolled by the decision of Robert, Graham, and I to take John out quickly and then try to work the rest of the board to the south. As this reached the point where someone was going to stab someone, of course, the way fortune of the draw hit this game. Robert was in the middle, so the logical thing for Graham and I to do was to sandwich him. But Graham. Well, it was late on Friday night and Graham had had quite a bit too much to drink, and it was hard even to get him to get his orders submitted on time. Robert and I both know Graham well, and Robert played it perfectly to stab me and THEN stab Graham in just such a way that the only way to stop Robert from soloing was a concerted effort from Graham. And at 2AM, that just wasn't going to happen. One solo down. Very well played by Robert, but playing next to Graham in a late night game was, well, his good luck. I'm going to keep on that theme of solos, my Saturday day game ended up as a fine three-way between Don Williams, Grant Steel, and Matt

Sundstrom (a very dear friend, and new friend, and one of my old friends who I finally met for the first time) where I played Italy between them, my favorite country and a fascinating game before the three of them took me out, but details have to be sacrificed somewhere, you have enough of me in this issue...



So then we come to Round 4, the Saturday evening round. I was getting tired at this point, as I mentioned and these last two rounds were not my best. I started off strong here though, yet faded in the stretch. And even before I start, I think I did real bonding with Christian Kline, but within the game at a couple of points, I sort of lost it with my exhaustion. I think I'll describe this one in a bit of detail, so those who don't like game recaps should go snooze.... But this game had crucial impact on the whole tournament. Don Scheifler soloed this game, went into the Top Board, and ALSO was tired out by this marathon game, so he didn't do very well and set up what happened there (which you can read about in more detail elsewhere in this issue). But you need the setup. So Maslow was England. I adore Maslow, and you guys see his fun writing here in DW all the time, but he can be nuts. I knew this, I used this, but it was a key issue in this game that set up Steve Cooley (who was France and who I don't think I told him carefully enough how nuts Maslow can be) and Christian Kline (who was

Germany) around what would be the failure to stop Don (who was Turkey) from winning. Bert Schoose (who is one of the great guys in the hobby and really didn't deserve what happened to him in this game) was Russia, and my old pal Roland Cooke was Italy. That left me as Austria, of course. As you probably all know, I like strange alliances, especially Austria-Turkey (as I also recently played it for a long time in a current Eternal Sunshine game, that is now rolling back as my Turkey is attacking Austria). I also knew this was Round 4 where people were taking their last shot at the Top Board. I had designs on this myself, but probably AT wouldn't do it, so I shouldn't have gone with it. But I did. And I did it knowing from the beginning that Don was going to stab me at SOME point. But I dove in and tried to use deceptions and misdirections that you have to do with ATs that people don't expect. This is where I did things to Bert that got me into Warsaw in Fall 1901, tricking him on Galicia and then walking in. So, my two builds were for F Gre and A War. Then it was Roland's turn. I got out into the Ionian in Spring 1902, and convoyed A Alb-Apu, Roland stabbed, with Tri-Ven, also supporting Christian into Tyrolia. I also put Don into Moscow, maybe that wasn't such a good idea, I probably should have taken Moscow and kept him south and me north. BUT, I'd done so well with a similar strategy in the recent Eternal Sunshine game, and I was being reckless. I got the build for Venice. 1903 had some hiccups and I went back down one to five. This was the key point in the game. I still stuck with Don in 1904 and broke the Anschluss, I took Munich and pushed my fleet forward into the Tyrrhenian Sea. This decision set Don up to be able to solo. And Christian was upset... I didn't know Christian then, but I do now, this queered the whole game. Meanwhile of course, Maslow was reaping insanity onto the Preacher in France. And Cooley was praying that Maslow would just go away rather than attacking Gascony and the like. 1906 and 1907 kept me up at six centers playing in Munich on the other side of the stalemate line, while my fleet came back around to hit Venice on poor Roland. Roland also was exasperated with me for supporting Don. And Don and I were playing around in our rear as I tried to stop him from getting the stab on me. I would not call Don's stab brilliant and if people had rallied around to stop Don, well, we could have. But as we pushed through 1909 and 1910, my early stabs of Bert Schoose and Roland Cooke kept them from wanting to help me, and the final big stab from Don left me with two units at the start of 1911, in Silesia and Tyrolia. Here, I was Steve Cooley's ally, and I set myself up in Germany, attacking Christian, but there was no help when I tried to use A Sil to hold off the Turkish advance. So Munich retreated into Kiel and I had Munich and Kiel trying to hold that line against Don. Here things stayed for a long time, and late into the night. The game did not end until 1914, Don eked out his solo. Christian threw it for what he felt were legitimate reasons, and maybe I could be accused of causing that by setting myself up in his two home

centers. Ah, yet again Jim-Bob sits on a tournament game with a solo, and he yet again does NOT score that solo. And in so doing I have more impact on the Tournament through that than in winning anything myself. As I sit back later, I don't regret my approach and my moves. If I had known Christian better I probably would have realized that it would turn out the way it did. If I had helped Cooley understand Maslow's play better, maybe Cooley could have taken him out faster and he could have helped me better. We always worked together in this game. But in the end, Don played the game the way you're supposed to do to get a tournament solo. And he got it. BUT, we were about the last game still going, this was like 3:00AM, and Don Scheifler was not well set up for success in the morning. I knew it, and perhaps even he knew it. But he did cement his placing in the tournament, even if he lost in Round 5, he was going to be second or third or so in the whole tournament. That was a damned good achievement. I hope I play Don over a board again and really enjoyed playing him over this one. The REAL tension as Christian behaved as he did at the end was really annoying, but it was very much in the bounds of the game. I know I don't hold it against him. It will be good to play him again somewhere sometime too. I feel worst for Bert Schoose who is a true gentleman, and I just ran over him. And Roland, who is a great player, and in retrospect it might have been a better game for Austria if we hit Don, I salute you as always, and I know I'll see and play you again.

In the US, we don't often play with Top Boards. Top Boards are most well known in C-Diplo tournaments, so the Weasels had a host of experiments that I think in the end turned out "right". Not perfect, since there is no such thing in a Diplomacy tournament structure, but right. I thought the structure for choosing the powers on the Top Board was great, the players that manipulated it correctly benefitted from doing so, but that was the way of the tournament. They picked for the ORDER of picking a country in reverse score order (seventh best score puts their card down first and then in order everyone else places their card in front of or behind that card). Then they picked countries. You could see right from that get-go that Doc Binder and Peter were in the best position to win. Doc took the heat of not being able to win a SC board tie and chose first so he could take France, the country he already had soloed with earlier on in the tournament. And the players who soloed on boards with me, Robert Rousse (who took England next to Doc, but before Peter Yeargin took Germany) and Don Scheifler were in trouble. I was not wrong.... Don in particular from afar just did look like he was playing tired. Yet he was the one with the points to finish second in the tournament if someone else soloed. One of the many "tournament pecking order" issues that seemed to influence play on the Top Board was the influence on tournament placing and WDC wins vs. North American DipCon wins. It was possible for things to break where

those would have been different people. Peter Yeargin and Doc Binder didn't take Robert Rousse out TOO quickly, but they took him out pretty quickly and it was clear that one of the two of them were going to win. Doc had the previous solo in the tournament, while Peter got there with three solid placings. This meant something really interesting.... If Doc soloed then the other players would beat Peter Yeargin in the tournament placings, but keep their positions in the Top Board for awards, while if Peter won, then Doc would still beat them (all but Don Scheifler, I believe) and they would all move down a place. I could see that this mattered. How much? I'm not sure, but every Top Board I've ever seen has seen such meta-gaming and meta-analyzing. I suspect there will be some discussion about what worked and did not work (you can see some more details on this elsewhere in this issue), but I liked the "position going into final board" way of choosing the order of choosing the countries, I think this worked. But if you want position going into final board to have no impact then you have to make ONLY points on the Top Board count for the positioning. The downside to that would have been (with a solo) lots of ties. Here's a modest proposal for an adaptation... player scores on the Top Board determine positions 1-7 in the tournament, no one can get up into 1-7 from playing in the last round on one of the other boards. Then positioning here only determines order. The EXCEPTION would be if there is a solo. Then the soloist obviously wins the tournament and that zero in the last round pushes ALL of the other six players off the top board for the tournament. In that case, and only in that case, the next six ranking players in the tournament get positions 2-7 and the other Top Board players get 8-13 in the positions from their ranks in the earlier part of the tournament. In that case, in this WDC, second through seventh would have been, in order, Edi Birsan, Steve Cooley, Aash Anand, Doug Moore, Mike Hall, and Christian MacDonald. I think that would have had a fitting aspect to it. And faced with that choice, some of the Top Board participants MIGHT have chosen differently. Maybe not.

Meanwhile, I was ALSO exhausted, and my board loomed. I was near the Top Board, so I kept peeking in, which is where I got the overview above, probably not the best for my play. I did meet Bernard Andrioli though, and this was great. I played a decent game, but then it collapsed and I should have trusted Bernard more and worked with him better. But Bernard and I then got together in Boston after HuskyCon as he was on his way back to the Netherlands. And we had a great time talking about the hobby and life and things in general at

a Tapas Bar on Newbury Street. This is the great fun of the hobby and these travels, you can intersect a couple of weeks later and continue developing friendships. I hope to get over to Europe for another diplomacy convention soon, even though Paris hits at a bad time for me, I'll find another one. Y'all get to Paris though!!!



Yes, so another WDC is in the books. This was a memorable one, it cements the Weasels and the Chicago hobby as a hub point for the hobby in the future. We need more hubs! Let the Weasels be your guide, getting people together for the fun and fellowship comes first and tournaments come later, that was the Weasels model and it worked well. Jim O'Kelley and Dan Burgess were great, the tournament was well run. I think Dan learned a lot that he can keep applying in the future for running tournaments and they established a bit of a "brand". Meeting Allan B. Calhamer and his family again was great, I know he really appreciated our attention even though it was tough for him to hear and actively talk to all of us in the noisy room. The presence was enough. Lots of us knew as we did this WDC in Chicago that we had to make that part of it happen. Diplomacy still is an amazing game, puts the rest of the games people play on another planet, and I still don't understand how Allan got it so right. Maybe even he doesn't. The DipAI project still badly needs good programmers to test and chip away at the Diplomacy game in the context of the global AI problem. People who think AI can be solved need to confront Diplomacy, check out David Norman's pages and the DipAI group for more. I really missed David Norman, it wasn't quite WDC without him. Hope this spurs all of you to get out to a tournament soon. If you want to come to TempleCon in Providence, February 1-3, contact me! Retro-futurist steampunk and Diplomacy: a great combination.

Diplomacy – A Fable for Beginning Players

Joshua Danker-Dake

Once upon a time, there was a Germany/England/Russia alliance that was doing fairly well for itself. Well enough, in fact, that England decided to stab Germany, and, while the move was perhaps a bit premature, he did a decent job of it, sending Germany into a death spiral.

Russia, not having been consulted, was not particularly thrilled about having his beneficial alliance disrupted. His strongest impulse was to side with Germany against England, both to keep England from jumping out to large gains and because he considered breaking the alliance a slap in the face.

Russia, however, was a decent Diplomacy player; one good enough, at least, to not let things like pride, loyalty, or betrayal stand between him and his best deal. So he went to England and said, "By rights, I should stand with Germany against you, and this I intend to do. However, I would be interested to know what my cut would be should I do otherwise."

England, then, whether to try to lure the befuddled German player back to the fold or just to stir up more chaos, passed this message along to Germany. Germany replied, but publicly – to all six other players – and Russia and England gave each other a look, then facepalmed. Each of the three then left the wreckage of the alliance to go his own way.

* * *

What happened after this really isn't all that important to the story. (Suffice it to say that Germany didn't win. Or survive.) If you're saying right now, "Well, that's all rather general," then understand that I could be as specific as you like, but it wouldn't do a lot of good, as you could see this same scenario go five different ways in five different games. After all, this is Diplomacy, where outcomes are not guaranteed and one's fortunes can shift quickly depending on the actions of the other players – that's one of the things that makes Diplomacy so exciting. Of greater interest here are the various potentialities at work – the principles of decision making – the morals of the story for each country, if you will.

England

It seems to me that the biggest strategic mistake that beginning players make, by far, is that they stab too early – and there is plenty of extant literature on the subject. There are two ways to look at England's stab:

1. It was *not* too soon. The number one rule of stabbing is that if you're going to stab, do it in such a way that the victim cannot recover. England did that here.

2. It was too soon. The three-way alliance was working well, and England sacrificed long-term growth for short-term gains and new enemies.

So which is correct? The answer is, obviously, *it depends*. While this may not be very satisfying, the point here is to learn to examine the factors that determine which is the best choice in your particular game. And there are a number of factors.

-Has Germany left himself too open for a stab? Most of us know that just because you can stab someone doesn't mean you should, but it's quite a bit harder to argue that you should be selective when given opportunities to stab someone in a devastating and profitable manner (in fact, you should probably go ahead and pull the trigger on that).

-Is the alliance still working in England's favor? Is he happy with his growth? Is he getting ahead of or falling behind his allies? What are his best options for short-term and, more importantly, long-term growth? Can he handle the squeeze that would come in the worst-case scenario, or is he willing to bet that he can get by on the basis of diplomacy? The answers to these questions will depend heavily on both the actions and the playing styles of all the players.

-A surprise stab (as opposed to a premeditated two-against-one stab) in a three-way alliance can turn out very different from stabbing your partner in a two-country alliance. How will Russia respond? Will he be upset? Vengeful? Indifferent? Or is he so wrapped up in his own affairs that he's unable to threaten or retaliate against England? Plans should be in place to manage, neutralize, appease, or ignore (whichever is most appropriate) the third party, depending on his personality and situation.

Russia

Rather than clinging to the sinking ship that was the three-way alliance, Russia, like any good Diplomacy player, looked to make his best deal – and you're never going to know if you got your *best* deal unless you try both sides. But being the odd man out in a defunct three-way alliance can be a tricky situation.

There's a time and a place for loyalty to a struggling ally, for sacrificing personal growth to prop him up; this usually comes at a fairly recognizable turning point in the game, when another power is threatening to overrun the board and win and the diminished ally's centers are the

front lines of the last battlefield, perhaps along a stalemate line.

No, here, Russia has to look out for Russia. Certainly England can't be trusted, as he undertook a secret stab privately to get the upper hand rather than approaching Russia about a trust-building, equal-growth joint strike. And where's England going next? Is he going to take his new gains and continue to march east, or is he going to send them to the Mediterranean (put another way, does Scandinavia look more vulnerable than France and Iberia right now)? Can Russia afford a new enemy and a new front? Russia may very well have to count the cost, circle the wagons, and sacrifice immediate growth potential to shore up his borders. These are all things Russia must keep in mind when talking with England post-stab.



Germany

There are a few lessons for Germany here. The most obvious is not to leave yourself too open for a stab. Yes, some measure of trust is required in any alliance, and yes, it's hard to be the middle power in a three-way alliance, but if you're the recipient of a crippling stab, it's

almost certainly because you left the back door open with the welcome mat out.

This is Diplomacy; stabs happen. But you're not dead until you're at zero, and this is the time to pull out all the stops. The first and most important thing to do is to appeal for help – to anyone and everyone. Reach out to your old enemies. There is a right way and a wrong way to do this.

I've played with new players who got stabbed and then came to me and said, "Support me back into Home Center X," but gave me no incentive to do so – and then they got surprised and upset when I declined. Please understand that when you have been debilitatingly stabbed and are asking for help, if you care about your survival, you are not in the driver's seat. You are not in the passenger seat. You are not in the back seat. You are in the trunk, or you're getting dragged behind the car on a gravel road. You can't expect to make a fair deal, or even a good deal. Be happy with a deal.

For example, assuming that Germany decides that England is a greater threat to his survival than his original enemy, France, the first thing Germany needs to do is go to France and offer to support *France* into one of England's centers first in exchange for help. When you've been stabbed and are down to three or four centers in the mid-game, the other powers don't need you – you're just a whiny speed bump on their road to an endgame showdown. You have to make it worth their while. Is France going to help you after you give him that support into, say, Belgium? Well, there are no guarantees. But he certainly isn't going to help you out of the goodness of his heart; you might have to be willing to play the diligent lackey for a little while.

And then there's Germany's incompetent public broadcast. Sometimes, making secret information public can be very beneficial – but not in this case, as you can burn bridges in a hurry and come across as stupid and/or untrustworthy to the other players. As Jean de La Fontaine said, "Nothing is more dangerous than a friend without discretion; even a prudent enemy is preferable."

The overarching moral to this story, then, is the same as the moral to every Diplomacy story: to give yourself the best chance of success, *think long-term*. Plan ahead, don't cause problems for yourself, envision what the other players will do, learn to anticipate eventualities, and, when your time comes, strike boldly.

Adventures in Droidippy

By Alex Maslow

I was the 4th to sign up. The game told me I'd have to wait a few hours or possibly a few days before enough people signed up for the game to begin. If this game had been online, that would've been standard. But this was on my phone, dammit! If people don't text me back within 2 hours I assume they're dead and begin writing their eulogy!! This game needed to start now!

The game began later that night. I was Turkey. It was one of my top choices. Not because I'm much good at it, but because I was curious to learn about Droidippy, and Turkey seemed remote enough that, if I got ganged up on, I could hold on long enough to figure out how the app worked.

I sent short messages to my neighbors, and even shorter to France and England. I'm basically communicating by text, so text-speak seems to be the expected etiquette. Besides – I don't want to type whole paragraphs on my phone's keyboard. That thing is tiny!!

Deadlines are 24 hours. You make moves by touch screen with a map. It actually works fairly well. No more error than any other app that requires touch precision. You can "commit" to moves before then, and if everyone has committed, the automated judge will run the turn early. There is also a public messaging board (conference) where you can post messages to all players.

The app keeps track of how reliable you are with your orders. Do you submit them on time? The game will send you an alert if the deadline has passed and you have not pressed "commit." It then extends the deadline by 1 hour. It never says who has infringed the deadline, so I'm not sure if you get the extension more than once, or if each player gets one grace period to use (as the app purports). If you still fail to submit orders you are put on "probation," which means if the deadline passes and you have not committed to your orders, too bad. After your first game, your reliability is rated, and you are then put into games with players of like reliability status.

In essence, your first game is going to be a mess of reliability.

I sent messages to everyone, and posted on the conference board if that was public. England grumpily replied "first time here, huh?" Just like a hipster. I knew I had to make him pay. Meanwhile, Germany was posting about Hitler. Austria posted the game wasn't letting him submit orders.

S01, Italy and Austria NMRd, France hit the channel, Germany went to Silesia(!) and Russia went to Livonia,

while also sending his fleet to Finland(!). I took the Black Sea.

Russia and I agreed to split Austria and move west. Inexplicably, Germany and England and France fought without regard for us. Remember, AI were dead in the water from the start. The RT moved along, and at one point Germany was in Edinburgh, England was in Brest, and France was in Munich. It was chaos. And still, we plowed on.

I saw a "stab" opportunity, and by that I mean to emphasize how crazy this game was and how little perception was needed on my part. I was still in Bla, Russia had units in Vie/Bud and everything else was up north. Italy had "fallen" (having never moved), and I was in NAO helping France. My stab went wonderfully and I grew from 8 to 12. Also in the mix I landed in Lvp, exacting on my revenge on England's pre-S01 snobbery!!

I sent Russia a message, "Sorry mate. You left yourself wide open." He sent me an exceptionally long message (remember, this is all via text) that basically lambasted me for what I had done and that he was a better player because he hadn't stabbed me. And then, presumably to show me how much better he was than me, he stopped sending in orders. I went to 17 and then to 19. Turkey ended the game in Liverpool and StP.

I SOLO'D AS TURKEY!!!

No. I just played a very ridiculous game with some low grade players. I don't like to call them that, but they were. Tactically questionable (Germany tried to take the Italian centers), diplomatically ungracious (Russia), a little incompetent with the software (France misordered multiple times), and generally immature (The Hitler comments, and also the word "retarded" got tossed around a lot) made me feel I was playing with middle schoolers. That said, my reliability status has certainly shot up, and I'm in a new game as Austria. So far so good. Pre S01, but everyone has so far been nice and appropriate. Russia's silent with 15 hours to go at the deadline. We'll see what happens!

Russia agreed to bounce in Gal, then promptly didn't. He sent War to Lvn(!). Italy went north but Germany bounced him in Tyr and the whole Italian train was stopped. Turkey went to Armenia. In the fall, Italy said he'd begin to attack Turkey, and Turkey and I decided to split Ser/Rum Gre/Bul. But Italy moved north again, but my fleet intercepted him in Ven. Turkey and Russia again bounced in Bla and I stupidly move Ser to Rum w/ Gal support, giving me but one build. In the winter, Italy

built an army in Ven. France built a fleet in Mar despite Bre being open. Russia got no builds.

So let's review. Russia opened to Lvn. Italy has 3 armies in the boot. I'm wedged between two crazies. Also, Italy is currently throwing a fit I "forced" him into this position, while Russia hasn't yet responded to my request to call a cease fire. Italy and I are butting heads, but no one has called anyone retarded or done anything inappropriate. All regular Diplomacy tension and disagreement.

Fast forward to S06 and Russia and Germany are in pieces, Italy and I have miraculously become allies (and he's disbanded some dislodged units such that he has 3 fleets, not 3 armies), Turkey is sitting in Warsaw and Ion, pledging not to attack me or Italy. England and France are strong, but got pushed back to the stalemate line. I'm in Munich and Italy is in WMed and Pie. There isn't much movement.

The public conference room also has been seeing a lot of use. You can post anonymously, too – and that ability has been used liberally. A cry of a French solo. Someone urging England to stab F. Various posts encouraging AIT to split. I posted a question anonymously: "When England stabs France, how will AIT divide?" Italy sent me a panicked text that he and I need to work together to take down Turkey. No doubt he did the same to Turkey, but the post at least sparked a conversation that would've been awkward to bring up otherwise.

My main concern of Droidippy would be the communication limitations. By text? 24 hour deadlines? How can much diplomatic movement occur??

Apparently, it can. Italy and I bounce e-mails about Turkey behind us, England and I have an exciting conversation where I attempt to convince him that, if he stabs France, we'll be happy to turn around and attack Turkey. The conversations are to the point – none of the long-winded PBEM style – and it works pretty well. In 1908 Italy and I hit Turkey, and England stabs both France and Turkey. France collapses and Turkey starts to fall pretty quick, all the while complaining (lets be honest: bitching) that he only got stabbed because he played badly, and I don't deserve credit for a successful stab, because he could have prevented it if he had wanted to. I think that was his point, anyway.

The game ended in an EIA draw. England probably could've gotten a solo, but we were all feeling weary of the game and agreed on that draw. The way end game

proposals work is interesting. You can select Victory, Draw and Surrender. Everyone's begins on Victory. If you are on victory and everyone moves to surrender, you win. For draws, you need to select who is included in the draw (DIAS is possible, but not necessary). If all players agree to the EXACT same draw, the game ends. If three players agree to a GF draw and one player agrees to a FGE draw, neither wouldn't pass. I do not know if three players agreed and one player was on "surrender." The endgame is enacted as soon as all players agree – the game will end midturn.

Two games down. I have to say, this system works pretty well. It's a nice dose of Dip without incredible commitment. Some people write LONG messages; maybe I'm not as text savvy. Or maybe they do it on their tablets with a keyboard attachment. I don't know. Several times I've received paragraph upon paragraph. Italy even "forwarded" me texts from Turkey. Did he retype it all out? Or copy/paste. Either way, freaking dedication!

Having played my two games missing no deadlines, my reliability is currently over 50. I was given the option to play in a "Public-Email 1908." This type of game, for those who have already shown their reliability, ups the ante by including your Google account (Which presumably makes you more accountable). It allows for conference chats, scores the game C-Diplo style, and the games automatically end at 1908 (or at the conclusion of 1908 – not sure). Deadlines are 48 hours, not 24. Also, misorders are possible. In the normal system, an illegal order is simply not allowable. The judge won't recognize it. I considered this type of game, but games with defined ends bother me because the end turns into a stab-fest, especially if scoring is involved. But maybe you like that. Either way, the option is there.

I wonder if the developer could add some neat sound FX to the system, like a Dip specific alert for when you get a new message or a turn has been adjudicated. I notice some of the provinces have been renamed, apparently for legal reasons. Does anyone know Hasrbo's claim to the board? All the provinces are, of course, real places. I appreciate the central conference screen – it is very easy to use. I wonder if it would be possible for Droidippy to become a platform for variant games? I think that would be very fun.

I have to say that Droidippy is a great, if not quite excellent, system. It's responsive, easy to learn, and the protection against misorders is actually quite useful for those few times when you touch the wrong province. If you haven't tried it, give it a go!

Opening Gambit for Italy and Austria

By Alfred Nicol

Ok, so this is nothing new, but I see it so rarely I think it's worth trying to revive this strategy...

The Problem - My thinking revolves around how to generate a more flexible Italian opening when faced with not only the formidable statistics of Italian mediocrity but four potential openings all fraught with problems. I suspect the problematic openings are intrinsically linked to the poor showing in end game statistics.

Italy's choices are grouped into four possible strategies. For purposes of this article I am excluding an attack on Germany as an opening strategy, although that might well make an interesting article in the future.

1. **Wait and see.** This means getting Tunis and then keeping one's cards close until a weakness is spotted. This is an advantage of Italy: it need not nail its colors to the mast straight away. But too much dithering can be Italy's greatest downfall, as sooner or later one of the big hitters will come along and hit big.
2. **Attack Turkey** using the Lepanto. This once fashionable and undeniably clever opening is beset by the problem of actually retaining Italy's newly gained Turkish centers. It seems to end up exposing one's western front in exchange for fragile gains in the east.
3. **Attack Austria;** perhaps using the Bohemian Crusher. This is a worthy opening but again my concern is retention of centers. Will an early attack on AH merely galvanize an R/T alliance, who can't resist the easy gains provided by an early fight between Italy and AH? If so, a concerted R/T will surely relieve Italy of Trieste fairly quickly.
4. **Attack France.** This repeatedly seems to end in pointless stalemate. I have seen innumerable games where France and Italy lock horns in the Western Med with slow or no real progress. The bottleneck of Pie/Mar means any real progress must be predominantly naval and getting a majority of fleets can be slow going. It is this weakness which leads me to promote the revival of a seemingly unused strategy...one which is designed to sow the misleading impression AH and Italy are at war, and accelerate Italy's fleet builds exponentially in order to take advantage of France.

The Strategy - In essence, Italy needs to convince AH to eliminate the Italian Venetian army in the Fall, and then rebuild it as a fleet in Rome along with a fleet in

Naples (courtesy of capturing Tunis). The orders are simple:

Spring 01: Ven-Tri, Rom-Ven, Nap-Ion

This must really be with agreement with AH, or must it? I would argue that this involves a lot of trust from AH as they are making themselves very vulnerable and may well miss out on Greece. Which means simply not telling them until after the move may be a good strategy, having earlier laid the ground for a DMZ on the Ven/Tri border. This allows Italy to slip in with no intention of actually keeping Tri. Later builds will confirm your lack of intent to harm AH in any way.

Fall 01: A Ven-Pie, Tri holds (and is thus presumably attacked by A Vie supported by F Alb), F Ion-Tun

The winter adjustments involve two fleet builds in Rom and Nap. The army in Pie hopefully pins any new fleet in Mar, allowing the newly found Italian naval superiority to attack Mar, Spa or the infinitely more valuable Mao. You can usually be sure (though western triples are not unheard of) of having valuable support from either England or Germany in the attack. Essentially it is something of a surprise naval attack on France.

The key problem is getting AH on side. After all, what is in it for them? Well in the first instance your builds of fleets and movement west pretty much ensures what every AH player wants, and that is peace with Italy for the first few years. They have other fish to fry in the east and in that sense, although at some risk, it guarantees a secure western border. It also is much less risky than the "Key Lepanto". The risk of an untimely stab whereby Trieste is supported in the fall, and the potential loss of Greece to Turkey, may make this an unattractive offer to most AH players. Therefore my suggestion would be to try and steal into Tri in the Spring and then explain the plan in your communications before the Fall. Although AH will be seriously annoyed he will have little choice but to oust you and the new builds might well reassure and cool him off in the Winter.

There is plenty of merit in the first four options I laid out above. In any given game, dependent upon negotiation, any of those measures could well be successful, but statistics do not look kindly on the conventional openings of Italy. Thus this opening, if AH consent can be granted, could well spell a very different game for Italy. Furthermore there is no reason why the fleets have to be used against France. They could go east to Greece, the Eastern Med and even into the Adriatic should you so wish.

DIPLOMACY XXI (Diplomacy in the 21st Century)

By Larry Peery

And it will come to pass in the new millennium
That the forces of the south shall rise up against the
forces of the north,
And the forces of the east will struggle with the forces of
the west.

And the seas will run yellow with the blood of the fallen,
The skies will be red and black with the flames of war,
And a great underground wall will divide them.

And the little islands shall be made great,
The big cities shall be destroyed,
And the kingdom in the middle will be divided again and
again.

Nostradamus 6/6/6

This article is for anyone who has used and hates Power
Point.

Since I lacked the time and patience to do what I've
done before and list each article or item by title, author
and source; I decided to try something different.
Hopefully it will work. I suggest you read through the list
that follows slowly, Each line represents an article or
document that you can find for yourself on the internet
(Try a Google search.) if you want more information. As
you read you'll see that the articles are grouped more or
less logically: DIPLOMACY (Things more or less
pertaining to the game or hobby), READING LIST,
PUTTING THE GUNBOAT IN DIPLOMACY, PUTTING
THE diplomacy IN DIPLOMACY, THE BOUNDARY
ISN'T SETTLED UNTIL THE CARTOGRAPHER SAYS
SO, and WWII IN THE PACIFIC: FROM GUNBOAT
DIPLOMACY TO NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST Call it, if you
will, "stream of consciousness comes to Diplomacy."

1. DIPLOMACY

Diplomacy World Correction – when I counted David
Norman's WDCs...
Diplomacy gaming for real
What if Israel bombed Iran? The view from Washington
What if Israel bombed Iran? The view from Tehran
Lessons from an Iranian war game
In Defense of the Power of Paper
Archives – Society of American Archivists
Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, 1961
10 Dirty Negotiation Tactics and How to Beat Them
The Art of Diplomacy Has Its Rules
Mapping Military Needs, Aided by a Big Projection
100th Anniversary of WWI to be highlighted at World
Travel Market
Art forever changed by World War I
German WWI graves smashed in France on peace

anniversary
Fifty years later, a New Chance for Reconciliation
Germany and France Celebrate Their Bond
France, Germany celebrate friendship amidst crisis
France and Britain Weigh the Price of Nuclear
Deterrence
France shows Caution on EU Integration
Pussy Riot and Russia's surreal 'justice'
Chefs of World Leaders Boost Diplomacy with Food
Mint Museum exhibit of Madeleine Albright's pin
collection features diplomacy by jewelry
Albright to be honored for her 'jazz diplomacy'
Madeleine Albright on Jazz, Diplomacy, and Vaclav
Havel's Rhythmic Deficiencies
He's No Averill Harriman, The Conscience of a Liberal
Travels with the Secretary of State
M.B.A. Candidates Learn Leadership, in the Mud
Singapore's Raffles Hotel Turns 125
Our Diplomats Deserve Better
Former Diplomat: Doing a Good Job Invites Risk
The New World According to the New York Times

2. READING LIST

THE REVENGE OF GEOGRAPHY: WHAT THE MAPS
TELL US ABOUT COMING CONFLICTS AND THE
BATTLE
AGAINST FATE, Robert D. Kaplan
GREAT GAMES, LOCAL RULES: THE NEW GREAT
POWER CONTEST IN CENTRAL ASIA, Alexander
Cooley
IKE'S BLUFF, Evan Thomas
Listening In: The Secret White House Recordings of
John F. Kennedy by Ted Widmer and Caroline Kennedy
Tombstone: The Great Chinese Famine, 1958-1962,
Yang Jisheng

3. PUTTING THE GUNBOAT IN DIPLOMACY

China, Japan and the world's Agadir Crisis (1911)
Agadir Crisis
Gunboat Diplomacy
Gunboat diplomacy on a rebound?
A New Era of Gunboat Diplomacy
China's maritime hero them park reopens
The Forgotten Soviet-Japanese War of 1939
East Asia's Sea Disputes: Scar Tissue from War
Wounds
Quemoy and Matsu
1st, 2nd, and 3rd Taiwan Strait Crises
Once a Redoubt Against China, Taiwan's Outpost
Evolves
Japan Concerned by China's navy, opaque leadership
PLA Watchers: Beware of Open Sources and
Information Laundering

Chinese military is sincere in opening to outside
 China Asserts Sea Claim With Politics and Ships
 China's Naval Rise and the South China Sea: An
 Operational Assessment
 Need to Know
 China carrier a show of force as Japan tension festers
 China: Aircraft Carrier Now in Service
 China's first aircraft carrier enters service
 China brings its first aircraft carrier into service, joining 9-
 nation club
 Analysis: China's aircraft carrier: in name only
 China eyes Japan with carrier name
 China adds aircraft carrier to its navy
 China dismisses reports of second aircraft carrier
 China to use drones to monitor territorial claims
 China's Real Blue Water Navy
 Chinese Military Progress Can Worsen Sea Disputes
 China's Naval Rise and the South China Sea: An
 Operational Assessment
 China's Nuclear War Plan
 Party Bristles at Military's Push for More Sway in China
 The rot inside
 Hu Jintao to Retain Control Over Military: Chinese
 Official
 China wary of US military moves in Asia-Pacific
 Boyd and the US Navy's Return to History
 US Counters Chinese Bases
 Rethinking US Military Presence in Asia and the Pacific
 List of US Navy installations in the Pacific
 Australia has rejected a proposal to host a US aircraft
 carrier strike group on its west coast
 US once deployed 12,000 nuclear warheads in 2 dozen
 countries
 Forces of the US 7th Fleet
 US naval fleet to shift towards the Pacific
 US Pacific Fleet (1995)
 US naval forces San Diego (2012)
 The Military Balance in Asia (1998-2011)
 Top Ten Military Powers (2012)
 San Diego warship visits symbol of the Cold War
 US Navy's new floating base gets a workout in Gulf
 New Russian ICBM carries bigger warhead
 Seoul claims it has bunker busting missile
 The Two Paths
 Falklands War
 North Sea Oil

A Note on Gunboats: Gunboats in the days of the Agadir
 crisis were small, a couple of thousand tons at best
 Today it's a bit different. One of my favorite illustrations I
 found as I researched this was a photo of a US aircraft
 carrier, taken head on. The caption simply said, "90,000
 tons of Diplomacy." Gunboats are faster today, although
 not as fast as aircraft. Nine hours of flight time today
 takes 18 days of sailing time in the Pacific.
 Communications are faster and very much real time;
 although I'm not convinced that is always a good thing.
 Politicians and admirals tend to micro-manage local on-
 site commanders; whether it's a photo reconnaissance

pilot over Cuba or Seals knocking on Bin Laden's doo.
 Little gunboats today are backed up by unseen
 resources. A hundred years ago if the gunboat couldn't
 do the job, perhaps the Battle Fleet could. On the other,
 as Jutland showed, perhaps not. Much ado is made
 about aircraft carriers and yet, again, like days of old
 they may prove too vulnerable to be put in harm's way.
 Keep in mind that half of an aircraft carrier's aircraft are
 devoted to protecting it. Submarines are another matter.
 There are a lot more submarines out there looking for
 big targets than there are big targets to be had. Which
 leaves the subs with two choices: look for other
 submarines for targets or go after merchant shipping,
 and all those super-tankers make very tempting targets.
 In today's Twitter and Weibo world citizens lead the
 making of public opinion and drive politicians to act,
 even when they'd rather not. The internet creates and
 feeds the frenzy of public opinion. Cooler heads find it
 harder to prevail over hotter heads in the face of public
 pressure. Still, with all these changes the more I look at
 events leading up to WWI and today's events the more I
 fear WWII may be just around the next rock.

4. PUTTING THE diplomacy in DIPLOMACY

China Alters Its Strategy in Diplomatic Crisis With Japan
 Diplomats tested as East Asia tensions rise
 Loss of diplomatic contacts exacerbates Japan-China
 feud
 US call for "cool heads" in China-Japan island dispute
 goes unheeded
 The islands dispute may get worse
 China hits back at Japan PM's statement on Islands
 At UN China takes aim at Japan over island dispute
 Former Japanese PM Shinzo Abe eyes return to power
 Fishermen enraged over Japan's harassment of fishing
 operations: Ma
 Taiwanese ships clash with Japanese coast guard over
 disputed islands
 Near Disputed Islands, Japan Confronts Boats From
 Taiwan
 Taiwan boats in disputed isle waters: Japan coast guard
 Senkaku dispute reinforces military shifts
 Taiwanese boats enter waters near disputed islands
 In dispute over islands, Japan trades water-cannon fire
 with Taiwan as meets with China
 Japan fires water cannon to turn away Taiwan boats
 View from China: no mood to party
 View from Japan: 'disappointed "in China for canceling
 anniversary celebration
 China's gunboat diplomacy
 Complex web of interests drives US bid for calm on
 South China Sea
 Osaka Mayor Urges Takeshima Action on Twitter
 Will North Korea Strike Again in NLL Area?
 US Expert sees fall of China
 Japan, China military conflict seen unlikely despite strain
 Diplomacy lost in sea of trouble
 How to Settle the Fight Over Some Guano-Covered

Rocks

Japan says China has canceled events marking 40th anniversary of diplomatic ties
China surveillance ships enter waters near disputed islands
Soul Searching in China Over Man Beaten Senseless by Anti-Japanese Protestors
John Garnaut on Edward Luttwak's Views on China
China sidesteps South China Sea island disputes
In Shark-Infested Waters, Resolve of Two Giants Is Tested
China, Japan shadow boxing over rocks – for now
China says Japan ties anniversary ruined by island row
Could China really go to war over these?
China-Japan island clash: A test of US diplomacy
S. Korea navy fires warning shots at N. Korea fishing boats for alleged breach of maritime border
China's Xi on diplomacy with neighboring countries
As island feud with Japan simmers, China sidesteps disputes with Southeast Asian neighbors
Japan Airlines cuts flights to China amid squabble
Harnessing the Power of Protest
Dangerous Rocks: Can both sides back off peacefully?
Sleepy Islands and a Smoldering Dispute
With China's Rise, Japan Shifts to the Right
Snow Dragons, As the Arctic Melts, Asia shudders at the risk but slavers at the opportunities
China joins nations seeking treasure in warming Arctic
Report: Chinese Consumers Increasingly Divided
China Politics Stall Overhaul for Economy
In China, shipbuilders languish after bubble bursts
China protests: Toyota resumes Chinese Operations
Japanese Car Plants in China: Who's Feeling the Heat?
Chinese migrants invited to dinner in attempt to bridge social gulf
Hainan to become a world-class tourist destination
China identifies Hainan as world-class tourism destination
Hainan: Travel and Tourism Development Potential (2011-2021)
Obama's Journey to a Tougher Tack on a Rising China
Anti-Japan protests reignite across China on occupation anniversary
Can the Frog Jump Before the Water Boils?
Japan's purchase of disputed islands is a farce, says China's next leader
China probes protest around US ambassador's car
A bellwether of Chinese Revolution
China moves to quell anti-Japan protests
How a remote rock split China and Japan
Chinese government both encourages and reins in anti-Japanese protests, analysts say
US defense chief Panetta warns on Asia territory rows
China struggles to channel anger as anti-Japan protests resume
Anti-Japanese protests in China swell, turn violent
In Japan, the right rises on China fears
China ships sail in waters near disputed waters
Off-Script Scramble for Power in a Chinese Leader's

Absence

Chinese Ships Enter Japanese-Controlled Waters to Protest Sale of Islands
China, Philippines argue about name of sea
China, Japan dig in heels as rhetoric escalates over islands
China patrol ships enter Japan waters: Japan Coast Guard
Will China Arm Its Fishermen to Protect a "Core Interest"?
Hong Kong Impedes Trip to Islands, Activists Say
China Accuses Japan of Stealing After Purchase of Group of Disputed Islands
From the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
China Accuses Japan of Stealing Disputed Islands
China sends patrol ships to islands at center of dispute with Japan
China sends patrol ships to contested islands after Japan buys them
What Keeps the Chinese Up at Night
Why are citizens from Japan and China fighting over East China Sea islands?
Japan, China leaders meet amid tension over islands
Australia's partnership dilemma: China or US?
Nationalism stokes Asian island disputes
China territorial disputes: a warning in the history of Imperial Japan
South Korea in military drill near disputed islands
Japan in final stages of talks to buy disputed islands, PM says
Putin's Ambitions Turn to the Far East
The Never-ending Story: Drama in the South China Sea
Nationalism Stokes Island Disputes Around Asia
Japan government "reaches deal to buy" disputed islands
China Livid Over Japan Island Purchase Reports
Tensions simmering between US, China over uninhabited islands' ownership
Did Japan just "buy" the Senkakus?
Territorial tensions rumble on as Clinton visits Beijing
Smiles and Barbs for Clinton in China
Hillary Clinton's China visit will be a balancing act
China warns US on South China Sea row as Clinton visits
As Growth Flags, China Shies From Stimulus
In Beijing Clinton to Discuss Island Disputes
China's manufacturing sector shrinks
Clinton Warns Against Coercion in South China Sea Dispute
Why Asia is arguing over its islands
US expands firepower in Asia-Pacific, targets China
Clinton to urge ASEAN unity on South China Sea
How China's Leaders Steer a Massive Nation
Tokyo dispatches team to survey islands at center of Japan, China tensions
China-Japan tensions rising over disputed islands
Clinton in South Pacific with China in focus
China's coming leadership change met with a shrug
Russia's Putin calls for Stalin-style "leap forward"

Brezhnev Bonds Haunt Putin as Investors Hunt \$785 Billion

What's behind the China-Japan island dispute?

Breakingviews: The what, when and Hu of China's big changeover

Analysis: Politics the priority for China as economy slows

Why Japan, China battle over Islands in the East China Sea

Barren rocks, barren nationalism

China Is Said to be Bolstering Missile Capabilities

China Besieged by Glut of Unsold Goods

Dispute Over Islands Reflects Japanese Fear of China's Rise

Anger simmers over Okinawa base burden

Brewing trouble in Asian waters

Japan hints at economic action in South Korea island feud

Look Out for Diaoyu Islands

Osaka Mayor Pitches Gallery of Controversial History

Dispute Over Islands Reflects Japanese Fear of China's Rise

Anti-Japan Protests Erupt in China Over Disputed Island

New York Times backs reckless US intervention in South China Sea

China Politics, Oil Needs Risk Conflict in South China Sea

Casino Mogul's Front man in China Is Focus of Inquiries
Police Detain 150 in Macau Casino Raids amid Fears of New Gang War

South China Sea dispute: China summons US diplomat

China media tells US to "shut up" over South China Sea tensions

Hong Kong Turnover (1997)

China names garrison commanders at newest city in South China Sea, pressing claims over waters

Japan's claim to Okinawa disputed by influential Chinese commentators

Leaning on US, Philippines boldly pushes back on China in sea dispute

A Note on the Timeline: This long list of articles is merely representative of what has appeared in the worldwide media (mostly on the internet) in the past month or so. The articles are arranged with the most recent first and the most dated first. The list changes daily as developments occur. For instance, you will note several articles talking about yesterday's 40th anniversary of the resumption of Japan-Chinese diplomacy. Everything pointed to the fact that the celebrations being planned to mark this event were being cancelled. But, at the last moment, one of the senior leaders of China did show up for the event, at the same time as the plane carrying the head of Toyota was denied landing permission in Beijing. Inscrutable they are.

As I noted way back when we are about to mark the 100th anniversary of the beginning of WWI. You may find these interesting:

Assassination of Archduke Ferdinand.

Front Page of NY Times, 28 July 1914

Articles about WWI from NY Times

Timeline of Documents about WWI

Why WWI Resonates, NY Times.

There were something like 1,300 articles instead in the NY Times chronology dealing with events leading up to WWI. As the above list shows there are hundreds of articles already posted on the internet in just a couple of months dealing with the South China Sea contretemps. Of course there are huge differences between the two. Was the life of one man, even an archduke, worth a world war? Are a few small uninhabited rocks worth another? The differences a hundred years make are amazing: chronological (WWI took years to resolve itself, and it never really did. The SCS War, if it happens, will probably be decided within the first 73 hours.) Location, Technology, Players (Great Powers, Others), Speed of Communications, Management from Above, Planning, etc. are all very different today than they were then. One thing that hasn't changed: Motivations. The passions, fears, and anger of a hundred years ago are still very much with us today; and governments now, as then, are perfectly willing to stir them up, especially when they have other problems.

For years the politicians, the military, the diplomats and the average person thought WWII would begin The Near East, The Middle East, Taiwan, Korea, or Central Europe, but the closest we've ever come to nuclear war in our time was in Cuba, although there have been other knuckle-busting crises over the years. Today, right now, the focus is on Asia, especially the South China Sea.



5. THE BOUNDARY ISN'T SETTLED UNTIL THE CARTOGRAPHER SAYS SO

East Asia's top 5 island disputes
Pacific Islands Disputes
Territorial disputes in the South China Sea
China's Territorial Disputes: Articles about China's Territorial Disputes. Lists from the New York Times (Oldest First, Newest First)
Map Suggestions
The specks of land at the center of Japan-China island dispute
A look at Pacific island disputes
Maps and Atlases
Map of Japanese naval districts
Maps of Asia, Pacific, varying scales, dates
Island Maps, Ocean Maps, Islands of the World
List of East Asian Ports
Panama's magic number
China finds another route to the Indian Ocean
Sneak/Diary Islands Map
South China Sea Maps
Indian Ocean map
China coastal map
US Pacific bases map
The Tyranny of Distance (Map)
South China Sea boundary claims (Map)
The Spratly Islands (map)
US Department of Defense Commanders' Areas of Responsibility (Map)
PRC naval units (Map)
US military bases in the West Pacific (Map)
China's String of Pearls (Map)
Area blank maps
Asia and the South Pacific: Political (Map)
Southeast Asia and the South Pacific: Political (Map)
South Asia: Political (Map)
Central and Northern Asia: Political (Map)
Central and Southwest Asia: Political (Map)
Island Grabbing in Asia

A Note on Maps: The traditional Diplomacy game board measures 24 by 22 inches. The National Geographic World Atlas Asia/Pacific map measures 24 by 18 inches and has a scale of 1 inch equals 360 miles. This is for the 1960 edition. Theoretically this is about the right size for a playable Diplomacy variant game board. The problem comes when attempting to include India and the Indian Ocean. However, the National Geographic Asia/Pacific Wall Map is 61 by 52 inches and has a scale of 1 inch equals 135 miles. I have the 1978 edition and it includes India and the Indian Ocean. However, it is a bit out of date, particularly since it shows the boundaries of the former USSR and the names of Chinese cities, etc. are in the old style (e.g. Peking instead of Beijing). However, it's a good sized table map (if you have a big table) for nine players, with plenty of room for all the pieces. It also has the advantage of being cheap. I saw a number of this edition offered on Amazon for less than

\$5, but note that these are folded, not rolled.

6. WWII IN THE PACIFIC: FROM GUNBOAT DIPLOMACY TO NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST

Perhaps the best way to understand the WWII in the Pacific that is surely coming is to game it. That's what Diplomacy XXI (for the 21st Century) is all about.

What you have read is very much a work in progress, at best an outline of what you might create from it. I've given you an idea, a concept, the victory criterion (One-half, plus one of all the supply centers and island points.), the players, and the rules; as well as some suggestions for seeking the Great Game balance and creating your own map.

There are 9 Great Powers in play: Russia, China, a unified Korea, Japan, USA, Indonesia/Philippines, Australia, Singapore/Malaysia/Thailand, and India.

To keep the game playable and maintain a balance of power I took a number of liberties with the current world map, an idea suggested by the NY Times article on potential changes in the near future. By combining the two Koreas it was possible to create a Great Power with an army, a fleet, a nuclear capacity, and enough space to put their pieces on the game board. The USA represented some special challenges because of its wide-spread bases in the Western Pacific. One possible option would be to add spaces on the eastern side of the Pacific (e.g. Alaska, Seattle, San Diego, etc.), Combining Indonesia and the Philippines, and Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand made them big enough and strong enough to be Great Powers instead of unoccupied supply centers. It also helped balance the game board between the northern and southern powers. India, like the USA, is far enough removed from the centers of action to have a "spoiler" role in the game. That distance keeps it weak in the beginning of the game, but allows it to grow relatively easily.

There are 4 kinds of units: Army (A), Fleet (F), Air Force (AF), and Nuclear (N).

A Note on Air Forces and Nuclear Units: The big difference is Air Forces can move two spaces, not one; and if for any reason they are blocked from entering either space, they return to their point of origin. Nuclear units are a bit more complex, and it's a concept I haven't worked out completely in my own mind yet. They move only one unit and on detonation when landing in a space that space is destroyed permanently (whether it's a supply center or not) and becomes impassable thereafter. Only the nuclear powers can build nuclear units and they must designate which of their home spaces is their nuclear supply center. If that space is occupied or destroyed, then cannot build additional nuclear units. When a nuclear unit is detonated it is

destroyed and ceases to exist. Your thoughts?

There are 29 Great Power supply centers:

Russia: A Vlad, F Petro-Pav, AF Khab, 1 Nuclear (TBA) (5 spaces)

China: A Beijing, F Quindao, F Yulin, AF Lanzhou, 1 Nuclear (TBA) (7 spaces)

Korea: A Pyongyang, F Busan, AF Seoul, 1 Nuclear (TBA) (4 spaces)

Japan: A Hokkaido, F Yokahama, AF Fukuoka (4 spaces)

USA: A Okinawa, F Hawaii, F Guam, AF Diego Garcia, 1 Nuclear (TBA), (5 spaces)

Indonesia/Philippines: A Jakarta, F Manila, AF Medan (5 spaces)

Australia: A Sydney, F Perth, AF Darwin (6 spaces)

Singapore/Malaysia/Thailand: A Bangkok, A Kuala Lumpur, F Singapore (5 spaces)

India: A Delhi, F Andaman, AF Calcutta, 1 Nuclear (TBA), (6 provinces)

There are 9 unoccupied supply centers: Taiwan, Vietnam, New Zealand, Burma, Laos, Cambodia, Mongolia, Tibet, and Bhutan.

There are 4 unoccupied non supply centers: Kashmir, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh

There are 9 disputed island(s) which are considered non-occupied and non-supply centers. However, occupation of them is worth one (each) supply center value toward the victory criterion: Sakhalin, Southern Kurile Islands, Dokdo or Takeshima, Yeonpyeong, Senkaku or Diaoyu, Quemoy (including Matsu and Pescadores), Spratly Islands, Paracel Islands, and Scarborough Shoals.

There are a lot of bodies of water in play:

Indian Ocean (North, South, West, East, Central): Bay of Bengal, Andaman Sea, Strait of Malacca, Gulf of Thailand, Great Australia Bight, Tasmanian Sea, Timor/Java Seas.

South Pacific Ocean: South China Sea, Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia, Philippines Sea, Gulf of Tonkin, Formosa Strait, East China Sea, Korean Strait.

North Pacific Ocean: Yellow Sea, Bo Hai, Korean Bay, Sea of Japan, Tatar Strait, La Perouse Strait, Sea of Okhotsk, Bering Sea.

The Central and East Pacific are the terra incognita eastern boundary of the game board.

A Note on Sources: What a difference forty-five years makes. That's about how long it's been since Allan Calhamer designed the original Diplomacy game. Back then if you wanted to design a Diplomacy type game you

found an atlas, perhaps some National Geographic maps if you were lucky, an almanac, an article in Collier's and perhaps an inspiring professor if you were lucky. Today you have the internet and all that goes with it. The amount of information available is unbelievable and often over-whelming.

7. FINAL EXAM

A Note on This Exam: Let's see how much you've learned from reading this article, or perhaps how much you already knew about the Pacific Ocean, both historically and its current events. I've given you a list of islands. Tell me what's important about them in a few words. It might be their history, a military connection, or a diplomatic story. It's OK to use an atlas, but no fair using the internet. Email me your results (peery@ix.netcom.com) and next issue I'll publish the answers and the winner's name. If nobody answers correctly I'll look forward to exploring Scarborough Shoals on my own. Ready? Here goes:

Venice
Malta
Bouvet
Diego Garcia
Andaman
Hainan
Adak
Shemya
Hawaii
Guam
Okinawa
Kwajalein
Johnston Atol
San Clemente
Simushir
Iturup
Yeonpyeong
La Reunion
Papeete
Numea
Kodiak
Crozet Islands
Moneron

8. CONCLUSION

If anyone actually creates a game board map based on the information I've given you, I'd very much like to see it. If anyone is motivated to do further research along these lines I have copies (about a thousand pages worth) of the articles, etc. listed above). If you're doing a Ph.D. thesis in History, Political Science or Geography I've done your research for you.

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

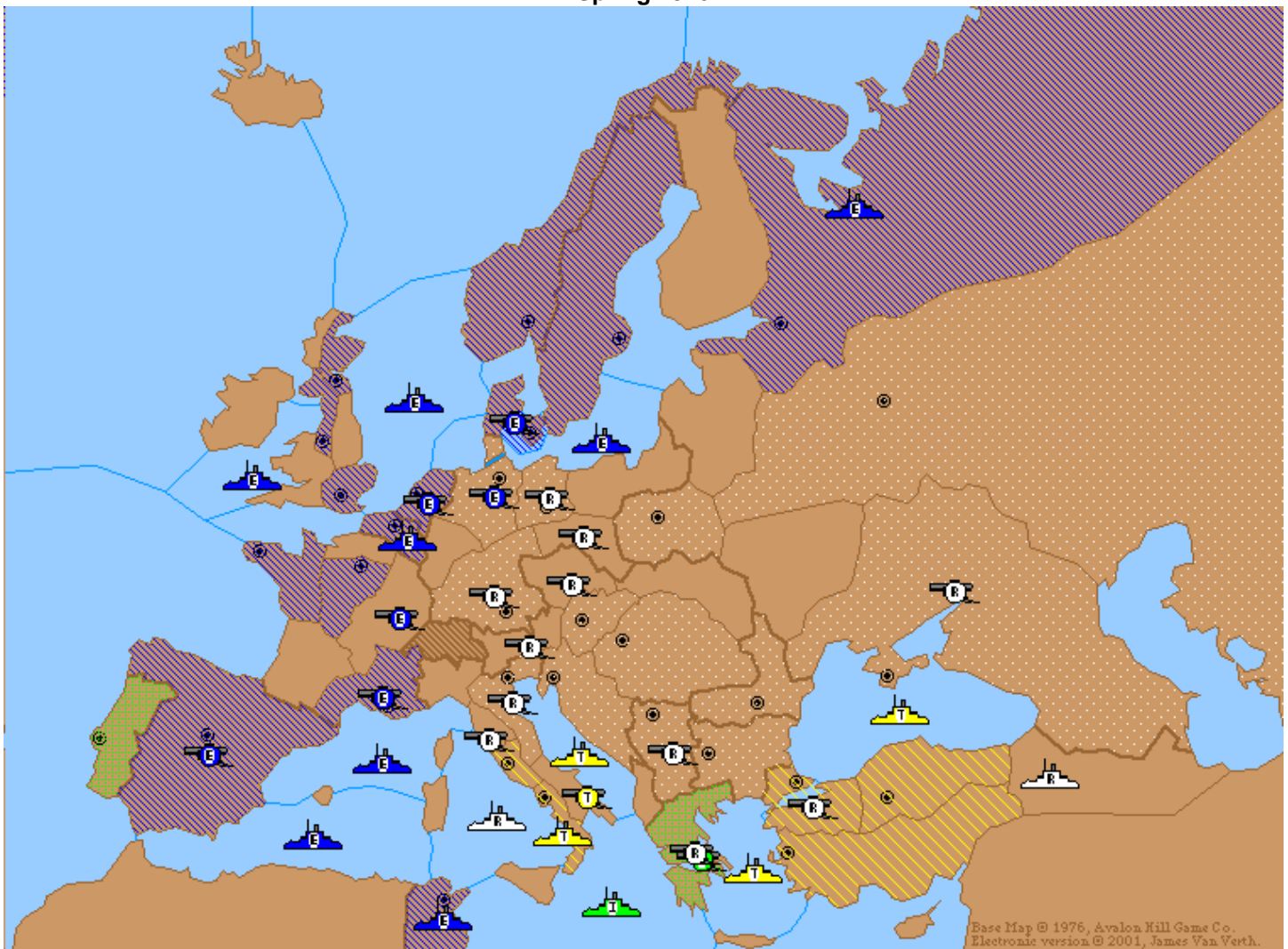
The Commentators:

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

The GM:

Douglas Kent

Spring 1916



Is this now Diplomacy, Twister, or Kingmaker?

England: A Burgundy - Munich (*Fails*), A Denmark Supports A Ruhr – Kiel, F English Channel – Belgium, F Gulf of Bothnia - Baltic Sea, A Holland Supports A Ruhr – Kiel, F Liverpool - Irish Sea, F London - North Sea, A Marseilles - Piedmont (*Bounce*), F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - Western Mediterranean, A Ruhr – Kiel, A Spain - Marseilles (*Fails*), F St Petersburg(nc) Hold, F Tunis - Ionian Sea (*Bounce*), F Western Mediterranean - Gulf of Lyon.

Italy: A Greece Supports A Bulgaria (*Dislodged*, retreat to Albania or OTB), F Ionian Sea - Aegean Sea (*Fails*).

Russia: A Berlin Supports A Kiel – Munich, A Bulgaria – Greece, A Kiel – Munich, A Moscow – Sevastopol, A Munich – Silesia, A Piedmont – Tyrolia, A Rumania – Constantinople, A Serbia Supports A Bulgaria – Greece, F Sevastopol – Armenia, A Tuscany - Piedmont (*Bounce*), A Tyrolia – Bohemia, F Tyrrhenian Sea Supports F Ionian Sea - Tunis (*Void*), A Venice - Piedmont (*Bounce*).

Turkey: F Aegean Sea - Ionian Sea (*Bounce*), F Apulia - Adriatic Sea, F Black Sea Convoys A Rumania – Constantinople, F Naples Supports F Tyrrhenian Sea, A Rome - Apulia.

Now Proposed – E/I/R/T. Please vote. NVR=No.

PRESS

Daffy Duck - Marvin Martian: I suppose you realize...This means War!

(Somewhere on a foggy sea) - "I'm sorry, Mistress, but I was unable to find the banana ice cream you wanted." EYE-gore hesitantly reported. "But I purchased the rest of the supplies."

The Woman shrugged. "No problem, EYE-gore. As long as I have a good supply of Hershey chocolate, I'm good." She tossed her first-mate a t-shirt. "Here, I picked up something for you."

"For me, Mistress? Thank you!" EYE-gore held up the T-shirt and read, '*I came to Greece and got rocked at the Acropolis by the lolausians*'. He glanced up at the Woman.

"Ummm...thank you, Mistress."

"You're welcome." The Woman fondly gazed back towards land. "Hell of a group, those lolausians. Their motto is '*Give the lolausians what we want and nobody gets hurt*'. Hell of a life mantra, isn't it?"

"Uh-huh." EYE-gore ignored the chittering from the drunken chipmunk.

The Woman glanced at the chipmunk. "Stop your bitching! I put beer on the shopping list!" She lowered her voice and leaned down to EYE-gore. "You did get the hootch, right?"

"Of course, Mistress," EYE-gore assured her. "Are we casting off now?"

The Woman donned her sunglasses and scratched her cheek. "No, I think we'll hang around for a while. Rumor has it there's going to be some heavy action at the local

casino." She glanced down at EYE-gore. "No problem using that credit card?"

"No, Mistress," EYE-gore answered.

The Woman nodded in satisfaction. "Good! Think I'll use it at the casino. I understand the ATM there doesn't have a limit on withdrawals."

"But, aren't you afraid the real owner will find out? I mean, right on the card it says 'Sheriff...'"

The Woman laughed. "Afraid?" She smacked EYE-gore on the back causing the smaller man to stumble forward. "EYE-gore, I'm counting on it."

MOSCOW to WORLD: Time to roll the dice for the last time ... one way or the other, I don't think this is going down to a two-way draw. The game is out of the hands of the generals and in the hands of the politicians and would-be kingmakers ...

MOSCOW to BELGIUM/VENICE BAD GUESS WAY BACK WHEN: This is all your fault ...

Ita - Board: Thought I'd just throw it out there for amusement if nothing else. Nothing ventured nothing gained...or so I've been told. Naples to London: What we have here is a failure to communicate!

Naples to Bizerte: What are you doing with a fleet in boss' protectorate?

Naples to Vichy Italy in Portugal: Where have all the flowers gone, long time passing?

Naples to Ghost of Vince: What's that Vince?! I'm coming to see you!!

Summer 1916

England: Has F Baltic Sea, F Belgium, A Burgundy, A Denmark, F Gulf of Lyon, A Holland, F Irish Sea, A Kiel, A Marseilles, F North Sea, A Spain, F St Petersburg(nc), F Tunis, F Western Mediterranean.

Italy: Retreat A Greece - Albania..Has A Albania, F Ionian Sea.

Russia: Has F Armenia, A Berlin, A Bohemia, A Constantinople, A Greece, A Munich, A Serbia, A Sevastopol, A Silesia, A Tuscany, A Tyrolia, F Tyrrhenian Sea, A Venice.

Turkey: Has F Adriatic Sea, F Aegean Sea, A Apulia, F Black Sea, F Naples.

DIAS Fails

PRESS

England - Turkey: Suicide becomes you.

(Somewhere on a foggy sea) - "Mistress! Mistress! We'll never outrun them!" EYE-gore scrambled around the poop deck dodging piles of empty beer cans and chipmunk...well, you know.

"So who's outrunning them?" The Woman grinned.
"Dale Darrell Waltrip Richard Petty Rusty Awesome Bill Gordon Irvin Earnheart Smith Johnson Junior! Get your furry ass into that dinghy!"

EYE-gore watched as the furry rodent scurried across the deck and leaped overboard to land in the dinghy.

"Move it, EYE-gore!" The Woman ordered. "You and the little drunk head for shore." She gave the first-mate a bundle of cash. "From the casino. Spend it well."

"But...but..." EYE-gore pointed at the three large ships approaching. Even without the spyglass he could see a

man with a badge on his chest standing at the railing of the nearest ship.

"Oh, don't worry about HIM." The Woman waved her hand in dismissal even as she shoved the first-mate towards the ladder leading down to the dinghy. "He's not after you. The dinghy's small enough they won't even see it."

She watched as EYE-gore carefully climbed down the ladder and cut the dinghy loose from the JOKER. As they silently floated away, the Woman watched as the drunken chipmunk bared his furry backside to the oncoming ships and shake his hips in derision.

"I salute you, little brother," the Woman grinned. Then she walked back across the deck and almost absently fired one of the cannons in the general direction of the oncoming ships. Then she glanced at her watch.
"Hmmm...I've got time for a snack. Might as well finish off the banana ice cream."

Spring and Summer 1916 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

I think we just say the obvious here.

Turkey can, in fact, throw the game to Russia this move, should he choose to do so. Since England can guarantee control of 16 SCs with the capture of Kiel and Portugal, such a move would require all of the Turkish and Italian centers to fall to Russia. I assume that was the point of F Nap S F Ion.

He can vacate Naples for Ion and leave Rome and the home SCs undefended.

We'll see what happens next.

popcorn

Hooeey, see what I meant, Rick? I think Don very well could be sitting on 17 again (I think he was there before) after Fall. He COULD fall just short yet again. But then in one more year, the way Bill moved, he could get to 18.

Maybe that's what we both say..... this really is time for us to sit back and see what happens.

So, no, I don't have any more to say either.

SPRING 1916

The 'Further Glory' shuddered and then came to a stop. General U'til rushed to the control room to find The Doctor and Lieutenant B'des pulling panelling off some of the control consoles. "Doctor," he shouted, "what is happening?"

The Time Lord turned to him and smiled. "Don't worry old friend," he replied, "as I told you before the Tardis is not designed to take a ship of this size. We are having problems with some of the power crystals but we are both confident it can be resolved." He took out his sonic screwdriver and rejoined the Lieutenant. "Carry on with your briefing General, this will soon be fixed."

"I hope you are right Doctor, this is proving more difficult than that damn rift." He turned and made his way to the briefing room.

The old soldier addressed his trainees for the next briefing. "Gentlemen, we are suffering a few technical difficulties but both The Doctor and Lieutenant B'des are confident they can be overcome and we can then continue our journey to this strange realm of Middle Earth. I am sure he is correct but meanwhile we must continue our training mission and hold the next briefing. Hail Fndili."

"Hail Fndili," came the response, although slightly more muted than last time. The General realised that the young trainees were starting to have some doubts, as indeed did he, but the mission had to continue for the sake of the Empire and he had given his word to the Time Lord.

"Well Gentlemen," began the old soldier, "England is making some progress in western Europe but the Russian defensive positions appear strong - can they make further progress? Italy now looks to be almost totally defeated and Turkey is clearly slipping back. Russia is advancing against both Italy and Turkey but is it too little too late? Unless England can make a breakthrough, which looks difficult now, I still favour a joint England and Russia victory. The next few seasons should prove decisive. As usual I will read your reports with great interest. Hail Fndili."

On Middle Earth the three companions rode further south through Rohan. As they rode they saw more bodies, both men and Orcs, and Brooklyn noticed Galadriel brushing away some tears. But then there was movement to their right as a rider emerged from the woodland on a white steed. Merlin raised his

staff and Brooklyn raised Excalibur but the Elf Queen motioned them to stop. "Oh no," she gasped, "surely it cannot be?"

The rider approached, halted his steed and quickly dismounted next to them. He bowed his head. "My Lady," he said, "I heard what was happening here and came as quickly as I could. I have my bow and a quiver full of arrows. I will help you in every way I can."



"Oh Legolas," replied Galadriel, "you are so welcome and so sorely needed. These are my companions Merlin and Brooklyn." Merlin bowed and Brooklyn just looked on in awe - not just one Elf but two!

"But come," said Galadriel, "we must ride with all haste to Helm's Deep, for I fear it is the last stand for mankind."

The four rode south, pushing their horses as hard as they dared.

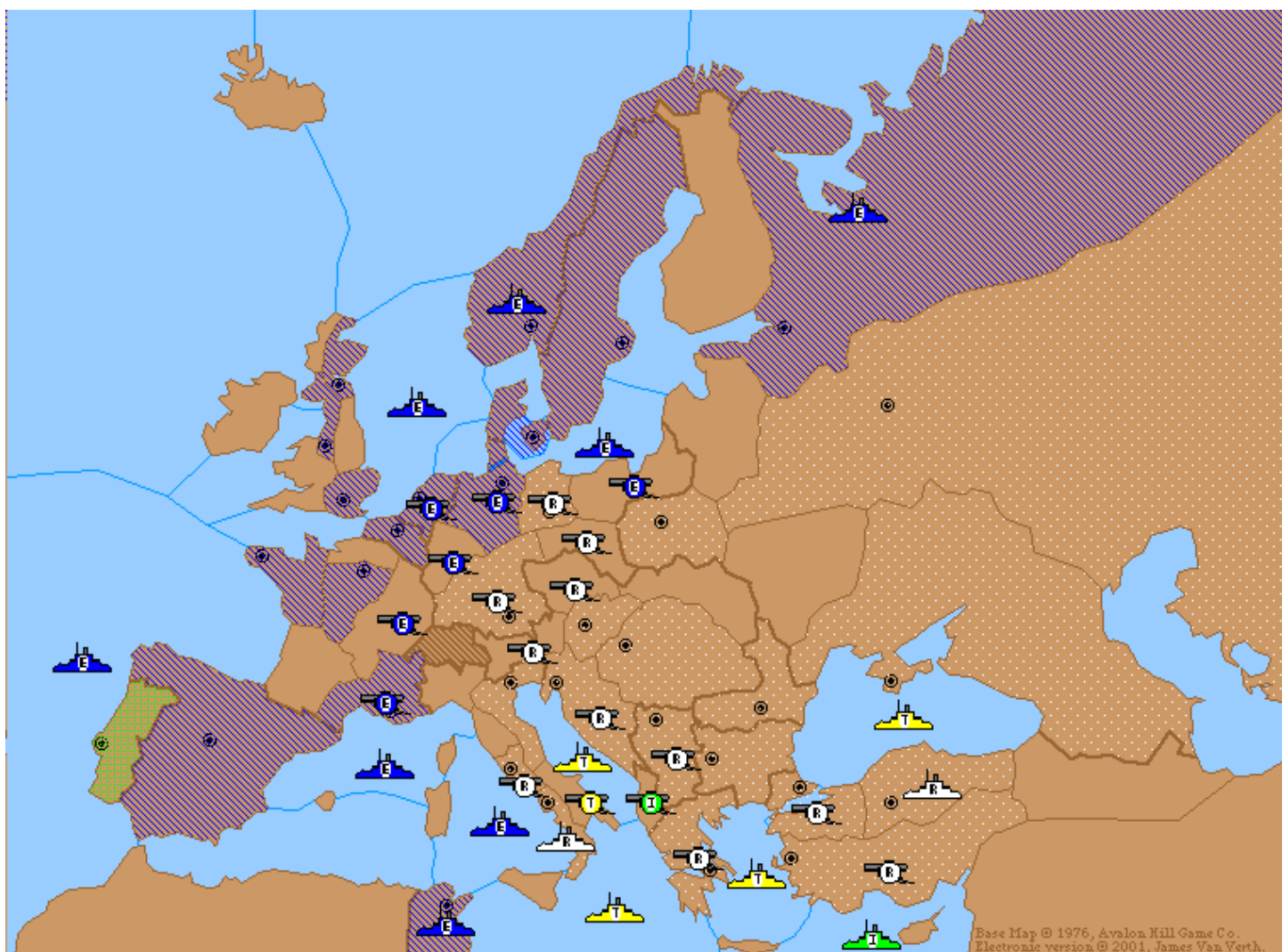
Fall 1916

England: F Baltic Sea Convoys A Denmark – Prussia, F Belgium - North Sea, A Burgundy – Ruhr, A Denmark – Prussia, F Gulf of Lyon Supports F Western Mediterranean - Tyrrhenian Sea, A Holland Supports A Kiel, F Irish Sea - Mid-Atlantic Ocean, A Kiel Supports A Burgundy - Ruhr (*Cut*), A Marseilles – Burgundy, F North Sea – Norway, A Spain – Marseilles, F St Petersburg(nc) Hold, F Tunis Supports F Western Mediterranean – Tyrrhenian Sea, F Western Mediterranean - Tyrrhenian Sea.

Italy: A Albania Supports F Ionian Sea – Greece, ~~F Ionian Sea – Greece~~ (*Dislodged*, retreat to Eastern Mediterranean or OTB).

Russia: F Armenia – Ankara, A Berlin Supports A Munich – Kiel, A Bohemia Supports A Tyrolia - Munich (*Fails*), A Constantinople – Smyrna, A Greece Waves Goodbye to Fleet Ionian (Holds), A Munich - Kiel (*Fails*), A Serbia Supports A Greece, A Sevastopol – Constantinople, A Silesia Supports A Berlin, A Tuscany – Rome, A Tyrolia - Munich (*Fails*), F Tyrrhenian Sea – Naples, A Venice - Trieste.

Turkey: F Adriatic Sea Supports F Naples - Ionian Sea, F Aegean Sea Supports F Naples - Ionian Sea, A Apulia Supports F Tyrrhenian Sea – Naples, F Black Sea Convoys A Sevastopol – Constantinople, F Naples - Ionian Sea.



FINALLY everybody seems to be working together....except the Turks.

Supply Center Chart

England: Belgium, Brest, Denmark, Edinburgh, Holland, Kiel, Liverpool, London, Marseilles, Norway, Paris, Spain, St Petersburg, Sweden, Tunis=15, Build 1
 Italy: Portugal=1, Even or Remove 1
 Russia: Ankara, Berlin, Budapest, Bulgaria, Constantinople, Greece, Moscow, Munich, Naples, Rome, Rumania, Serbia, Sevastopol, Smyrna, Trieste, Venice, Vienna, Warsaw=18, WINS!
 Turkey: None=0, OUT!

Italy has a retreat but there is no need to continue. Russia has 18 centers and the game is over.

PRESS

London - Whadda ya mean it's over?

(Somewhere on a foggy sea): The Woman stood with crossed arms as the Sheriff and his men boarded the JOKER.

Doug – London: Nothing is over until WE say it is!

"You didn't really think you could get away, did you?" The Sheriff demanded with a feral smile. "You and I have unfinished business. In fact, you owe me quite a deal."

"Is that a fact?" The Woman yawned. "And you think you're going to collect?"

"PREPARE TO BE BOARDED IN THE NAME OF HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN!"

"What the hell!?" The Sheriff turned to see the JOKER being boarded by British naval forces. Large British ships suddenly appeared out of the fog, cannons aimed at the Sheriff's ships. "What the hell do you think you're doing? You have no authority here!" The Sheriff angrily roared at the British officer.

"Neither do you," the Woman pointed out. She smiled at the British officer. "Nice to see you, James. Impeccable timing as always."

The British officer flashed the Woman a grin then turned to the Sheriff. "Her Majesty's fleet has authority wherever it sails, old chap. Now, you and your men have five minutes to disembark and return to wherever you wish. I understand you have quite a bit of real estate to choose from. This ship, the...uhh..." He glanced at the Woman.

"The JOKER."

"Of course it is," James sighed. He turned back to the Sheriff. "This ship, the JOKER, is now the property of Her Majesty The Queen."

"And if I don't?"

"My dear chap, your fleet is surrounded!" James chuckled. "In exactly four minutes and thirty seconds, if your ships are not retreating, Her Majesty's ships The GOLDFINGER, The THUNDERBALL, The MOONRAKER, The GOLDENEYE, and The SKYFALL will open fire. Along with my flagship, The OCTOPUSSY, of course." He clapped the Sheriff on the shoulder. "You've won this little game. No need to spike the ball."

He stepped back and waved an arm towards the Sheriff's ships. "Now, run along, old chap."

He turned and ordered the British sailors to secure The JOKER. He then offered an arm to the Woman and escorted her away. "Well, at least we live to fight another day," James quietly spoke.

The Woman nodded. "The Wheel will turn again." She grinned. "Hey, how about a picnic at the Lighthouse? If we hurry, we can catch up with the dingy. It's got all the beer and not even that little drunken chipmunk could have drunk it all by now."

"Guinness?"

"Of course."

RUSSIA to ENGLAND, ITALY, TURKEY: With any luck ...

RUSSIA to ENGLAND: ... or not ...

MOSCOW to LONDON: I am full of hope that you will surely show more grace, mercy, clemency and kindness than I and will correspondingly allow forebear to extinguish the light of Italian civilization in Portugal. You have always been the gentleman between the two of us.

SEVASTOPOL to RUSSIAN FLEET

MEDITERRANEAN: Vedi Napoli e poi ... live!

RUSSIA to ITALY: Sorry, Miss Kitty, but there's no other way to count to 18 ... let's hope the angels of Bill's better nature prevail ...

DON to DOUG: This is a fine less you've gotten us into.

Doug – Don: I am simply a bystander. Note the lack of the word innocent.

RUSSIA to CROWN ROYALE AT TOPKAPI PALACE:

I simply am dying to read your endgame statement to see how we got to this point ... thanks or not depending on how this turns out!

Fall 1916 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

As we at the last finally expected.....

My three line final statement would look something like, Faz dominated the early game, but then he chose to quit. Don was the beneficiary, and then tried to play an "Edi Birsan, get them to concede me the win" game, but it took until he browbeat a

replacement Turkey, Gary Behnen, into it, that someone finally handed him the win.

I guess that's five lines. Everyone else seemed mostly to be spectators to Don's masterful game.

Well, there was a set of orders that Russia and Turkey could execute to guarantee a Russian solo, and they did them.

With the game overs, there's not much point in trying to figure out the players' motivations. After all, they can tell us what they were thinking themselves.

But I'll go over the tactics of the final move.

Russia faced the problem of taking all the Turkish SCs this move. To do that, he had to get three forces into Asia Minor. And the fleet in Sev would not be able to get anything but Ankara (or it could go through the Black Sea to take Con, but that would leave the problem of who to take Smyrna?) The Smyrna issue was solved by having the Turk convoy Russian armies in the Spring and the Fall - the first to take Smyrna in the Fall and the second to take Constantinople.

Then there's the boot. Russia needed to take Rome and Naples. Rome was easy to take with Turkey having vacated it and with no English or Italians next to it. Naples was tougher.

The problem with Naples was that the Turkish fleet had to get out of the way, to let the Russian fleet land. It couldn't go to Rome, obviously. It couldn't go to the TYS, as such a move would block the Turkish landing. Also, it had to keep the Italian fleet in the Ionian see from standing off the Russians in Naples.

The solution? Dislodge the Italian fleet, with supports from F Aegean and F Adriatic. With two supports, even support from the English in Tunis would not suffice for the English to hold their position. And since this fleet would be dislodged from Naples, it could not participate in any standoff over Naples.

One question that is raised is: why did Turkey actually go through with these moves? If he had held in Naples and supported himself back into Rome, he'd have had two SCs right at the front. Part of the problem here is that the Russian position in Germany is untenable. He would lose at least one SC in the next year, and would be hard-pressed to hold either Berlin or Munich. England might have been able to get his own solo. Or, failing that, he might have taken one German center and then backed off of Italy to let Russia eliminate the Turks.

But again, questions of motivation at this point are better directed at the players.

FALL 1916

After the briefing General U'til returned to the control room to find The Doctor and Lieutenant B'des

replacing the panelling of the control consoles. "Have you done it Doctor?" he asked, with some concern.

The Time Lord smiled at him. "We have old friend, the power crystals have been repaired and we can soon be on our way although I think it would be wise to travel a little more slowly. This problem could possibly happen again."

The old soldier looked relieved. "That is good advice Doctor and I fully support it. And well done to you B'des, this will certainly be included in your final report."

The young Lieutenant waved three tentacles in the sign of 'Gratitude to a senior officer'. "Thank you Sir," he replied as he continued replacing the panelling.

The Doctor smiled again. "I think we are ready General. Lieutenant, shall we try the warp drive?" The young science officer moved to the control panel and started pressing buttons. There was a small shudder but then the three of them heard the warp drive engage and the 'Further Glory' moved ahead. The Time Lord's smile became even wider. "General, your ship is working again and we can now continue our voyage, although at a slower speed. I suggest you conduct your next briefing while B'des and I monitor the technical details."

"Well done to you both," replied General U'til, "and the briefing is indeed due. Please excuse me." He rushed off to the briefing room, leaving The Doctor and the Lieutenant to exchange smiles and nods of satisfaction.

The old soldier addressed his trainees for the next briefing. "Gentlemen, The Doctor and Lieutenant B'des seem to have solved the problem and we are now once again on our journey to this strange realm of Middle Earth, although I have no idea what we will find there. But now we must continue our training mission and hold the next briefing. Hail Fndili."

"Hail Fndili," came the response, somewhat louder than before. The General realised that the young trainees were now wanting some real action and wanting to show what skills they had learned on the

training grounds, which pleased him greatly. But he kept his features calm as he addressed them.

"Well Gentlemen," began the old soldier, "The war seems to be over. Russia has made some huge gains at the expense of Turkey and now reigns supreme. England seemed to have a chance but that has come to nothing. I hope you have all learned from this exercise for it will be most valuable in your future service of the Empire. Prepare your final reports before we arrive at Middle Earth. Hail Fndili."

On Middle Earth the four companions rode south with all the speed they could muster. More bodies lay on the ground, again both men and Orcs, and the tears were now flowing down Galadriel's cheeks. Brooklyn took an even firmer grip on Excalibur.

At several places they saw funeral pyres still smouldering, where some of Arabor'n's forces had clearly cremated the fallen as they took flight to Helm's Deep. Galadriel was now sobbing openly. "Oh this is tragic," she cried, "it is so much worse than I feared. Come friends, please, as fast as we dare."



Then ahead there was movement from behind a large tree. They slowed their steeds as a huge creature appeared. "Oh no," shrieked the Elf Queen, "it is an Oliphaunt. This is getting ever worse."

Legolas immediately jumped from his horse and strung his bow. "Brooklyn, with me," he shouted. "Go for the back legs. If we can sever the tendons the creature will fall." The young boy jumped from his

pony and rushed forward as the Elf started shooting arrows at the enormous monster.



The Elf shot his arrows at the head, which did little damage but caused the Oliphaunt to howl in rage. But it gave Brooklyn the chance to run behind it and slash at the back legs with the magical sword.

Although the hide of the creature was nearly a foot thick Excalibur cut through it like a knife through butter. Brooklyn quickly jumped back out of the way. The Oliphaunt gave a huge scream as it fell to the ground, gasped a few times and then died.

Legolas pulled the young boy into his arms and held him close. "Young man," he said, "that was well done indeed. But I fear there are more battles to come."

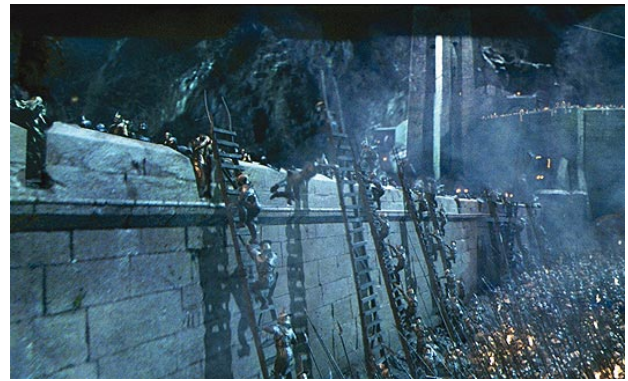
Brooklyn was panting from the effort of the battle. But he looked up at his new Elf friend and smiled. "I'm ready for it, no matter what it takes."

Then Legolas looked across at Galadriel. "My Lady," he said, "this is so much worse than we feared."

"It is," replied the Elf Queen as she brushed away some more tears. "To Helm's Deep, with all possible speed."

They urged their steeds into a gallop as they continued south.

But when they arrived they saw a scene of total chaos with thousands of Orcs swarming the battlements as the forces of Arwen desperately tried to defend their last stronghold.



Legolas looked at Galadriel with horror in his eyes. "My Lady, there is no way we can get through to help them!"

End-Game Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Italics)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16		
Austria	3	1	1	1	1	0											Steve Cooley	OUT F06
England	4	5	6	8	9	8	7	8	8	6	9	10	11	12	14	15	Bill Quinn	SURV F16
France	5	5	7	5	4	4	4	3	2	1	1	0					Buz Eddy	RES S03
																	David Hood	OUT F12
Germany	6	4	2	1	0												Mark Fassio	OUT F05
Italy	5	6	7	7	3	3	4	5	5	4	5	4	2	2	2	1	Melinda Holley	SURV F16
Russia	6	7	6	7	10	11	12	12	13	17	12	14	14	13	13	18	Don Williams	WIN F16
Turkey	4	5	5	5	7	8	7	6	6	6	7	6	7	7	5	0	Vince Lutterbie	RES S07
																	Gary Behnen	OUT F16

End of Game Statements:

Steve Cooley (Austria): Submitting an EOG for this game is a bit like asking a hit-and-run victim if he was in pain as the 18-wheeler broke every bone in his body. I will readily confess I did not enjoy the game. It was like having my younger brother beg me for the umpteenth time to mix baking soda and vinegar: the results were predictable and the process was not really fun.

I know for me, personally, seeing Mr. Cooley be knocked out so quickly was not fun for me either, I wanted to see him play, and watch him interact with Mr. Williams especially. We were not treated to this, a big shame.

Congratulations to Don on winning the game. No matter how you slice it, that's an achievement. Since I checked out as soon as Serbia's Ghost Army (SGA) stopped holding the center for me, I lost track of the endless chicanery and hijinks. I was a bit of a fish out of water as many of the press releases about moonshine, squirrels, and Grandpa's Edsel were just a bit over my head. I don't know that I have much anyone will profit from other than this: Germany attacking Austria in 1901 was a dumb idea before this game. If Fassio accomplished anything, it was to demonstrate for all the world to see the absolute futility of such a "strategy." Of course, some wise player, perhaps even Fassio himself, will make the claim that the game is about people, not tactics or strategy.

Anschluss, it just don't make sense for Germany to attack Austria, no way, no how, both lose, as they did here.

That is wrong. The game is about all three. If you don't play the people in the game, ignore the strategic implications of your moves (and others' moves), and employ shoddy tactics, you'll always get waxed. If you utilize 1 or 2 of the three,

you'll occasionally have good results and won't understand why sometimes things go poorly. I try to do all three. However, in my worst nightmare, it would not occur to me that a competent player occupying the German position would lay out a "strategy" to take down Austria in his/her opening. Not only is it statistically foolish, it is a strategic debacle. It nearly begs RT and EF alliances to form, which is the LAST thing any Central Power should want.

Now, about the game—or, more aptly the two years I was actually a participant. Melinda's notes to me seemed "okay," but I constantly had the nagging alarm going off in the back of my head that she was up to something anti-Austrian, no matter how many times she assured me she wasn't. At some point, I brought Fassio up to speed on things and expressed Don's (alleged) fear of me as Austria. He said he was sure Melinda and Don would work together. That seemed reasonable, based on what I knew of the two of them and Vince. Of course, Mark knew that would seem reasonable and that was precisely what he wanted me to think. Because I expressed some concerns about Melinda going to Tyl, Fassio offered to go there to bounce her. I wrote that it would not be necessary, but Fassio didn't respond before the deadline.

When I saw the Spring 1901 results, hope had left the building. Germany had indeed gone to Tyl, although with regret. After all, he only did it for me (cough). Worse, Melinda had gone to Tri and Ven. Still worse, Russia had moved aggressively anti-Austrian. Sure, Don had told me about the bounce in Gal. In fact, no matter how much I begged not to do bounce, he insisted. France opened up in an anti-German manner and England in the ever-popular "Split your forces" opening (fleet to the Channel and army to Yor). The only glimmer of hope was Vince's successful move to Bla, but that was weakened by Smy-Con. In other words, after one turn, I was running out of options.

Wow! That was more than two years ago!

Reviewing the emails, I had not given up, but was trying all manner of desperation plays. I wanted Mark to go to Ven from Tyl. That seemed reasonable. If he was going to leave Munich open, what else did he have to do with it? Melinda, after the spring attack, raised the idea of a Western Triple. Okay, I was born at night . . . but, even as gullible as I am, I'm not falling for that. A Triple that has France opening to Pic with his fleet? Ummm, no.

So, prior to Fall, Fassio tells me I'm on my own. He's going to cover Munich. The funny thing is, at the last minute, I have a really good idea. What was it? I decided to cut Tri from Ser and Vie. That way, the best Melinda could do was one of my dots, assuming Fassio was doing as he said—and why wouldn't he?

Of course, he didn't. Melinda supported his move into Vie. Again, if I'd listened to the voices in my head instead of telling them to shut up, I would have had a build and Mark's "interesting" opening would have been for naught. Instead, he got Vie. Williams shuffled his pieces around so he has armies in Gal and Rum. Lutterbie moved so that he had an opening for a fleet build.

Somewhere during this timeframe, Fassio said he really didn't care about the results of this game and was just out to have some fun. Boy, this sure was fun!!!

I kept grinding, but I knew it was pointless. Austria is not a country that bounces back from losing two home centers. Still, I was more than willing to be a lackey for RT. They could have written my orders for as long as they wanted, but there seemed to be a predisposition for eliminating me. That's okay; it happens. I understand.

What I don't understand is people slitting their own throats to make it happen. Germany and Italy, in Spring 1902, supporting Russia into Budapest. I'm sorry, but that's dumb. Russia supporting Turkey into Serbia? That's not; it's what allies do. Melinda cagily maneuvered her pieces to take out Germany's ill-gotten Vie. Brilliant. Well, except for the part about who is going to stop the RT Juggernaut that is starting to roll downhill? But, thankfully, it wasn't my problem.

I have nothing more to add about the game. It appears I knew nothing about what was going on anyway. No one told me the truth. I got eliminated, essentially, in two years. That's what happens when

About the Demo Game concept: I like it. However, I think far more care should have gone into the selection of players. I love Buz, but he is not a great player. He has done a great deal for the hobby and for that alone he deserves to be lionized. I am extremely saddened by his health and can only pray for a miracle. One other thing on the Demo Game concept: while you cannot stop players from using any game as a petri dish, it is useless to recruit someone who is willing to do such a thing for the whole world to watch. What did we learn from the game? That an EF in paralysis are ultimately no match for an RT which was fed Austria by Germany and Italy. Sure, that's a simplified version of the game, but it's not far off.

Let me put it another way: if you told me that a game in which I was not playing began with Germany taking Vie in 1901, I would ask whether RT or EF swept the board. One or the other surely would. In the history of novel openings, A Mun-Tyl; A Tyl-Vie should get a rating of zero on a scale of 0 to 100.

I discussed this opening quite a while ago with Steve. I share his feeling about the futility of a German invasion of Austria. It adds very little to the German position and removes a check on growth of both Russia and Turkey. Germany really shouldn't be in a hurry to get to the midgame unless he's the one with 9+ SCs.

Bill Quinn (England): At last this one will be history. This game has actually been over for about 6 months. That will become clear near the end of my statement.

England began this game with a hostile Germany and France. From the outset it was clear that England was in the sights of the pair. Mr. Fassio was clearly the puppet master of the two. His patronizing style combined with transparent lies made an alliance with Russia inevitable. When Germany came demanding English help against Russia, Mr. Fassio had the gall to write, "Guess I owe you some explanations after lying to you for 13 straight letters...this is a deathbed confession, so it's all true..." Certainly! I believe you this time, Faz! As predicted the planned attack on the Russian in Sweden would have put German fleets in Denmark and North Sea, and a French fleet in the North Atlantic. I'm glad I didn't buy German lie #14. This was the beginning of the end for Germany.

Russia and England made two agreements. 1. We would not attack each other and 2. Germany would be Russian. Scandinavia and France would be English. The new French player, David Hood, proved to be problematic to that end. His excellent play left England dependent on Italy and Russia for success. England falls farther behind Russia in the game. Meanwhile, Russia and Turkey make a move to eliminate Italy. To complicate matters a Turkish fleet occupies MAO! Thus begins a long, difficult relationship with the Turk. England is completely stymied while Turkey and Russia move on Italy, Germany, and Austria. While Russia and England remain on good terms, Turkey and England begin to trade barbs over the fate of France. My offer of Portugal, Spain, and Marseille for Brest, Paris, and MAO is refused. Turkey insists that England attack Russia before he will relent. Russia however remains England's best and only close ally. England's new plan is to keep Italy on her feet fighting to prevent the collapse of the middle Mediterranean to either Turkey or Russia. This tactic worked well for England and Italy until the end.

The France problem continued to plague England. Turk support for French positions ultimately required England to support and encourage Italy and Russia to advance into France. In addition, while England was unable to make progress against France I am forced to rely on Russia to make amends with Italy to bring down Turkey. By 1907 this policy shows fruit and Turkey is forced to remove F MAO after losing centers to a combined R-I attack. Finally, England can move fleets to MAO and ultimately W. Med. By Fall of '08, French centers begin to fall to Italy and then Russia.

In '09, with Italy and Russia putting an end to France, England chose to take a tactical victory in occupying W. Med and N. Africa. From this position England could then begin to capture the French centers. Before that campaign could be launched the Russian betrayal occurred. Don's betrayal was either well thought out or circumstance gave it the appearance of being well conceived and executed. I remember that Don contacted me on the eve of the Spring '10 deadline saying he had some important changes to our plans and would send them along shortly. I trusted my Russian ally completely and did not believe he would take advantage of my weak northern defenses for a long shot drive to 18. The hour grew late for me and as I was about to give up and go to bed the awaited changes arrived. I foolishly copied them down and sent them in without evaluating their meaning or impact. Upon reading the Spring '10 results I realized I had been completely chumped. With my Russian written moves Don did indeed have a very good chance of winning. This put Italy and England in the unpleasant position of allying with Turkey.

Gary assumed control of Turkey for the Fall of '07 move. My initial hope of a player willing to negotiate and work together was quickly dashed. Our negotiation for the division of France and realignment of forces quickly dissolved. Behnen bluntly accused me of passing his e-mail, "Not quite sure why you are sharing my e-mails (according to Don)". Next he resorts to insults and finally broken promises, and threats. "...I know you have no true plans to work with me and I will throw the game to Russia." Quite a negotiator. Thus, I came to find the Turkish player odious.

After surviving the Russian attempt at winning, there began the Great Re-approachment of Russia and England. After the Spring '12 moves, Russia proposes, "So, if you're game I'm willing to hit the reset button and make a promise to you I did not make anytime before now-I will play for an E-R two-way from here on if you are willing". Our re-alignment agreement included the return of all taken supply centers, all of France and St. Petersburg. England and Russia would not attack each other. We would take Turk and Italian supply centers until one of us won or a 17-17 draw was reached.

The re-alignment of Russia and England took place between 1912 and 1914. Russian units bolstered the German line while they withdrew from France. English units replaced Russian units and fleets entered the Mediterranean. The drive on Turkish units was on. Sister Italy was with us no matter what her ultimate fate would be. Our immediate goal was to eliminate Turkey. The Turk, seeing his fate, stepped up his war of insults in the Press and in correspondence. As the noose tightened and the end became apparent, Mr. Behnen told his final lie, "We will defend to the end", and made good on his threat, "I'll throw this game to Russia", and that is what he did. As Don said on the eve of Fall '16, "this is Gary's game to decide". Don, I regret that you allowed him to decide. You are now in his debt for "giving" you this game. You have stoked his ego and rewarded his poor behavior, something you told me you would never do. You could have denied him that pleasure and power. At least we kept our bargain that Turkey would not survive the game. In a note from our GM Doug after publishing Fall '16, "yes, thanks to a Turkish suicide.... for a game that should have ended in 1910, if Don had made the right moves, it is still sad to me that it had to end THIS way." My feelings too. Until we meet again. Thanks to all for an interesting game. Once again to the Hobby, Farewell! Bill Quinn.

Of interest to note:

1. The winning country did not own all of its home supply centers.
2. Both England and Russia owned two supply centers on the opposite side of the stalemate line.

Still not understanding why Bill never made a real effort to stop Russian growth. He was the one player who could do a lot but never did.

Yeah, even after reading everything here, I am still not sure I understand what Bill Quinn was up to. As most of you reading this don't remember, for five years or so in the early 1980's, Bill was a REALLY great asset to the hobby, but most of this was as Boardman Number Custodian – a concept you also probably don't really understand – I never thought of Bill as a great player, but it was fun to watch him in action here. Even if it turned out this way.

David Hood (French Replacement): Basically when I took over my options were pretty well constrained. For reasons beyond me, Bill decided that he did not want to work with France here, even when it became clear that Russia was the threat. It was truly bizarre, and skewed the game from my perspective. After the first year I was really just in total defense mode, with the hopes of eventually putting some sort of plan together with Melinda and Don that would allow me to live. Once Melinda and/or Don (can't remember right now) decided I was not necessary that was pretty much it.

I have to say – Bill, I am not sure what you were smoking here, but I would not suggest playing under the influence of that substance again unless you just don't care about the results.

Thanks, David, for stepping in.

Right, thanks to David for playing perfect tactics after he entered the game, even if no one would give him the time of day diplomatically.

Mark Fassio (Germany):

GERMAN REFLECTIONS (in a Shattered Mirror)
Mark Fassio

7 April 2010
Let the Games Begin!

DISCLAIMER

Before you read this, ~~swallow a bottle of No-Doz and break out some cheese to go with my "whine"~~ I wanted to caveat two things: (1) Not all of this is directly related to the game, so it occasionally might be seen as rambling Hunter Thompson-type stream-of-consciousness...sorry if that's the case; (2) I am pretty blunt in what I say and how I feel. That comes from commanding troops and being in a career field that prefers directness to BS. Combine that with me wearing my emotions on my sleeve, and some of my words may raise an eyebrow or two. If it offends anyone, it is what it is, and I'm not apologizing for the truth or how I feel. Jim Burgess' description of me in issue #110 was spot-on – I'm a predictable and easy 'read,' and it will indeed probably haunt me throughout this game. If it's also visible in this diary, so be it; as the title says, I'm looking at shattered reflections and broken glass, so the verbiage in here will also be sharp, pointed, and (to some) a little bloody. Just wanted to state that up front.

BACKGROUND TO THE GAME

After years of staring at the phone, waiting for that magic call, it's finally happened! Doug Kent – dynamo that he is – took the bit and ran full-tilt and, out of the blue, has organized a Golden Agers Demo Game. (Given our ages, maybe it's more of a Bronze or Stone-Ager game, I don't know.) Anyway, I was selected (cough) late (cough cough) in the draft (ahem...) after all but 6 of the really good players declined (cough), but hey: I'm in. I've joined some Legends for a reprise of the old days of playing, and I requested Germany as a change of pace from my usual preferences (Turkey, Turkey, and Turkey) and, lo and behold, have it. So in the space of a week, I now have a full-time gaming commitment AND control a paranoid, surrounded country position! Moral of the story: be careful what you ask for (grin).

PERSONAL HISTORY -- already published in issue 110

You can't tell the players without a scorecard, so: this is FYI material, for the new-guy readers' edification. I have played Diplomacy, primarily by mail, since the mid-70s – the Golden Age of Dip. I LOVE(d) this game. I would even phone in orders during my weekly 5-minute "morale call" to my wife when I was stationed in Russia or Iraq, so she could pass on the moves to my GMs after we talked; how's *that* for fanatically loving a game? I was the Strategy and Tactics editor for DIPLOMACY WORLD magazine in the 90s, and won "Best Player" and "Best Writer" awards in that era, after copiously bribing the judges (or maybe it was primarily for playing Turkey in games, I don't know). Over the years I went through some brownouts and burnouts, and had some disagreements with friends over moves and outlooks (completely stupid ones, in retrospect; such actions always are [stupid] when a game with wooden blocks is involved...why, I can remember when I was 3 ½ and...well, never mind...). Anyway, those brownouts and disagreements – coupled with the death of my Dad in 2002 and some new job/relocation issues at the same time – pretty much ended my active Dipping. I went through a slight "renaissance" in the PBeM world after 2005 and played occasionally on the DipBounced site (www.Dipbounced.com), as well as some occasional "replacement player" positions in the old remaining monthly postal 'zines. I even went to a one-board 'Con in 2007 and won "Best Austria" (and "only Austria", too)! But even with "all" that, I am rusty as all get-out; negotiating and playing this game will be akin to having Mr Olympia be your personal trainer after lying on the couch eating Doritos for the last 8 years. To quote Mr T, "Can you say, 'painful,' boys and girls?" Still, it *is* Diplomacy, and we do have the seeds for a great match, so I'm enthused as can be. I hope we can give you, the reader, a good show...if not, then I hope we can all flame out like supernovas when it's our turn to get a blade in the back.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE OTHER PLAYERS (WINTER 1900 ruminations)

I'm familiar, in varying degrees, with four players in this game from (golden) ages past:

- Don (Duck) Williams (Russia) is probably one of my oldest hobby fellow travelers...and I have a gazillion dollars in old phone bills to prove it. He and I have gone through many emotional high and low gyrations over this damn game in the past two and a half decades. When we're "on" as a duo, we're invincible. When we're not, we're awful, either together or one of us individually. His Irishness and my Italian-ness and OUR competitiveness sometimes lends itself to bad karma...sometimes. But they say that, if you break a bone, it heals even stronger. That is how I'd describe our gaming and personal histories over time. If there ever is someone I implicitly trust when he gives his word in a Dip game, he's the guy. Over the years – to me, anyway – I always sensed that he had a sort of inferiority complex, always talking about how good all the *other* players in the hobby are. I get the sense that he feels he's as good as anyone else (and he is, in my books) but that he doesn't get the recognition that some other "name" people do, and so these games are a way to somehow "prove" his skill. So this game may be his big stage to get the marquee lights on his name. We'll see...if so, I plan on being his best supporting actor.

Melinda Holley (Italy) is another compatriot that I go back years with. She's got a streak of the old Kathy Byrne Caruso in her, i.e., slice-'em-and-dice-'em, so I don't want to be forced to rely on her toward the end-game if we're neck-and-neck. She's just too dang good. As a person, she is a tremendous lady, and as a player, she's equally tremendous – which may cause some grief in the later-game stages if I don't line my (ahem) "Duck(s)" in line...

Buz Eddy (France) is a legend, but more for the social aspects of the game than for success in playing it, as he himself admits. Still, we're talking decades of The Hobby residing in my Gallic neighbor to the West, and I intend to include him in everything I do here. At least until he has to be stabbed, should it come to that. I'd love for him to win this, in all seriousness.

Bill Quinn (England) is our resident dentist and someone I played a few times. I don't remember much about him (I don't remember much beyond *last week*, let alone the 80s) other than he's like a Volvo: not flashy, yet solid, dependable, driven, and professional to a point.

The other two players are complete ciphers to me, but from what I've gathered so far...

Steve Cooley (Austria) says people call him, "the Poor Man's Mark Fassio," so I guess that makes me "The Rich Man's Steve Cooley." <g> I've read his articles on the web and had a good initial note swap with him. He is indeed quite a lot like me in that he likes early, aggressive action in tandem with allies, and isn't afraid to conduct multiple stabs to keep the OpsTempo in his favor. A dangerous neighbor if were not friends....and a Fassio Tenet is to ALWAYS "take out the strongest player first." Dum da dum dum.....

Vince Lutterbie (Turkey) seems like a nice guy as well, and I know of his rep from the hobby. He may be another Quinn-like "Volvo" with a spoiler and a souped-up engine. I need to find out more about both these sharks. As this game progresses, I'll expand upon my views of them. I always try to "personality profile" my foes in these games, to know what technique works best, and what moves can (and can't) be tried against them. I do know that I will probably be the one of the more voluble and tenacious correspondents (my personal strong point in this game of communication); I've already written to all the players – some only twice, some up to 6 e-mails – in the first couple weeks since we've started, with varying degrees of reply back to me. If you don't write, you're an early target, in my books.

OVERALL GERMAN GAME-PLAN, WINTER 1900:

I am a gambling, cut-and-slash player when it comes to opening moves. While the game has innumerable permutations due to player personality, there tends to be similar strategies and openings, done by generally conservative players making "sure bets" in the early game. I always seek to change that equation with bold openers, knowing – as the Germans discovered in 1939-1940 and the Allies in 1944-45 – that keeping a foe perpetually off-balance and reactive is the best way to impose your will and improve your chances for success. As such, I have chosen ITALY (I) and RUSSIA (R) as my initial two allies, and have proposed a radical opening called the SWAT. (See the hyperlinked article at http://webspaces.webring.com/people/bd/diplomacy_world/journal/swat.htm for a nice discussion of the idea.) The approach is basically a "three-on-one" assault on a mutual neighbor (here, Austria), to gut him right off the bat, make all three of us equally strong, and then, as the Archduke is trying to stanch his blood loss, turn rapidly on Turkey and England at the same time. The idea is to vaporize Steve quickly, isolate a strong, defensible Turk from any succor, and allow France and I to take on England and give Russia time to "come to the rescue" as well up there. The SWAT is a devastating plan if implemented 100% by all three allies, and I know it would take the board by storm and get past even the mid-game stalemate lines by 1902. The danger, of course, is keeping the genie under control once released from the bottle and making sure you're not the next victim! That's the gamble one takes with radical moves; hopefully I'm up to the task.

Still 7 April 2010

*"Francisco Franco is Still Dead"**

(*Old 1975 SNL skit with Chevy Chase at the SNL news desk)

YAWN. "Diplomacy is still dead." Here we are, with due date in 11 days, and I have still received nothing in the last week and a half from anyone. I gave some thought about why us old guys sometimes fade away and/or see the current iteration of the hobby as irrelevant -- an aged diva who no longer sings well or looks good. And I see it here: enthusiasm lacking for even the modicum of effort required for a good Demo Game of Diplomacy. That being said, it IS only Winter 1900, and if anyone can rekindle the flames of competitiveness for the readership to see in this game, it's this group. I think the silence is a natural two-point issue: point (a), we all communicated earlier and have sort of "set the cement" to cure and form our plans, so nothing is really needed yet for a follow-on, and (b) we're also 20+ years older, and we have families, real-world concerns, and have learned to triage in a different way (i.e., no more "Dip first, Life second"). Of course, there could be a point (c): no one's writing ME because I'm the first to be set upon. I try to ignore point (c) whenever possible. Hopefully I'll be pleasantly surprised and receive floodgates of letters before the Second Coming; right now it's problematic which will occur first.

Germany's plan for Spring 1901:

1. Alliance with France and have him open anti-England. Buz says he's doing it and heading to Channel and PIC. Be still, my beating heart!
2. Alliance with I/R against Austria. Steve actually asked me to open to TYO if I suspect Italian perfidy. I'm going to pretend I do, and open there while Ita opens to TYO and Rus opens to GAL...thus making myself indispensable to "friend Austria" for this overt I/R alliance that's "manifested itself" as a "threat to us all" ...and then I'm going to join the vultures and stab him rotten. I also want to keep Italy focused East vs Turkey, to deny Austria help and to allow Buz to get strong(er) and stay allied with me, so those two can fight amongst themselves later.
3. Alliance with Russia, for the long(er) term. Help him and Melinda now, convince her that I'm the one that I/R will absorb later (while Don and I plan to do the same to her). Then have Don move North and help F/G vs England. If we can neuter the two Wicked Witches while puncturing the Archduke's lines, then the (*Isosceles*) *Triangle of Evil* will run a hypotenuse through Petersburg-Berlin-Paris, then a leg to Rome and back to Mother Russia again.

The Fall plan will be expanded after the Spring moves manifest themselves, but for now my intent is:

1. Get Buz with me vs NTH Sea and/or into BEL, to continue his war vs Quinn.
2. Get Don to NWY ASAP, as I'll have shown my hand to TWO foes (E and A/H) in two turns...Germany bringing on two-front war upon herself, once again.
3. Get two builds for me and begin Sea Lion while the Balkans gyrate on their own.

3 MAY 2010
GERMAN PLANS IN 'GERMINATION', FALL 1901

Am typing this after the lackluster Penguins let their playoff series get tied 1-1, so I'll keep this short unless my Tourette's Syndrome starts to *&^%#\$\$\$ up out of frustration.

For now, I am hoping to get Buz redirected back toward leaving MUN (and BUR) alone and heading off vs. Bill. If Quinn grabs BRE, my whole balancing act in the West starts to unravel, and that weakens Buz and creates a back-door threat for Melinda, whom I've pretty much committed to for the short-term in trying to level Austria. Hopefully Buz is "in" with accepting my support to MUN, which should, if he defends BRE, give him 2 and Quinn at +1 only. Quinn will be PO'd, I know, but he's too good a player to be left unchecked, and I don't want Buz wiped out and him growing to unmanageable proportions.

Big concern this interim period is which way the Turk goes. If he hits Austria, Steve goes under in about three turns. But if he allies with Steve in Austria, then I look to see two fleets in his coastal provinces, with him taking GRE, not Steve, and Cooley using his pieces to try and regain TRI. Then it's a whole new affair. Don is hopefully going to keep RUM and get GAL, but if I'm an A/T, I look to simultaneously neuter their perceived R/I threat by forcing Melinda to build two defensive fleets to counter their soon-to-be-three, AND at the same time, maybe taking a stab (no pun intended) at SEV or RUM and wishing away the problems to VIE and BUD. If I'm Steve, I get Germany to help him and then I try and work over RUM and check his eastern threat, so he can "bunker down" in the Balkans with Turkey's backing. But hey, what do I know? I thought the (*&!@@@ Penguins would beat the Canucks today.

More when the moves come out. For now, in a nutshell:

- Friendly with France, supporting him to BEL
- Neutral (unfriendly neutral) with England
- Lie through my teeth to Austria as a friend while...
- Trying to take VIE and help Italy reduce him before
- The Turk shows his probable pro-Austrian hand

16 May 2010
THE WINTER OF OUR ~~DIS~~-CONTENT...err, CONTENTMENT
Germany, Post-Fall 1901

Well, from a hockey standpoint, no Stanley Cup Chase for the Pens this year, after choking versus those Canadiens. Ratfarts. As for this game, however, everything I wanted came to fruition. All the moves I scripted to F/I/R went off as desired! Austria, though suspicious, was caught off-guard and stayed even with my grab of VIE. France did indeed "heave to" and go against England, with the two of them now hopefully locked into internecine fighting for years to come. Turkey pulled a Munich 1938 (or perhaps more of a 1940 Phony War) and hunkered down into nothingness, allowing Russia to dance around Austrian defenses and stay solvent with his builds. Italy and I stayed true and she supported me to Vienna. Oh yeah, and I got 3 as well -- but that's beside the point. For one thing, no one likes a 6-center Germany in 1901, and second, I'm hopelessly out of position. Cooley got it right when he wrote me and said that against competent opponents, my moves would be suicidal or stupidly rash...his implication, being, I guess, that Buz, Bill, Don and Melinda (and me?) are all incompetent opponents...or maybe it's just me.

The thing he isn't cognizant of right now, of course, is that this was an R/I/G "SWAT" arrangement that I've orchestrated since Winter 1900. I'm thinking he suspects me of nothing more than being a Mussolini-like jackal who succumbed to Axis Greed near a drowning neighbor, and only jumped his bones as opportunity arose -- as opposed to one of three (not two) who've been planning his demise since I planned this strategy. If he knew that, he might not be so hard on all the other neighbors.

As I mentioned, this is probably going to be my "best" season as far as arranging things and having them work out. My plan was to isolate the Witches, put multiple enemies on Austria, and secondarily, on England -- and that's been done. If I can succeed in keeping the heat on Eng (by R/F) and Austria (by RIG), then 1902 will be equally good. But if you look at 1902 as the sequel to a great 1901 blockbuster, the sequel's never as good. We'll see what transpires...more after the builds are announced on the 29th.

In sum:

Arrows up (good things):

1. SWAT vs Austria succeeded very well
2. Buz and Bill occupied and fighting – and away from me
3. Russia and Italy each go +2 and us in position for SWAT Year 2

Arrows down (potentially bad):

1. Buz with builds; where does he go?
2. Potential dragging out of the Balkan War. If Turkey allies with Austria and hits Don, then he is on the defensive and I/G are facing a wall to try and help him
3. Germany with three builds and surrounded by friends....how do I get past them to fight E/A?
4. Am I the next crème filling in an R/I Oreos?

German desires for Winter 1901 and Spring 1902:

1. France builds 1-and 1 and continues west and north vs England (POR, setting up convoys, staying away from me, etc)
2. England fights with France and tries to get Don to hit me in DEN with him
3. Russia suckers England into a fake DEN “alliance option” while he (Russia) builds 1-and 1 and heads North with both, knocking England out of Nwy
4. Italy builds the two fleets and gains the ION and ADR
5. R/I/G work on a mutual plan to crush SER and BUD in 1902, hopefully with Turkey as a loyal subaltern instead of a recalcitrant Austrian supporter

Mark is an incredibly good Diplomacy player, well in the top 10 of people I’ve ever been involved with. But great players sometimes try to do too many impossible things before breakfast, and Mark tries to do that here. Anschluss connections between Austria and Germany are incredibly strong in this game, you break them at your peril. Mark created his own peril.

22-24 May 10

The Wicket Gets Sticky

Clausewitz said, “No plan survives contact with the enemy,” but he could’ve added, “or your allies” as well. My plan for a third fleet build (F BER) is meeting huge resistance from Don, with Melinda trying to mediate (more to Don’s side). Both of them want me to defer the third build in the event I need an army and Buz or Bill turn on me. Don is especially paranoid – in his warped view, with supposedly good reason – that I’ll make him the next target, and not Quinn, given his fairly open access routes from BAL to SIL. My big issues, after some reflection, are twofold:

1. I wish they would finally TRUST me to see this thing through. I was the one who tried to architect the SWAT on Austria, and I think I can read a board well enough to know what to build, and when, without them fearing every time I pop out an idea that seems “risky.” The whole INTENT of building rashly and “looking dangerous” to Russia is precisely for that reason. In one turn I will lie – for the second straight time—to Turkey and England. Both of them will never look to me for valid info again, and bridges will be burned. And that’s ok, as long as they pay the price from my hand and that of my allies – the sledgehammer can replace the verbal rapier once we get into position. But geez Louise, my Allies are walking on eggshells and I feel like I’m charging the bunker with my team still hunkering in the foxholes.
2. The other thing I’ve discovered is that my shelf-life (attention span) for doing this type of stuff again is, well, just about over. I could give a s**t if I get killed, and I have no killer instinct to stab anyone other than E and A. In essence, once I stab my two chosen enemies, I’m surrounded by friends whom I have no desire to stab. As I told Don, I don’t need to be Mick Jagger, proving to the younger generation that he’s still ‘got it’ while touring at 87 years old. My plan was to prove the viability of the SWAT (done); to see if I still have the ol’ negotiation savvy (well, for 1901 I do, anyway), and to link up with decades-old partners and maybe let them have a thrill at winning (pending). This is a disconcerting outlook, however, for it either dooms me to be a pending Care-Bear victim, or forces me to recharge the batteries and become a stab-happy fool again to expand beyond the confines of friends. I probably shouldn’t have signed up for this, in retrospect. Ah well...water under the bridge, which I’m burning from underneath me as I speak. <g>

30 May 2010

Sturm und Drang

I just returned from a tremendously-successful three-day jaunt to PA...picked up more Steelers gear, visited family, surprised my old college roomie at his retirement party, and even fried myself to a brown crisp in the convertible during an 8-hr return trip in 93* weather.

And THEN I opened the builds and the resulting e-mails. To quote the late Mister Rogers, "Can you say 'aggravated,' boys and girls? Sure you can."

The issue is the aforementioned F BER build. Don seems to think he IS me, in how he can "read me after three decades," and "knew" I'd build the fleet—ergo, his 'retaliatory' build of A WAR. To say I am pissed and white-hot right now would be an understatement. In my admittedly-puny mind, I am maximizing our fleet positioning now versus England, before anyone can gel against the RIG beat-down we're doing...and this camouflage is the first step...well, the LAST one, once England sees me lie to him again. But to Don, it is *Fassio redux* from the 1990s era, and I'm 'obviously' casting lustful eyes toward him. His paranoia – and the verbiage in our e-mails of the last two days—has resurrected the age-old love-hate teamwork of we two—well, the hate part, anyway. When we're on and seeing eye-to-eye, we are unstoppable. When he doubts or I push (or vice versa), grief sets in, followed by temper, followed by pique, followed by useless wastes of time (and forces) when we SHOULD be killing our foes. That came tonight when I opened his e-mails. Apparently I'm now untrustworthy, and, by implication, he 'knew' what I was intending all along, and that this is a rational counter-build by him.

Right; *Army Warsaw...really smart build against England*, or even against A/T. Hey, maybe it's me. Maybe he's playing with my mind and he's been after me now all along, and just turned my logic back on me. If so, huzzahs for him. Because, dear "diary," it's working if he's trying to alienate an ally and create dissension. Even as I'm working on anti-E/A plans with them, I'm working on a 'self-stab' of me by them to allow them to play this their way, get some centers for their desire for the solo(s), and to negate the abrasiveness they apparently see here in me with my desired builds and options. So GM, if I don't ask to resign soon, you may, just may, see a really spectacular stab of HOL in S'02, with MUN/DEN/VIE and possibly BER going out in Fall. I can have my summer and my non-game life back, and the enraptured readership will be even more slack-jawed with stupefied amazement at this cornucopia of 'stabs.'

Heck, I should write for Hollywood.

4 June 2010

"Doctor Kevorkian, Please Report to Germany; Dr Kevorkian"

E-mails are flying today about John Boardman going to an assisted living center. There seems to be a LoveFest for the old crank because he founded the first DipZine, and sincere kudos to him for doing that. But turning to the Dark Side: for about three years, because he disagreed with my outlooks, I was on the receiving end of dozens of *monthly* packaged clippings he sent me from crackpot NYC media outlets – over 30 packets with dozens of items, denigrating the armed forces and its leadership, containing his very cruel marginalia about dead servicemen or their ideals, and casting aspersions on me personally as well. I was also the only "(U)ncomplimentary" listed subber in his rag. While he may be a Dip Ghod, as a person I *find* him a Dip: intolerant, mean-spirited, and just plain overbearing in the main. So today, dear Dip Diary, the only thing I want to know is when and where to send flowers.

I'm sure some of the old gamers who grew up in the halcyon days of the 60s will take umbrage at my 'cruel words' and stick up for this "pioneer of the hobby" through thick and thin...but they always lived in a fantasy world of orcs and dragons anyway. If he were Hitler his admirers would say how much good he did for the country in the '30s, even if he was "a little bad" on aggression, and that whole Jewish thing. Pah; try enduring three years of unasked-for spite every month just because he wanted to push his views across, and see if the bile doesn't rise. God help the staff of his residence.

Speaking of "dead," I have no heart(beat) left for this game – and after only three months of self-injected enthusiasm; a new record! This non-interest level is obviously affecting my outlook for the remainder of this game. Whatever spark I hoped this game would ignite in my smoldering Diplomacy embers failed to light, and I have this messy, smelly ash that just sits there. I want to resign, but I promised I'd play. Apparently the GM can't find 7 breathing old people who can commit to this, and, because I said I'd play (and because I hate to renege on anything), I'll see this thing through. But, to quote Frank Sinatra, I'll be able to look back and say, "I did it...my way." I'll also be able to tick off a few people on the way out, so there are some fringe benefits to this. <wicked grin>

I plan on vacating as many centers as possible in spring, with the ostensible appearance of fighting vs Bill and/or Don....then, come fall, I expect to see MUN, VIE, DEN and BER vaporized. If there's a way I can get HOL and/or KIE to go as well, more's the better! This move should make R/I sit atop the heap on the board, but also set up Buz for a good

defense (I have a soft spot for the old warrior in my heart, and even now am trying to find ways to get him a few centers as well.) Time will tell how well this works; heck, I could die before Cooley! And because no enemy suspects this option, I'll be the brunt of uninformed commentary about what a Dip buffoon I am, and how my skill is non-existent. Ah, if only I felt this enthused about *continuing*. Ah, if only someone would *write* after three-plus weeks of, well, "non-communication." So much for a corresponding 'showcase' game.

1 July 2010

Hold up there, Dr. Kevorkian!!

Last week a player sent an e-mail to the board, basically lambasting the lack of comms this game (agreed – writing has been abysmal, just like in other recent games. It's a dying art, IMO). In closing, he then sniffed (figuratively) and said that he knew Diplomacy, that this game wasn't it, and that even if he was going out this game, he had won more tourneys than all of us put together, so it was all ok. Wow. At that point, the Give-a-Shit Meter for my view of him officially dropped to "0" and the vision of a bespectacled 8-year old Nerdmeister in shorts and white socks, huffy because he lost at something he wasn't supposed to, came into my brain. Not a pretty sight. I gave him a link to some articles and enlightened him that this really is "diplomacy" – but that some others stopped talking to their target, basically...and that would be him.

His complaint – the one that he stated regarding "non-communication" – echoed mine. That complaint -- and the inference I "read into" about the disdain he feels for our treatment toward him this game have, at least for tonight, re-energized me. I have broken out my Bernie Oaklyn bubblegum cards, lit a candle in front of my wall-size poster of Edi Birsan, re-read all 4,365,974 issues of TAP, and am now prepared to stab my neighbors rotten while I continue to play this thing through – lest I become just another bitter cast-off from this Demo Game. I mean, heck, my ego's ok and all that, but still.....me? Bitter? Emotional? Naaaaah.

Hmmm...maybe it's *not* others' comments that are energizing me...maybe it's the 400 glasses of iced tea I drank to stay awake during the 11-hour ride back from South Carolina....well, whatever it is, I've written Turkey and Italy and asked them, bluntly, about stabbing Russia. I've rebounded from 0% desire to stay in this game to at least a 50-50 shot. We'll see how I feel after the iced tea wears off, and after the inevitable volley of replies to replies to replies of the reply to...you get the picture. If I still feel gung-ho, I'll stay in and try to fend off R and/or E, and work to wean Italy and Turkey from Russia. (I have visions of attacking BUD, RUM and WAR this Fall. Ah, perchance to dream!) But if I wake up logical tomorrow, I'll realize that these periodic, herpes-like flare-ups for Dip are no way to play a long-term Demo game, and I'll revert back to the planned Supply Center Fire Sale. Decisions, decisions.....more to come after the retreat season for Austria.

2 July 2010

Back from the Abyss(?)

Well, I did wake up (obviously) and I decided to write the gamers and tell them I'm gutting it out...if they want my centers, they'll have to pry them from my cold dead fingers as they remove their blades from my over-exposed back. It's not right to suicide out in a Demo game, and heck – none of these buzzards (except the Oldest Buz-zard) deserves 'em, and he's abstaining. I credit that June e-mail with re-motivating me. (And, in retrospect, its author really is a good guy, just emotional at times – like me. I have therefore raised my Give-A-Shit Opinion Meter level to "ok.")

Some commentators (and players) have mentioned how dumb my *anti-Anschluss* strategy would be against "competent" opponents, and pretty much said I'm next to die. If for no other reason than trying to dig myself out of the hole I just made (by withdrawing from my front lines in preparation for suiciding out before my change of heart), I'm going to try and prove them wrong... and that, dear reader, is going to be one tough row to hoe. So, kamikaze-like, I've donned my ritual Blue Oyster Cult headband (from their 2006 tour) and climbed into my Zero for the inevitable death ride against the foe. If I can hold out, great; if not, someone's going down in flames with me.

Game-plan for the Fall will be pretty obvious:

1. Ascertain Don's standing. If Russia is now united with England and/or Turkey, then it's imperative Melinda, Buz and I stay together and face them on all fronts. If Don's with us (G/I) for another turn or so, Quinn is dead meat, as he won't build and may actually lose one. Russian intentions are crucial this turn coming. I know Don has some family health issues that are genuinely concerning, and this may keep him distracted. If he's after me, that's good, because when he's distracted he usually NMRs or plays a sub-optimal turn. But if he's with us, it's not good, and I need to get some answers soon.

Note to self: In all honesty, I'm deluding myself. Don's non-hit of NWY last turn – when he said he would take it and after I hit NTH to ensure he'd take it – pretty much was signal #1 that he wasn't with me any

longer. Building WAR and invading PRU was signal #2. I guess I'm getting blinder as I get older, because the obvious signals are not sinking in, and I keep hoping he'll come back to the fold.

2. Continue to sound the alarm to Vince about how the Turk is next in the R/I Grand Scheme of Balkan Isolation, Encirclement, and Reduction. If Vince would turn on Don and move to ARM while attacking RUM, Don's southern position would be jeopardized. If R/T unite (with or without English help), this is gonna get ugly, BUT: if R/I hit SER, VIE and BUL, they will rule the board and G/T become the next two victims.
3. Wean Melinda from Don as well, and offer to give her VIE if she supports me to BUD against Don. This would be a visible sign of support and, if BUD fell, would probably keep Don even as well. The fact that she and Don rarely write me with moves suggestions or discussions – leaving me to be the one to write joint “ally notes” and propose the moves – should be signal #3 that she, too, is after me. You'd think I'd learn not to trust those two after all these years.
4. Continue to encourage Buz to hit ENG, cover BRE (double-bounce to keep it open for his fleet gain from POR in Fall), and have him be the main catalyst vs Quinn. At this stage, Buz is my only true ally and friend.
5. Renegotiate with Bill on the side. He is shut out from centers as long as G/R stand firm. If Don sides with him, he has a chance at taking DEN, but not a good one. For me, I need to steer him North, possibly even giving helping him into SWE just to get Don off my back...won't make Buz happy, but with another French build coming, he can maintain *status quo*, anyway. I just don't know if Quinn will trust me after three game turns of lying to him religiously.

5 July 2010

Paradigm Shift: “Brother, Can You Spare a Paradigm?”

Well, it's official: I've thoroughly misread the ‘friends’ I thought I had, and am now in the process of scrambling to recover and reshape the board. So what else is new?

Since this morning I've been bombarded with notes from Vince, Mr Quiet. It's like he and I had simultaneous epiphanies on the sorry state of dealing with Mr Williams, and we have been scheming all day to try and work out joint ops – including him, me and (drum roll, please), Archduke Cooley. I sent Steve (what I consider to be) a persuasive letter admitting that my experiment went awry, and am trying to play on his pride (not to go out in under two game years without a fight). If he responds and agrees to play on, we could actually shock the board with a new set-up – maybe even keep SER and/or attack TRI or BUD (Vince wants to hit RUM). I mean, Turkey's in a bind: he needs to stay ‘forward’ with his defense and not let the foe have the initiative. But if he does, his entire northern coastline, not to mention SER and BUL, are all in danger. If he covers all his home dots, the foe will walk into the front trenches unscathed. Anyway, I wrote Russia and Italy, whining that they don't share data with me, nor any timely updates, nor anything concrete, and that I hardly see us as allies anymore (there's a reason for that, Captain Freakin' Obvious). Melinda says she doesn't want MUN but also won't hit Vince or Don because she fears the other would make an R/T vs her...yeah, right. I told them the best plan would be for Melinda to take SER with BUD support, and have my VIE support her Tyo-Tri while Ven goes to APU for the convoy coming soon. I hope they agree with that plan, because Vince is after RUM before Rum/Bla can take BUL. It'll be a case of which dog bites the other dog's tail first. (Would be a hoot to see Cooley live and stay with 2, just to make the R/I quake a little.)

Also wrote England and told him I'd agree to his request for SWE this Fall, and would even ask Buz to lay off. I then wrote Buz and told her to keep pressing, but do it at Impulse Power, not Warp speed, and to consider building in MAR this fall, to keep Melinda from having a totally free hand.

Note how smoothly Fassio takes us through all this... Ghod, the man is amazing!!! Now he is about to comment on me, and my opinion of him. I am not the greatest Diplomacy player, since I spend TOO much time playing the game and not enough time playing THE GAME.

Burgess has me pegged spot-on this game with his personality profile. Now, let the record state: I have NO regrets for unleashing the SWAT Experiment. It worked beyond my wildest dreams and I got to at least see the valley floor from my mountaintop for one game year. And with anyone else in Russia besides Williams, I think I'd be top dog right now and we'd be crushing the Witches -- and then picking off any stragglers after them. But the on-again, off-again dealings I alluded to earlier with Don rose to the surface -- my emotions caused me to have a rift with him (his usual self pushed the usual wrong buttons, and I responded in the usual exacerbating way). And my style of play isolates the people I deem to

become the chosen dead, because I basically see no need to encourage to the dead and dying...yet now, these are the very same people I need to keep on life support (or raise from the dead) in order to save my miscalculating skin.

I like Mark's play, in great part, BECAUSE it is so emotional, some people are just way too analytical.... Or boring.

Well, right now there's enough opportunity for everyone to grab something: Quinn a sure gain (SWE) instead of an iffy one (DEN); Melinda for a center (in her eyes), while Cooley and/or Lutterbie can keep SER (I want to hit BUD and cut any support for a TRI-SER move)...and even Buz continues to build...only I have the danger of losing more than anyone. Guess wrong and I could be out MUN, BER and/or DEN, as well as VIE. If I were R/I, I'd definitely take me out next.

So, game plan for Fall 1902:

1. Become friends with England: Support Ska-Swe with BAL
2. Stay friends with France: ask him to build MAR, keep attacking Quinn, and request he move Bel-Ruh to help me retake MUN in case Melinda gets it.
3. Attack Russia (go for WAR and risk the bounce and a build for him there? Or to GAL and then make trouble with Vince and Steve against him?)
4. Try to wean Italy from Russia. I can't go into specifics about the big TAG attack, lest she spill the beans to Don. But I need to tell her so she can feel empowered to hit Russia knowing everyone else is, too
5. Pray. Depending how I move, I either stay close to home and cover MUN, BER and DEN (and something could fall for lack of enough units). Conversely, I gamble and go to the limit and hope that Don blinks first and covers WAR; that Melinda is truthful and doesn't hit MUN; and that Quinn goes for SWE and not DEN. Heck, why don't I also gamble that I'll win the PowerBall two nights in a row, too?
6. Start praying now. And start drinking as well.

7 July 2010

Drinking More Than Praying

There's that old saying about, "You reap what you sow," and I feel like the Poster Child for a whirlwind of disaster. I wrote about 12 notes yesterday (most of them admittedly small affairs to Vince, but also long and introspective ones to nearly every player). Melinda wrote back and flat-out lied to me (surprise!) regarding Turkey and the R/I intended game plan. Don of course hasn't written again, despite his propensity to call allies in this and other games and chat for hours on the phone—so I guess that tea leaf is pretty easy to read as well. Buz is silent, but he's sporadic in letters anyway, so that's ok. Steve is silent, so he's either pausing for effect (to make his tormentors sweat while he pontificates a decision) or he could care less about the PBM "experiment," as he labels it, and has destroyed his radio receiver. Bummer so far. England is also an exasperation right now. I've told him three times that SWE is his and I'll support him; even wrote Buz to try and calm him down and not attack Bill, so he'd feel ok joining vs Don. Instead I got three replies from him, castigating me for previous lies (fair enough), and asking if he should be foolish enough to trust me again.

Sigh. And I thought people realized Dip changes allies faster than Madonna changes underwear.

Well golly, let's see, Bill: we can band together and take Don down a peg, and all breathe easier, with England guaranteed SWE if you side with me. Or you can gamble 50-50 with Don that 3 of yours beats 3 of mine vs DEN...and also gamble that I don't hit NTH with two while Buz hits channel and forces you to do nothing but circle the fleets forever. Hmm...let me see...decisions, decisions.....for whatever reason, I don't trust him either; I smell the very capable organizational force of the Duck behind all this, convincing people that Fassio is the next most dangerous man on the board after Cooley and that now's the time to take me down. He'd probably "sell" that to a very gullible audience. Curse that 3-build 1901 season.

Game-plan remains the same as yesterday, but with a much tougher negotiation in convincing France that I'm still anti-Eng while convincing England that he should be anti-Russian. And then there's that matter of how to guess right so as to not lose MUN to Melinda, BER to Don, DEN to Bill/Don, and how to split Vienna into three parts so it can support itself from all sides. Um...yeah. Barkeep, another margarita!

Introspective end-note: interesting to have experienced the gamut of emotions toward playing again -- which have ranged from extreme exhilaration at the beginning to abject apathy recently, and now back to being focused and determined -- and all at only the three-month anniversary point! Kind of weird, that. I mean, "back in the day" I'd be in

the thick of a PBM game for 2, 3, sometimes 4 real-time years and never think twice about it. (Cue song: "Those were the days my friend // we thought they'd never end...") I just find it ironic (and self-damning) that now that my head's finally on regarding this game and I want to try and do well, a coalition is about to exit me prematurely. (Cue Alanis Morissette song: "Isn't it ironic // don't cha' think? // a little tooo ironic // and yeah, I really do think")

8 July 2010

Cue the Dave Mason song: "We Just Disagree"

More or less tried to smooth over contentious outlooks with one of the players yesterday and today...sent an e-mail and asked that all communication between us stop for this game, lest we wreck previous dealings. That, I fear, is already a done deal. Rubicon crossed, bridges burned.

9-11 July 2010

All In; Deal the Hand

OK, we're about where we need to be for this Fall turn.

AUSTRIA, while not committing to anything official, is at least interested and reviewing options – he's overdue in responding, but hey, let's be real: if I was busy in real life, plus shat upon by the same guys now asking me to save their skins, and I was down to 1 or 2, how much enthusiasm would I have to immediately reply? The mere fact that he didn't tell Vince and I to 'rot off' is encouragement enough! I have faith in Steve; he's tenacious.

TURKEY has moves in and, while I think he should strike West with Steve vs TRI or ION, is instead desiring to cover centers (logical enough) and attack RUM. Don should see through this veneer, especially as Vince has been talking to Melinda and dropping hints that he wants an alliance with her vs Russia. Still, he's "in" and working to smack the Bear's nose as well.

ENGLAND is in as well, or so I'm hoping. After the aforementioned exchange of doubting letters, he'll take the SWE support but wants me to call off Buz. Again. If all goes well I'll keep DEN and he'll remove Russia from SWE.

FRANCE, on paper to E/G, agrees to the Western Triple, thus appeasing Bill. In backchannel communications, however, he is focused -- fixated, dare I say – against England. This will ONLY bring damage to the entire West, but for some reason, it doesn't bother me. I will need to marshal my skills to keep 40% of England vs Russia, with me, while helping his other 60% fight Buz ... even as I try to send a fraction of Buz to cover his exposed flank down south. Speaking of...

ITALY got my last letter during her bed-rest for strep throat. Hopefully it gave her a headache as well, for I exaggerated (grossly exaggerated) the anti-Don and potential anti-Melinda coalition if she doesn't change her evil ways...baby (cue the *Santana* song) and fight with us vs. Don. Am asking her for a piddly support to BUD and will "ensure" Buz doesn't hair-trigger attack her from behind (yeah, right). She hasn't sent me one detailed tactics letter since 1901, so I expect she's so far in Don's camp that there's no hope of weaning her away. Still, mind games and PSYOPS have to come into play to keep her jumpy and/or unfocused....and to pass along the same to...

RUSSIA. I can only hope that he gets distracted like in many of his other games and becomes his alter-ego, DoNMR Williams. With an active GM, however, I don't see that happening. If my situation doesn't pan out, my money's on him to win this outright; Melinda and Bill are just following the Pied Piper.

I'm going to hope that I guessed right on a 1:1 bounce in DEN and that there's no R/E. Then I sent notes out that I was considering WAR and/or SIL. Don should, hopefully, try to anticipate bouncing me in WAR to get another army next to me from his Fall builds. I'm hoping that, by actually playing defensive for once in my life, that I'll outguess him and deny him the open center. Ditto for Melinda and MUN. Heck, it's all a crap-shoot at this stage. I've got two pair, A/Ts and E/Fs, Ace High, and am trying to bluff two players with better hands. Let's see if the River Card is another Ace in the Hole for me.

14 July 2010

Dancing on the Head of a Pin

Am trying to keep the PSYOPS campaign alive vs Melinda, keep Bill in the camp, and let Buz be Buz. Italy wrote back with what was probably her second best letter – with tactics and questions! – and told me she'd jump Don with us

if (a) I could keep Buz from building in MAR and (b) if Buz wouldn't turn East. I can't tell her that both are already ok, because she might tip off Bill, who might then suspect G/F collusion and turn on me, and on and on. I asked her why she's so afraid of an R/T when we both "know" Vince is after Don. She is truly afraid of an R/T (more of T than R, I guess – kind of hard for Don to attack her from only a dislodged BUD, especially if he's under siege all along the board)...either that, or she's just stalling and trying to glean nuggets from me on what is specifically going to happen, so she can warn Don. I gave her the 11th hour clarion call one last time, but I expect nothing to come from it. Ah, if only Buz would let Quinn along for 1-2 turns and build in MAR! T/A would have less pressure facing them, Melinda might actually want to deal to alleviate a threat, and Bill could focus on crushing Don with me. Buz, Buz...a loyal, fixated ally at a time when fluidity is required. Ah well, *c'est la guerre*.

22 July 2010
The Week in Review

There has been a dearth of recent e-mail (gosh, not much e-mail this game? You're kidding!), so I went picking blackberries yesterday in the hopes my wife will whip up another of her great pies. If she doesn't, I'll at least have humble pie – and crow! – to complement my meal after some premature predictions from last week's ruminations. Granted, I could be lied to (and if so, they did a darn fine job of it), but I heard back from England – still going after SWE and is 'with me' – and (drum roll, PLEASE!) Melinda of Italy! She says she's with me and will support me to BUD (while, of course, relieving me of VIE as I exit the place). If she's telling the truth, Russia could be facing the loss of 2, depending what he does versus Turkey. If Melinda's spoofing me, I don't want to know for the next two days...I just want to savor the ambiance of the Russian, possibly stewing in his own juices.

Mark is always THE most aggressive communicator in every game he's in. It is a shame other people can't keep up with him. Or maybe it's not. Just get the deliciousness of this... and what happens next...

The only foul smell from that thought is from (gasp) the Turk! Vince had me thinking he and Steve were teaming up and that he was after RUM. Now he says Cooley's never written back (true; he never did review the board and reply to my three joint ATG notes), and that means he (Vince) is after GRE to stay solvent and possibly build. Now, if he's after Don and is making some defensive moves as well, that's ok. If he's been a big fibber and is working an active R/T, then his country is anathema to me. The silver lining to any sneakiness on his part: it should tie Melinda in closer to me, as any Juggernaut with those two sharks is bound to force us closer together.

Slight Disappointment Award goes to Austria. For someone who complained about no one writing, and how this was some preordained sham of a game, he's not been very communicative toward anyone, and has only sent back two friendly, "I'll look at the options soon" type notes, i.e., no meaty comments. Granted, we still have 2 days before deadline, but Turkey's already tuned him out and is after him full-bore in GRE. We coulda been contendahs, coach....

Quite the turnabout this week: one ally earlier going after Don (Tur) is not; one former enemy (Ita) supposedly now is. Film at 11, I guess.

24 July 2010
Punk'ed, Chumped, and Dumped

Well, using the "all in at the poker table" analogy from two weeks ago, I suppose a better subtitle for this entry would be "bluffed and busted." Every alliance I thought I'd worked on to break up and/or stop the R/I came out to be one big (bowel) movement against me instead. Two centers lost, three enemies besieging me, and four remaining units to defend a nine-province front. Even a bad Math student like me can solve that equation. I suspect I have, if I make a guessing game and a hard fight of it, two game years left-- a far cry from the heady days of Winter 1901!

England has written me twice in two days, both times telling me he didn't want "stung by the scorpion" if he helped me cross the river (Aesopian Fable, I believe) and then added that he'd be glad to have me remove HOL and HEL and be the "picket fence" between R/I and him while he turned on Buz. Color me stupid, but removing two pieces from the rear of a guy who won't trust me or let me grow, and who needs centers immediately, is probably not the most logical option. Of course, options are few and far between at this stage. I can 'ally' with him (and wait for the second knife thrust), try and fight all three (and die), or some sort of combination – and still die. I think I'll just turn on Bill and tell him so, offering to have peace if he leaves DEN...otherwise, I'll fight him and allow the others to swamp me, to his ultimate detriment. At this stage, the suicide out threat is about the only game in town for me. And if that does happen, then maybe letting Don grow to Hubristic Proportions and scaring Melinda and Bill, I can effect some small amount of revenge as they send flowers to MY grave. I want them to realize I wasn't the only one to make bonehead moves this game.

Realistically, I don't expect to be writing to many of the remaining people on the board. I normally write everyone, every season, because no position is hopeless if there's options and a desire to make it work. 'Old' Faz would be sending two or three pleading and whiny letters to each of my tormentors right now, trying to make an 11th hour deal with the Devil to save myself. But, like Austria, I feel like I've been led by the nose the entire game and, now that my neck's in the noose, no one's realistically going to let up on me -- so why waste time? (Quick, someone: call the Waaaaahm-bulance. Faz is feeling bad!)

As I don't care about the game as much as the others, it's probably fitting that they just take me out. As such, this will probably be one of my last "meaty" diary entries before I send the whole novella of tripe to Doug. So while I have the time and desire, let's take the title from *The Best of Buffalo Springfield* CD and do a "Retrospective."

AND, HERE is where I want to chime in a few times as well.

Here are a few things that are painfully obvious to me:

1. After eight years of not playing Dip, I'm so rusty that a bath in WD-40 couldn't save me. I either don't see the moves a turn out, or else my "spider sense" does indeed tingle to warn me of danger, but I ignore it -- or else I'm too slow to react. It's like the aging Western gunfighter who's a little slow on his draw...with obvious results. I guess it's also how 35-year old football receivers feel when they're trying to run routes; not the same as when you're 25. I never did run pass patterns well, and I'm sure not 25 any more.

Well, maybe, but *I*** don't think so. As I was watching it, it seemed that you just tried a bit too hard.**

2. As someone who always tries to personality-profile my enemies to get inside their decision cycles and outlooks, I myself was effectively "profiled," which is an offhand tribute to my foes. Of course, playing against all but two of these people for the past two or three decades, it wasn't too hard for my foes to know what buttons to push, what to look and wait for, and how to "steer" me to my own destruction -- aided in no small part by my own emotions. Heck, if even Jim-Bob Burgess can ID my weaknesses, I'm pretty darn predictable. Too. Darn. Predictable. And while I also knew what made my foes tick, I go back to para 1, above, and realize I didn't have fast enough reflexes to address it....or else I had the outlook in #3, below:

Hey, well I have studied pretty much everything Mark Fassio has done in the hobby, with relish. That I "got it" shouldn't surprise people. Maybe Don got it, but I don't think others did, this is overthinking with a bullet.

3. I wasted my time with this game. The more I think about Steve's comments, the more I think he's right. As I understand it, he was mad that this game was, in essence, an "experiment" done by a small cabal (RIG) to see if the SWAT could work, and, in essence, pre-ordaining how much he'd (not) be written to, and how (non-) truthful those few letters would be. In essence, he was a beta test for the opening moves, without any of the benefits that would come from discussion and scheming. I see the same thing with me, only not on such a large scale. I signed up for this game -- wrongly, I admit -- after initially hesitating to expend time and energy when I had better things to do. I did it because some friends suggested it, and at first, it really did sound neat. I mean, after 34 years of playing Dip with some real pros, why wouldn't it sound good? And this was (is) a good idea created by Doug, it really is; he just got stuck with the wrong actor for Germany.

My big mistake was thinking I would work with Don to try and sweep the board 17-17, and revert back to (surprise!) the days of 8-tracks and rotary phones, when working toward good draws was my MO. (If that was the case, then spending months or years for this demo game would indeed have been a worthwhile ending, and not like a roulette wheel, where I'd be just another target.) His third e-mail to me, in mid-March, essentially cemented a deal and denied ever wanting to stab me. On a personal level, I took that as gospel. Foolish me: he -- and all the others -- saw this game for what it really is, and really *should* be: just another game, with no personal friendship thrown in. It's all business, baby. Or, maybe all of them saw it as a chance to let their brilliance shine through to the readership by showing how well they still play the game. Either way, it meant my expectations would not be meshing with my perceived reality. And that's my fault entirely: I assumed a non-reality. Had I known that my vision wasn't going to be the operative paradigm this game, I wouldn't have wasted time sending over 150 detailed e-mails when I was an obvious eventual target. Five months of my spring and summer, shot to blazes. Well, at least the readership saw some good stabs, and hopefully everyone's press caused some chuckles. So not all is a total wash, I guess.

I hope this REALLY wasn't viewed as a waste. It was a Diplomacy game, lots of people were watching, and I think Mark is being way, way too hard on himself here. Mark tried to play every power and there weren't enough

patsies. I think of the old poker saw.... Look around the board and if you can't see the patsie, well, it must be you. NO, that's NOT what was going on here. It wasn't, not from my vantage point. Surely Mark overreached, but that's not a capital offense. It did lead him to lose this game though.

I'm fond of using song lyrics to describe life, so I think this one is very *apropos* for the hows, whys, (and *who*) in this game:

My whole world is fallin' down
My whole world is fallin' down
Couldn't see, only me
Nobody else to blame
My whole world is goin' away
(Atomic Rooster, *Nobody Else*)

It's funny, but I swear I adopt the personas of the countries I play. It's like when you see people and their dogs, and how they start to resemble each other in personality or generic looks, or temperament. As the Hun, I was bellicose, paranoid, and fearing encirclement this game, just like Wilhelmine Germany. Those emotions were observed and acted upon by the others. I also tried to be friends with England in a "German" way, which involved putting (and pissing) him off. Like the real (early 1900s) Germany, I also watched allies jump ship and make new arrangements (Italy and Russia), and considered myself potentially "fettered to a corpse" (Austria) and therefore not worried much about his travails...to my own detriment. And, just like the 1918 Germans, I reaped the whirlwind, got moody and depressed, and felt like blaming everyone for my own geopolitical problems this game. Man...I guess if I ever start having a craving for *bratwurst* or for invading France and Poland, I'd better seek help.

29 August 2010
SSDD*

(* Same Shit, Different Day).

Moves arrived today; joy. It's always fun watching the oncoming train(s) come at your car when you're stuck on the tracks – the outlines get larger and larger, and you see the wreck coming, but can't escape it. That's called "Germany 1903." The beauty is that, what I 'think' is happening, is that Melinda and Bill – who could've worked with me to dump Don earlier -- are now going to be shat about with great force (how's THAT for a visual?) now that Vince the Genie is uncorked in the south and Don continues apace in the East and North. Couldn't happen to a nicer couple.

I'm especially ecstatic that the GM has adopted other GMs' "wisdom" in allowing late orders to be accepted beyond deadline (*déjà vu*, Jim?). Funny thing, that word...deadline...it should mean, "get it in or it doesn't count." One can think of times in History where orders were lost, captured, or never submitted, and the fate of nations or peoples changed because of it...the old adage, "For want of a nail..." and all that. Yet apparently in Dip, to keep it an 'interesting' Demo Game, it has to be like the Super Bowl: manicured, perfect weather, everything sterile and just so...and because of it, slugs who are late with orders get a free pass to continue on their way so the "Demo" can be pristine. Does it really matter to this old Kaiser? Nah; dead is dead. But fair should be fair, and if you look at it from a purist's view, moves shouldn't be allowed after deadline. Period. But hey – *someone's* happy they avoided an NMR, right? So *everyone's* a winner here!

Removing tongue from cheek, I want to finish my *Retrospective* from last press entry...

General Richard "Old Baldy" Ewell, Confederate general at Gettysburg, reflected on the battle years later. He said, "It took a dozen blunders to lose Gettysburg and I committed a good many of them." I could take his quote *verbatim* and apply it to this game.

And, also like Ewell, Mark blames himself too much for what happened. He tried to do something REALLY hard.

When I strip away the late move acceptance, the crappy letter-writing, and every other peripheral I can cut to the core and list The Five Bottom Lines why I lost:

1. I didn't give the game my concentrated focus for 100% of the time like a good player should, instead playing a manic-depressive "love this game/hate this game" situation, which was too erratic to stay competitive or focused. My fault.
2. I came in rusty. My fault.

Because of those two points, plus the fact that

3. I assumed a friendship that didn't exist (double fault),
4. I then played the position very poorly. My fault.
5. Compounding failure in the end, I didn't succeed in using diplomacy to scramble and change my declining fortunes, so I lost. My fault.

I guess that about sums it up.

So, after all those "faults"
((Cue the Cream song:))

Anyone for Tennis?

RD: Wait! I thought I was the only one allowed to use italics! Anyway, Mark's fabulous EOG speaks for itself. I enjoy watching him play immensely and am saddened that all of his strategic feelings about his triple alliance were nullified by the simple problem that neither of his allies had any intention of sticking with him very long.

JB (who does get to use bold pretty exclusively here): Since Mark says it is not a secret and he wants everyone to know, at the end of this endgame statement it seems appropriate to note that Mark is in the fight of his life right now with a very serious illness. He is weak at times, but seems to be in good spirits. For all of you who know him, and even those who only know him through this game, drop him a line. He needs all the prayers and support that he can get. I find Mark Fassio one of the greatest Diplomacy players and one of the greatest people I've ever met. If anyone can beat what he's going through, he can. Mark, you're the best.

Melinda Holley (Italy): Well, what can I say? I came...I saw...I survived. Congratulations to Don Williams. He pulled it off. So my thoughts for the game.

First of all I intended to have some fun. When I saw the lineup for this game, I knew it was going to be tough going at times. Don and I immediately connected up and we formed a 3-way with Vince Lutterbie (Turkey) (I/R/T). Or did they pull me in???

Unfortunately, Steve Cooley (Austria) was the first target. Nothing personal, Steve. Just wrong place, wrong time, and you're too good a player to allow a good head start. Mark Fassio (Germany) decided to drop down and help finish off Austria. I had a good non-aggression pact with Buz Eddy (France) and touched base with Bill Quinn (England). But Mark was going to be target #2.

Things went well in eliminating Steve then Mark bit the dust. In the meantime, I knew (yes, I KNEW) I was walking the edge with an R/T alliance at my back. But I was hoping I could make it work a little longer and started moving west along with Russia & Turkey. Don and I were agreed (or so I thought) that we needed to get Vince further away from his homeland before turning on him. Unfortunately for me, Don and Vince decided it was better to stab me first by getting me further away from MY homeland!

I have two philosophies for when I get stabbed. One: Throw everything I have at whoever stabbed me. Two: Play for time and become subservient. Wait for my chance to change things around if possible or at least survive.

I tried Plan One by trying to get an active anti-R/T alliance together but France and England couldn't make peace with each other. So I went with Plan Two and offered myself up to the R/T in return for survival.

Then Vince resigned and Gary Behnen took over the position. Ah-ha! I thought. Here's my chance to split the R/T alliance. Which DID happen but all of a sudden Don was off to the races and stabbed me again. Which led up to the Weasel Moot Con in Chicago last year. I knew Don would also be attending. As Don had pointed out, the gun was removed from my head but still pointed at my heart. Open defiance would not be tolerated. Time to walk softly and hide all sticks both big and small.

So I quietly tried to get an anti Russian coalition to prevent the win. This time there was definite interest. I knew that Don and I would have a chance at Weasel Moot to talk about the game. As we were sitting in the hotel lobby waiting for our ride to the airport after the Con, Don brought up the game. I admit to a small obfuscation. My comment to Don was a

wave of the hand and a 'that game's all done'. Well, Don was sitting at 17 centers and poised to take the 18th so it was a reasonable comment. Don then told me how he planned to end the game. I took mental notes and reported to my co-conspirators when I got home. Somehow I don't think I'll ever be able to pull that off again *sigh*.

So the first Russian attempt at winning the game was stopped. But after that, we just couldn't get things together. Gary and I never seemed to click (quite probably more my fault than anything else). Bill named me his 'sister' and held true to his promise at the end.

And, yes, I'm the author of the 'Somewhere on a foggy mountaintop' press. I had a blast with that since I decided to take the opportunity to pay homage to many of my loves and favorites. Such as:

Spring 1901: This one set up my character. Living on a mountaintop with a rusted out Ford truck, an oversized satellite dish, cans of root beer, and many many one-pound packages of peanut M&Ms...and a drunken chipmunk.

Fall 1901: Sheriff Kluk (that's Kluk with a "K") was a play on the Sheriff in American Gothic (Sheriff Buck...with a "B"). American Gothic was a wonderful show that only lasted one season (darnit). Gary Cole played a demonic sheriff in the southern town of Trinity, South Carolina. I had fun rhyming that name but refrained from using the obvious "F".

The name of the drunken chipmunk (Dale Darrell Waltrip Richard Petty Rusty Awesome Bill Irvin Gordon Earnhardt Smith Johnson Junior) is from a song by comedian Tim Wilson. The names, of course, are from Nascar drivers: DALE Jarrett, DARRELL Waltrip, Michael WALTRIP, RICHARD PETTY, RUSTY Wallace, AWESOME BILL Elliot, Ernie IRVAN, Jeff GORDON, Dale EARNHARDT, SMITH (well, there's been a lot of them), JOHNSON JUNIOR (well, could be either Jimmy JOHNSON and JUNIOR Johnson or just flipping Junior Johnson's name...take your pick).

Boston Rob refers to one of the best players to ever be on Survivor (one of my all-time favorite shows). Lost was a great show that either made the viewers think outside the box or just made them hang on for the ride. As for American Idol, well, my sister sucked me into that one at the time. I usually avoid it like the plague.

Winter 1901: Survivor and Lost were over and Law & Order got cancelled. I was definitely depressed. And I wasn't getting much sympathy from others either *g*

Spring 1902 – At this point I was pulling my hair out over some online classes. I decided to change my major and was getting a butt-load of administrivia nonsense over it. One of the reasons that I decided to let that part of my life go for a while.

I brought in the wolves as homage to the annual Moonridge auction to benefit the adoption and support of animals. Some friends and I pooled resources and have donated services and items to support two wolves at Moonridge. No, they're not named Big Sexy and Bad Guy. I chose those names in honor of two members of professional wrestling and members of The Wolfpac: Kevin 'Big Sexy' Nash & Scott 'Bad Guy' Hall. *Gives times for the laughter to subside* Yes, I like professional wrestling. Grew up watching it at my daddy's knee. Let's face it...have you ever seen these guys? Well, okay, maybe that won't mean anything to you men but, trust me, millions of women watch professional wrestling and it's not for the athletic competition....and, yes, I AM that shallow! (Sixx referred to Sean 'Sixx Pac' Whitman & Chavo referred to Chavo Guerrero, both wrestlers. Well, at least Chavo is.)

The reference to Spencer's Creek was for the movie Spencer's Mountain, the forerunner to Walton's Mountain on the TV show, The Waltons. (By the way, I LOVED the commentary on this press! Guys, I'm not that subtle!

Spring 1903: Life imitates art (or vice versa), and I was getting over a sinus infection. So I decided to bring it into the press. And, while I'm told that Cap'n Jack is good medicine, I stuck with the prescribed antibiotics.

I DO like going to casinos but I only play Jackpot Party nickel or quarter slot machines. Bad mojo from the other machines *shudder*.

Captain Banks in the Major Crimes department is a nod to the defunct television show, The Sentinel. I've written a lot of fan fiction in that fandom. The Elvis impersonator, ceiling fan, rubber chicken, nail gun, and orange marmalade is an old joke.

Rumors and Rhiannon, of course, belong to Fleetwood Mac. Classic rock song.

Fall 1903: The press moved into the town. Mr. Drucker is a character from Green Acres and Petticoat Junction. He ran the General Store in Hooterville. So of course he had one of my favorite deserts (banana cr me pie).

The '64-1/2 fire engine red Mustang convertible is (IMHO) the ultimate sports car!

The lyrics: 'I hear voices in my head, They counsel me, They understand, They talk to me. I hear voices crying. I see heroes dying. I taste the blood that's drying. I feel tensions rising. They talk to me...they talk to me'. The song is Voices by Rev Theory. I condensed the lyrics from the entire song. It is also Randy Orton's entrance song. Yes, he's another professional wrestler (aka "The Viper") and *sigh* the man has one awesome body! (I told you that I AM that shallow.)

Abner & Gladys were Darren & Samantha's neighbors on the TV show Bewitched.

Fall 1904: Otis Campbell was the town drunk on Andy Griffith. He was allowed to pretty much come and go at will *g*.

The First Baptist Bar & Grille is from a song by comedian Tim Wilson (church burns down just before revival time so they set up in a local bar).

Spring 1905: The courtroom participants are from the TV Show 'Night Court', possibly one of the funniest shows ever. The town deputy (Deputy Fife) is Barney Fife from the Andy Griffith Show who was portrayed by Don Knotts, who is also from West Virginia!

Fall 1905: Should have done conditional press since I got stabbed this turn and my character was gloating over the demise of other players *sigh* and *double sigh*.

The lyrics 'She's the daughter of the Devil. The Sister of the Snake. The Keeper of Souls down in Voodoo Lake' is from the song 'Voodoo Lake' by Lynyrd Skynyrd, THE best Southern Rock band. Their signature song can be heard at most SR concerts when the (half-drunken) crowd shouts 'FREEBIRD!'

Winter 1905: After getting stabbed I brought in the character Sheriff Kluck was based on: Sheriff Buck from American Gothic. And the 'two works for ya'? Wrestling fans recognize that tag line from Degeneration X (DX). The answer: Suck it!

Spring 1906/Autumn 1906: No real gems here. I was introspective and trying to figure a way out of the mess I'd gotten myself into. At least the chipmunk was getting something...

Spring 1907: Yes, I mix Excedrin Migraine tablets & Alka Seltzer...just not in the quantities I mentioned in the press.

The lines of: "You drink stuff like that and you're gonna die!" and "When?" are from the movie Blazing Saddles. IMHO, the funniest movie EVER! I can quote lines from that movie from just about any point. Whenever I get depressed, I just watch that DVD.

Spring 1908/Fall 1908: Part of the press is around the song 'Ricky Tidwell's Momma' by comedian Tim Wilson. You've probably figured out that I like Tim Wilson's humor.

Here I introduce the Lewis sisters. I have to admit characters were adapted by my sister, Dianne, from our Lewis ancestors. She and I have done genealogy work on our family for years (I've got Dad's side; she has Mom's). One day, while trekking in the back hills of Wirt Co., WV trying to find Lewis graves, Dianne came up with this hilarious spiel about Hannah Lewis, our direct ancestress. I had to pull the car to the side of the road; I was laughing so hard I couldn't see the road (or what there was of it). She's currently working on storylines for Hannah's siblings: Ann (who changed her name to Rebecca for some reason), Deborah (who had a shiftless husband), Esther (who actually DID try and fake her death), Sarah (nothing much known about her), Will (who seemed to just mind his own business), and Nancy (the much-married Black Widow herself).

Fall 1909: Just a few mentions of some of my favorite candy *g* and a nod to one of my favorite shows: Law & Order: Criminal Intent. While the final season was really more a soap-opera than a cop show, I still miss it.

Spring 1910: Must have been in a singing mood *g*. The lyrics 'Sweet-talkin' people wanna run me outta town, and I got enough 'shine to float a battleship around, I'm leavin' this game one step ahead of you, You will not hear me cry 'cause I do not sing the blues. Give me back my bullets' are from Lynyrd Skynyrd's song 'Give Me Back My Bullets'. However, I

HAVE to say that the version performed by Lynyrd Skynyrd and Kid Rock remains my favorite version of this song. And I did sorta mess with the lyrics...

The Black Widow (aka Nancy Lewis) makes another appearance and snatches another husband...I mean victim. (Sorry Deputy Fife)

The story around Mongo is, of course, taken from Blazing Saddles. For some reason, I 'saw' this episode in my mind as I wrote it *g*

The lyrics 'Dirty deeds, done dirt cheap' is from AC/DC's song 'Dirty Deeds'. And, yes, I DO have an eclectic taste in music!

Spring 1911: The press obviously revolves around the adage 'It's not over until the fat lady sings'. I mentioned my two favorite bands, Lynyrd Skynyrd, and TSO (Trans Siberian Orchestra) – remember my eclectic taste in music...

Fall 1911: The line 'There's a storm coming' is from the end of Terminator 1. Didn't much care for the sequels.

Fall 1912/Autumn 1912: A bit of social commentary. I was driving back from Gatlinburg, TN (to my home in Delaware) and wanted coffee. (Okay, let's ignore the fact that Starbucks coffee sucks.) Every place I stopped, it was lattes or frappes which are, in actuality, all crappes. Coffee, people! Give us decent coffee! (No wonder I hardly ever drink the stuff...last good cup of coffee I had was on a cruise ship.)

The address of 'corner of LaVesque and Higgenbotham' is, again, homage to my love of professional wrestling. LaVesque is Paul 'Triple H' LaVesque and Higgenbotham is Shawn 'The Heartbreak Kid' Higgenbotham; the twosome known as Degeneration X (DX).

And voting the cemetery? In truth, West Virginia could teach Chicago a thing or two about that....

Fall 1913: The Black Widow returns (off screen).

The line 'This used to be a nice quiet town. Could have been such a sweet deal between us.' comes from the movie, Silverado, an excellent western with a very basic plot of good guys vs bad guys. The line comes when the crooked sheriff (Brian Dennehy) squares off in a gunfight against Paden (Kevin Kline). Kline, of course, had decided not to fall in with the bad guys and was standing with the good guys. Kline won the gunfight.

The comment about The Lighthouse referred to a new Dip game that Don and I found ourselves in.

Spring 1914: I think we've all heard of the popular law firm of Dewey Cheatham & Howe *g*. Poor Mr. Pettibone...carrying on with Ms. Kiki LaBoom of the KittyCat Palace *shakes head*. What IS the legal profession coming to???

I felt it was only fair to sell the mountain top assets to my ancestress, the Black Widow.

Fall 1914: From the mountains to the sea (my two favorite geological entities). Down to an admittedly little boat with a single crew member, what else could I call the boat but The Joker?

Igor/EYE-GORE is from the movie 'Young Frankenstein'.

Fall 1915: Had to bring the drunken chipmunk along on a sea voyage! And nude sunbathing at that *shudders*. And why shouldn't the Sheriff bankroll provisioning the Joker?

Spring 1916: Ah, fresh banana ice cream. Nothing can beat it. But Hershey chocolate comes close *g*.

The lolausians is a group of people I've been privileged to know for about 13 or so years. The mantra of 'Give the lolausians what we want and nobody gets hurt' is our formal and official group motto. We don't try to understand the quirks and foibles of the others. We just roll with it. Hey, not just anybody could get me to try a Mojito! *blech!*

Summer 1916: Maybe going down for the final time? At least I got EYE-gore and the drunken chipmunk to safety.

Fall 1916: Well, I submitted conditional press based on whether or not Bill (England) took Portugal. I was pretty sure he would keep his word (and he did! Thank you, my brother!) but just in case...

Reference to The Wheel is a reference to fate. The Wheel Turns is NOT a soap opera (jeez!) but is a reference to luck, fate, and karma. Eventually The Wheel will turn. Those favored will fall and those in need will be raised.

This press was my homage to Bond, James Bond. And the ONLY James Bond is Sean Connery. The rest are just poor James-Bond-wannabes.

Conclusion: I survived. That was my main focus from the time the R/T alliance stabbed me. Secondary focus was to stop Don from winning once it was evident that was his intention. With help from the other players, that was accomplished once. Just couldn't pull it off a second time so back to survival.

Arguably better players than I were eliminated from this game (Steve, Faz, Dave, and Gary) some going down swinging and others not. I leave it up to others to argue who had the better strategy.

Anyway, that's my story and I'm stickin' to it!

I guessed Melinda was the author of the mountaintop press early. And while Jim kept thinking it was somebody else, it still seemed to be Melinda throughout the game. Glad to be right about something.

GUILTY as charged. I finally met Melinda Holley in person a few weeks ago after THREE decades of virtual meeting. Once I met her, and I sorta knew this but didn't REALLY know it until I met her, but she lived this and poured herself into the Mountaintop press. I loved it, I loved that I screwed up and didn't figure out it was her, and I loved that I finally met the great Melinda. Cheers to another of the great personalities in the hobby, pouring it all out for all to see in this classic press that no one writes any more. Big shame.

We're still impressed at just how devastating the stab of Italy was. Five dots at once! Chris Martin's rule of thumb is: always stab for two dots, or for one dot plus position. When as many as five can be taken as once, the potential stabbers would have to explain what they were thinking if they didn't stab.

Oh, and now Don is going to steal my italic font. ☹ (Italic frown!)

Don Williams (Russia): *Reader beware! I've played Diplomacy for over thirty years, but suspect it's been more than fifteen since I wrote an End of Game Statement (EGS). But tradition runs strong in the demo games of Diplomacy World and with that in mind, I'll do my best to provide insight and interest, a sense of the tactical and strategic ... and maybe you'll even be entertained.*

Yeah, but stop stealing Rick's Italic font!!!! You had better have written an end-game statement!!! Or else.

If games had unique theme music, the score for "Rotary" would be Morricone's iconic "The Good, The Bad and the Ugly." It best sums up the game from my perspective: The good opening years where things went well; the bad timing, bad options, bad assumptions, and bad news as players changed in the mid-game; and, the ugly endgame, with Tsarist armies marching up, down and all around Europe to eventually thrash their way into eighteen dots. Not a great movie – or a pretty game – but the plot twists in each kept them entertaining to the end.

I must correct a mistake I made in my opening statement months ago. I said that in my first postal game I was eliminated by Woody Arnawoodian's Russia on the turn he won the game. I was wrong. Woody did eliminate my England on the final turn, but it was Bob Slossar as Italy who won that game. Bob and I met each other in that game and are still friends. (Thanks, Bob, for the reminder all these years later!)

The Players:

What a field! I know all of these players. I've played with 'em and against 'em for decades. Many times, in fact. I've known most of them more than 30 years. And they know me. Rotary will be a great game, and here's why ...

Steve Cooley (AUSTRIA) is one of the finest players I've ever known, and certainly the smoothest. We first met at a house con more twenty-five years ago. He ate my lunch, smiling the whole time. Superior in every aspect of the game. Always calculating. Steve's opportunistic Great White tendencies are abetted by his keen sense of timing and his

patience. Thrust. Parry. Stab. Repeat. Steve's forte is face-to-face (FTF) and tournament play. He's played postally from time-to-time through the years, but it's not his preferred arena. In fact, I wonder if Steve might have an Achilles Heel here in Rotary, a fact he can't avoid ... in a game full of career postal players, his powerful style is strongly suited to FTF play where he excels, but he is the odd man out of this retro cast of play-by-mail (PBM) players. I'm respectful and wary of Steve's skill. Along with one other player here, he could be my best ally or my nightmare foe.

Bill Quinn (ENGLAND) and I go back twenty five years, too, but haven't played together in at least fifteen. He plays a strong, steady, conservative, "gentleman's game," and is not to be taken lightly. When he was active, his laconic communications style always left me wanting more, and often left me worried about what he wasn't saying. Bill really lets the blocks speak for him and, in that way, our styles are essentially not well-suited for each another. I like the long talk, looking down board to predict what might happen three seasons from now; Bill's interested in the realpolitik of the next set of moves. We've played several games before, but I'm damned if I remember if we were allies or enemies. With Steve (AUS) and Mark (GER) at my door, making friends with Bill is a must.

Buz Eddy (FRANCE) and I played together once in the 80s in *Kathy's Kornor*. We were getting our butts kicked but having a press war to end all press wars in the process. I don't recall Buz's style at all, but I know he's played PBM and FTF for years. France is especially important to Russia, especially for mid- and end-game strategy options, but my perception here is that Buz is in a shark tank and ... well, there's fins to the left, fins to the right, and he's the only bait in town. What happens to him and France is my earliest concern, especially if E/G team up fast.

Mark Fassio (GERMANY) ... well, no surprises here; I've been in awe of Mark for three decades. Mark is the best of the best of the best, and a good friend since my earliest days in the Hobby. Competitive. Self-effacing. Focused. Competitive. Opportunistic. Brilliant. Funny. Competitive. Galvanizing. Ruthless. And did I mention competitive? Mark has honed his understanding of human psychology to a razor's edge. With this sharpness – and his passion for military history, tactics and strategy – Mark's an old school psyops warrior and he combines these elements with stunning effect. He's elite class and is one of the top three postal players ... ever. Sometimes allied, sometimes not, we've fought countless battles. We're close friends and have the scars to prove it. The best strategy bull sessions I've ever had I've had with Mark. Some of the nastiest, too. Few can people push my buttons the way he can, and he'd tell you I return the favor. And then some. When our tempers spark you can illuminate a stadium with the glare. Luckily, we generate more light than heat, and we've always remained true to our core friendship once the battle is fought. Mark's style is well-suited for Germany, a country he excels at playing. He will powerfully influence England and France and I have no doubt he'll quickly be calling the shots in the West. If there's any early advantage to be found, it's that he's been relatively inactive the past few years and might be a little rusty. That won't last long – a couple seasons at most – and I just know we'll be in each other's gun sights from the start.

Melinda Holley's (ITALY) style most closely resembles my own. As with several others, she and I have played together in more games than I can count over the past 25 years. Unlike the others, though, after a hiatus of fifteen years or so she's been playing again for the past four years and we've recently ended up in a game or two. She's excellent with strategy and tactics, is a great writer, and is a trustworthy partner who likes alliance play ... to a point. (As in a *dagger* point.) Neither reckless nor conservative, she's a veteran who plays a standout game down the line with panache and with flashes of brilliance when the risk/reward analysis suits her. Also like me, she sometimes trusts a little too much or a little too long, and her timing occasionally betrays her; she's a turn out of sync from time to time. (I so get that one in spades.) I appreciate her keen mind, her perspective on the play, and her genuine love of the game. She's playing Italy – not her strongest country as I remember – but I think her Italy and my Russia can work together early as a counterbalance to the more aggressive playing styles on the board. In fact, I think they'll have to.

Vince Lutterbie (TURKEY) is another player with a similar style, and I'm delighted to see him here. We played four or five PBM games (in *Magus*) years ago and always seemed to have fun even when we were stabbing away at each other's dots. He's a strong player and a superior writer. Vince's style is very suitable for playing Turkey; slow expansion, patience, quiet seduction ... and then a lightning strike out of nowhere. As I recall, Vince is like me and Melinda and he might favor an early alliance to get past the opening game. Like some others, Vince is also shaking off mothballs to take his place in Rotary. To accommodate and offset some of the more aggressive playing styles on the board, it makes sense to pursue agreement with him and, at the very least, to do everything possible to keep him from becoming a foe.

1900

We are going to have peace even if we have to fight for it. – Dwight Eisenhower

The opening round chatter was full of what you'd expect when a bunch of players who haven't gamed with each other in over a decade get dropped into a game. Some quick catching up and reminiscing, followed immediately by "casual" questions about alliances and targets, finished by aspersion-casting, and paranoia creation.

I wrote to everyone and talked to a few, including Mark and Melinda. Vince, Melinda and I quickly fell into a sympathetic chatter. Like me, they seemed more concerned with Steve's Austria, and less concerned with me or each other. Early negotiations with Mark were more animated as we explored options by phone and email well beyond the opening few years as was our way in games past, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. (Mark wrote volumes and I couldn't keep up, but I loved it.) Steve and I also emailed some, but the chat felt inconsistent and seemed somehow subdued and out of sync. I wrote several times to Buz's France and got nothing I could use by way of information, and little more of anything else. This pattern began immediately (and never really altered) and had immediate implications for Russian strategy with the western powers. As I'd remembered, Bill's terse no-nonsense style and my verbosity were an ill-suited mix, but we agreed to watch developments and stay friendly. He pushed for a southern-ish opening from me and I promised it.

As either Russia or Italy, I like the I/R alliance for reasons you all know, and was pleased to learn Melinda liked it, too. We agreed to work together. We decided we'd do well to focus the board's east-west powers on the two strong central power players, Mark and Steve. I was concerned this powerful duo would form naturally and quickly with Russia as its first target. I developed a rather reasonable argument that Austria and Germany might hit me fast and hard, and I worked to sell this to Vince, Buz and Bill. With the little we were getting from Buz and the short notes from Bill, I think I convinced myself that Mark and Steve *would* ally early while England and France shook off the rust and slowly developed a 1902 strategy. Was this real or was I believing my own propaganda? In any case, Vince soon joined the discussion with me and Melinda and agreed to work with I/R.

Italy and Russia broached the idea with Germany that Mark open to TYA pretending he didn't trust Melinda. Italy would hit TRI with A ROM-VEN trailing and Russia would get Austria to bounce in GAL, tying up A VIE. Turkey would feint into the BLA and work with Italy against Steve's Austria, too. Austria wouldn't stand a chance.

Mark was strongly hesitant at first, but with a lot of email patter from Italy and Russia, he held his nose and agreed, then started working his negotiating magic with England and France to make his southern attack viable. In return, Germany got assurance Russia would build north and hit England in '02. In a four-way take down of Austria we figured we'd be lucky to get a dot each, and so thought we should look quickly beyond that. Simply put, I agreed ... mindful of discussions Italy and Russia had *already* started on that same post-Austria topic.

1901

The best weapon against an enemy is another enemy. – Friedrich Nietzsche

There were few surprises in the Spring as Steve, Mark, Melinda, Vince and I all moved as agreed. (Well, Steve was surprised, I bet ... but the rest of us weren't.) England's move to the Channel was a minor surprise and okay with me, but I was concerned with France's weak (my opinion) non-standard opening which left MAO open. The opening to BUR also jeopardized Mark's attack on Austria if A TYA dropped back to defend. Negotiations continued pretty much as before – Rotary continually enjoyed a better than average communications rate, with a couple notable exceptions early on. Steve was a blur of communication and started asking for help. On purpose, I kept email volume low simply to avoid lying more than I had to. (This is a tactic postal play offers that FTF doesn't and I know it frustrated Steve.) Germany's tasks were both to keep A BUR out of MUN and to convince Steve that Germany was no threat. My moves were as promised to everyone and, on purpose, were not the strongest. No one likes a roaring bear. Negotiations between Mark, Bill and Buz seemed pretty extensive, but as I was only getting this from Mark's Germany, I wasn't sure at all sure of what was going on, and this played on me. I was already getting whiffs of what I'd worried about; Mark playing a strong Germany with France and Germany sparring in S'1901. With the vague and teasing stuff from Buz and Bill's brevity, I couldn't sense what was going on, but quickly concluded that there was a good chance Germany was orchestrating it. (I didn't know if I was right or not, but it was the safest way to play.) I didn't suggest Buz take MUN, but did ask about it and he gave an enigmatic answer. I sensed he was working with Mark but wasn't sure.

Fall was more surprising as England convoyed A YOR-NWY (damn Bill!) but failed to take BEL. (We learned later that Germany had, uh, lied and supported France instead.) I took positions against Austria telling Steve the armies were coming to help him. The G/I attack on VIE succeeded as Steve bought what Mark was selling. F BLA was still there but had not moved aggressively and Turkey and I talked about vacating soon as the misdirection was no longer needed or plausible. All told, 1901 had opened well.

Too well, actually. As I'd seen so many times before, Mark had pulled off a three center coup in 1901, and his Germany now sat with six centers headed into 1902. France had taken BEL with his help, and England had convoyed an army into NWY, while failing to take BEL or MAO. Mark was working with I/R in Austria, and he and I had agreed we'd attack England. I couldn't prove it, but Germany's lie to England about BEL felt like only half the story, and I was certain he was behind the English convoy to NWY. Mark denied it, but who wouldn't? He was pushing me to build F STP(nc) and A MOS to start the attack on England as promised, and Bill would be looking at an F/G/R next season. While I tended to agree (A NWY made an excellent case for it) I was wary that Mark was already strongly dictating the game in the west. Though he was asking for little more than what we'd agreed on, I let him know he was worrying me. It was more of a style thing than anything else, but it came across wrong. In record time, Mark and I backed each other into a corner and buttons were getting pushed left and right. Old wounds opened, old laundry got aired, old gripes got griped. It got ugly and personal ... fast. Mark said he'd build two fleets and an army to go at England; Melinda and I asked him to waive any build in BER to keep the G/I/R stable. We felt he was under little threat in the west and didn't need the third build. Experience with Mark said he wouldn't waive the build unless he promised it and we couldn't get him to commit. Mark said he'd think about it, but in fairness never said he would.

I couldn't believe it – I was facing a serious decision point with my very first builds. Building F STP(nc) would lock Russia into the promised attack against England, but would leave her invitingly open to an opportunistic six center Germany that in two seasons had attacked Austria, clearly influenced French and English moves, and was pushing for a Anglo-Russian war. Mark had also proposed F BER – BAL in S'02, which threatened SWE, especially with a hostile A NWY. I could not accept the idea and told him so. Again, Italy agreed with me and tried to broker peace, but she was also thinking of what we'd been talking about post-Austria, a joint I/R attack on Germany. Honestly, I can't remember who proposed it first, but it seemed to us a natural outgrowth of the I/R/T. She urged me to consider it in making my build decisions. With my irritation over Mark's "bullheadedness" – and my fear of an early A/G vs R – I needed little coaxing and listened willingly. I delivered an uncharacteristic ultimatum to Mark, an ultimatum that angered him; Russia would view any build in BER as a declaration of war. And with that I wrote my build orders.

I wasn't surprised Germany built in all three centers, and I doubt he was surprised by A WAR and A STP. Miffed, yes. Surprised, no. F EDI certainly looked anti-Russian, and I still wasn't convinced Mark and Bill were at war – maybe a little lie over BEL, but nothing more serious had happened. France's builds were mixed, but boded well for Germany and less well for Italy. Vince built as promised. I didn't say anything further to Mark about his F BER build. After W'01 builds, I think only one person besides me knew Germany and Russia were at war and that was Melinda Holley. She began negotiating accordingly.

1902

War is the unfolding of miscalculations. – Barbara Tuchman

The earnest dismantling of Austria continued. Steve tried desperately to negotiate his way out, but the mugging had taken on a momentum of its own and even he seemed to see the efficacy. He was miffed, especially at Germany, but remained cordial and classy with everyone else, except for a few brief spleen ventings. Turkey and I danced a bit in the BLA for show but he grabbed SER (with my help) and AEG and we felt sufficiently disengaged for the moment. England's eastward movement was ambiguous; it might be an attack on Germany, but hitting SWE was a mixed signal, as was EDI – NTH instead of EDI - NWG. I'd offered support to DEN but he didn't accept; I'd ordered it anyway to show sincerity. My move to PRU was provocative, but no more than Mark's moves to SIL and BAL. Still, he had supported me into BUD and had vacated DEN, probably to push F BAL through. *He was clearly trying to patch up the R/G kerfuffle, not realizing it was already too late -- my ultimatum had been heartfelt.* Italy's move to TYA caught him off-guard, I think, as I/R started the assault on Germany. France's orders were a mystery and Buz was not responding back in any logical way; moves to MAO and SPA(sc) seemed contradictory, but vacating BRE seemed to be saying the French-English spat was on the back burner. With Austria in trouble, F/E looking at each other, and Italy a willing partner in crime, I saw the opportunity to hammer home the attack on Germany. England was the question mark and we started negotiating in earnest.

Fall '02 arrived with the war against Germany going on three fronts as I supported England into DEN while Mark attempted to return the favor in BUD and SWE. After tough negotiations, Bill had agreed to join me; we disengaged neatly to capture DEN as Italy took VIE. Turkey destroyed Austria's F GRE and Steve was reduced to SER. France's moves continued to be a mystery as she held in place, moved away from Germany and went to NAT ... and didn't take capture an open and needed POR.

The W'02 builds suggested the unfolding alliances: E/I/R vs G/F, with I/T gearing up to push west with fleets against F as well. Five I/R armies were poised against Germany from LVN to TYA, and a sixth from England lurked in DEN. I built F STP(sc) for the attack on Germany and to beef up against England ... just in case. Mark removed two armies, I assumed

for maximum flexibility. He'd said in the press he was giving centers to me and/or Buz. Didn't see 'em coming my way. (As for the commentators ... well, Jim thought there was an R/G but Rick successfully called that situation and saw that the mugging of Austria required an immediate second war; Melinda and I'd discussed that very issue with each other and Vince.) Mark was an obvious target for I/R and his stubborn refusal to waive an unneeded (in our opinion) build made the decision easier. Even better, of course, were Bill's decision in F'02 to reverse fields and work with Russia in the north and Vince's agreement to work with Italy and Russia in the south. Questions about France were rampant with Buz not really writing to anyone so far as I could tell. This confusion made an I/T vs F seem doable, and it bothered me not-at-all that Buz was distracting England without actually harming him.

1903

The direct use of force is such a poor solution to any problem, it is generally employed only by small children and large nations. – David Friedman

Six armies and four fleets slammed Germany, overwhelming even Mark's ability to stem the tide. Steve fought to hang onto SER in a pattern that'd keep Austria in the game through '06. (In fact, I/R/T had already broached with Steve the idea of convoying his army into France. Yes, we were serious. This was a thing we did back in the day, even in the middle of a serious game. Steve agreed to the convoy.) The I/R/T alliance came into obvious view with the fleet line shifting west with Italy's three threatening France even as Buz pulled off and headed north. Bill made me nervous with his fleets but seemed serious about wanting Germany gone and now Buz was nipping at the Kaiser's pant legs, too. Somewhere in here Bill said he wanted SWE to cement the E/R alliance, solve the Scandinavian Question, and get him a needed build against F/G. He'd seen BER/MUN falling fast and wanted something for his troubles. I agreed, and we considered eliminating one of the Russian fleets to really get "peace in our time." With Buz harmlessly harassing England's rear, the possible loss of my fleet felt temporary at worst, and worth it to make sure England stayed happy. Then a funny thing happened on the way to the forum Fall ... and in an instant David Hood is taking the helm from the struggling Buz.

As the commentators noted, David's entry totally changed the equation as only the unexpected arrival of an elite player can. Yes, the E/I/R wolves were snapping loudly at the Kaiser's door, but I feared a game changer like David would immediately reverse the momentum given the power of a Fassio-Hood F/G alliance. I also feared he, as a new player with no history, might pry England and Russia apart (*also as the commentators opined*), and maybe Italy as well. I reconsidered ceding SWE and removing that northern fleet, but needed Bill to stay true to the E/R. I wrote David a long email relating the game's background and hoped he'd consider Russia as his immediate and best ally in a post-Fassio world. He wrote back a short note promising to consider all options, probably the best I could get under the circumstances.

Yeah, I got this, even though David didn't. And it was why he was so perplexed by how everyone reacted to him.

The Fall mostly reflected the existing alliances and the New France; Italy grabbed MUN and Mark defended BER while ceding HOL to David. (I assumed at the time it was arranged as David was about to be thumped by Italy & Co.) To my concern but not my surprise, David moved south to disengage from England; Bill also cleared LPL in a very trusting way, readying a convoy eastward. Fresh Hell. England swept into SWE as agreed in the north, and in the south I left CON on my way to the Mediterranean.

David's arrival triggered a far more important chain of events than what could be seen on the board, though, involving the stability of the I/R/T. Melinda and I had talked in the abstract about stringing the Sultan out across Med, then stabbing him once he was enmeshed in France with Steve's Austrian army at his side. (Yes, my fleet was now "safely" out of Turkey's back yard, but that had just put it on the front lawn.) Vince and I had similarly mused about whether/when to stab Italy as Melinda pushed west and north, and it's impossible to imagine those two hadn't had identical discussions about how to double-cross Russia with her seven units stretched from SWE to AEG. (There's more honor among feuding drug lords, I swear.) Anyway, David's arrival immediately distilled these musings into serious plotting; France was now going to put up a helluva fight, especially if she'd allied with Germany and England, and a stalled I/R/T would be an unstable and paranoid I/R/T. I outlined plots with both Vince and Melinda separately and suggested that with David in France, we'd have to move the schedule up. Both separately agreed about eventually hitting the other. We all decided, though, it'd be too worrisome to put Steve's army into France (no more convoy ideas) because a Mark/David/Steve brain trust would be too horrible to even contemplate. Instead, we thought the unit could be used for another purpose; keeping I/R/T armies mutually bouncing in SER to garrison the Balkans and thereby stabilize the I/R/T in a sort of three-way Mexican standoff. Messy and expensive, but workable; it served for another three years, and was in direct response to David Hood's entry.

Come Winter, France grew to seven centers and was suddenly resurgent, tied for the lead with Italy. Russian-German removals weren't a sign of détente. Mark and I weren't even talking any more. I'd decided against pulling the second northern fleet because I wasn't sure about England, and I eliminated A WAR instead. Germany continued his plan to cede David dots and kept the units best able to implement that plan. England's anti-French F LPL build gave me hope. Italy built A VEN, a good swing unit; but was it going north, west or ... east? If ever I/T were going to turn on Russia, I thought this was it, as there were two Russian defenders against a possible I/T assault of six and I was enmeshed in Germany. I thought that Russian fleet loose in AEG was at least a small deterrent. I certainly *hoped* it was.

1904

Get your facts first and then you can distort them as much as you please. – Mark Twain

To my relief, both the north and south alliances held in the Spring. Well, sort of. The fighting over Germany was fierce, even as I/T pressed France. There was a little miscommunication and a planned convoy of A SMY failed because Vince and I forgot to tell Melinda it was off. I intentionally misordered F AEG with Vince's okay. With Italy's march into Germany, Russia's mid-game options became narrower and I sized up the witches ... uh, again. Neither looked particularly undefended and I was thinking I'd have hold back and be patient. Bad news. Even worse was the news that England appeared joined with the new France! A YOR found HOL and not NWY, but France was now in KIE (supported there by Mark and Bill), and Bill had again trustingly vacated LPL. I had self-bounced FIN to keep E/G from taking STP come Fall. It wasn't needed.

In the commentary for this season Jim Burgess noted that Germany did not convoy England's A DEN to LVN, which would have been a deadly and unstoppable strike at Russia's heart. I can only say that while I was worried about England and France joining forces, I couldn't at all see E/G working together at that point. So much bad blood (Mark was lashing out) had passed between Bill and Mark by now that I doubt either was speaking to other. (At his request, Mark and I had also stopped talking by now.) I'd guess it was only David's reasonable negotiation style that kept E and G moving in the same direction. Even so, and to be fair, this entire time Bill was telling me in his (too) brief emails, that the E/R was solid. I so wanted to believe.

When Fall came, I finally did believe as England stabbed France for (effectively) three centers (BEL, HOL and KIE), finally cleared F NAO, and lead the board at eight dots. E/R had negotiated (with Italy) the attack on KIE, deciding to leave BER for later as it was now isolated behind my lines. *(Jim Burgess correctly saw that this was an E/R deal. Rick Desper correctly pointed out that England's long-term growth was hampered by this, but Rick couldn't know that the E/R was in play before the E/F and that Bill was therefore honoring an older alliance by stabbing David. I'll leave others to decide the wisdom of that. Finally, Rick pointed up that Italy had been very trusting of her allies' fleets. Hold that thought, Rick.)* For whatever reason, David and I weren't really talking through this period. Maybe we both knew that working together in this one would be tough given respective positions? The I/R/T fleets moved forward in preparation of (finally!) the attack on France, and Turkey was front and center for the battle. My fleet's move to ION was at Italy's behest and I'd moved there under (a little) protest ... with Turkey about to get some needed dots, I'd moved off his front lawn, leaving Russia more vulnerable in the process. The E/R builds reflected the alliance and I tried to build inconspicuously to avoid making either witch tense. *(Jim, it was closest to Door No. 3 of your guesses in W'04: E/R had become a solid alliance and I was trying to figure out what to do with the I/R/T.)*

1905

The first casualty when war comes is the truth. – Hiram Johnson

What had started looking mostly like a consolidating year for Russia actually exposed a looming issue. With the alliances she had pursued, Russia had nowhere to go and had to consider the next phase of the game, assuming the fall of A/G had constituted the end of the opening. I/T were making inroads vs. France just as England was seeing her nemesis in Germany go down; Bill was clearly going after France as well. I/R/T successfully eliminated Steve's long-suffering A ALB, but he was still with us. I didn't know if any negotiation was going on between Bill and Vince, but knew Melinda emailed Bill regularly and I was worried about a surprise E/I breaking out. Still, she'd enjoyed "favored ally" status for four years now and I was hoping it was still I/R into the end game, where Russia can sometimes enjoy a slight advantage over Italy. But ... it's past time to decide where Russia's next front will be and it's an issue any experienced player can see from a mile off. The center doesn't have much play left if France is getting squeezed north and south and, anyway, it leaves Russia "fleet weak" and exposed on both flanks. But hit either flanking witch (the alternatives to "right down the middle" option) and start doing well, and the other witch will get interested fast. Then there's the Law of Unintended Consequences aspect. Hit England and France may be the benefactor. Hit Turkey and watch Italy surge ahead. Doing nothing still looked pretty good and patience seemed to be the best strategy.

Ironically, Melinda solved the problem in S'05. She had provided Russia with an answer – and she was it.

The fleets had muddled westward for what seemed like forever. I'd wanted to stop in AEG or even ION to stay near Turkey and keep an eye on the Sultan. Melinda had urged me to TYN and I'd argued that I was getting too far forward. We'd mused about hitting Turkey, so I was worried she was moving my fleet further west as a way of putting that off and stringing me out as we'd talked about doing to Vince. I finally did as she asked in the Spring ... but only after taking a hard look at the board, seeing the vulnerable Italian position and talking to Vince. I called him and before I'd gotten the words out of my mouth about the opportunistic stab of Italy he said "Count me in." He'd seen it, too. (*Jim Burgess was right with his comments again, though, as I confess to orchestrating the moves.*) We didn't tell Bill as we didn't want him tipping off Melinda – they'd been working together in Germany and I wasn't sure he'd approve of the explosive R/T surge anyway. I suggested England and Turkey coordinate around France and then Vince and I set up the stab in Spring which netted five Italian centers – including ROM and NAP – that Fall. It didn't hurt that Germany was eliminated and France was weakened by Italy at the same time. Steve's A ALB was unfortunate collateral damage; we needed to pull A TRI out of position and so concocted the plan that A ALB finally had to go so we could free up those three Balkan armies for use elsewhere. Under the R/T plan, SER would go to Turkey the following year ... he was to have taken it with Melinda's help in the Fall but she had crossed him up a little. Italy pulled four pieces from the west to signal that she was done in France and was turning to fight her treacherous former allies. Once more I built the best I could to avoid irritating my twitchy witchy allies.

1906

Truth is mighty and will prevail. There is nothing the matter with this, except that it ain't so. – Mark Twain

The stab of Italy had worked well, but Russia was way out of position (pulled forward) and stretched. I moved needed armies into Austria, Germany and the Balkans to defend/consolidate those fronts, again leaving the flanks weak. To offset this I tried to focus E/T on their (other) mutual foe of opportunity, David. They appeared to agree. Melinda and I kept talking. Despite my treachery, she remained open to the future. (In old PBM fashion, she blamed herself for the stab as much as she blamed me and Vince. This willingness to work together remained to the end of the game.) To survive – and live to fight me another day, knowing her – she agreed to work with Russia and became a sounding board to Russia's mid-game ambitions. We discussed Russian attacks on England and Turkey and she agreed the choices were poor and getting poorer; hitting either while they fought France might mean they'd ally against Russia as well. Or instead. I was balanced on the edge and couldn't decide. Turkey finally owned SER after walking out of it in F'02 and would build. He'd covered NAP/BUL in the face of Russian armies moving south and the Spring '06 misorder of my F ROM; I'd put this down to reasonable nervousness. England was in a slugfest with David and had agreed to dismantle a northern fleet if Russia would and we'd worked out the mechanics. He'd also supported my return to KIE as promised and Russia would build two. Again, I built to keep the witches calm, but the fog had cleared a little in W'06 and through it I saw ... England.

It was two seasons later that I learned that in S'06 I'd made my second biggest error of the game. (The biggest would come in Fall '10.) The fleet I'd intentionally misordered in 1904 was misordered again in S'06, but this time it was an accident. A bad accident. (BAH-YEE-AH-YEE-YAH WUH-WUH-WUH ...) No one knew it in S'06, but that little misorder redirected the course of Russia's game by 180 degrees. Literally.

1907

It is not enough to conquer; one must learn to seduce. – Voltaire

Prior to sending S'07 orders I'd conferred once more with Italy. We were at Chicago's Midway airport waiting for our flights after a weekend of tournament play at Weasel Moot IV. I'd agonized for days and had finally decided to stab England and had shared my thinking with Melinda. Both England and Turkey had been good allies and true to their word. England and had I allied successfully over Germany. Turkey and Russia had partnered the hit on Italy. There was no epiphany, but Vince had been more trusting and less worrisome and his style was closer to mine. Bill was still struggling with David's awesome defense and a lightly defended Scandinavia was calling. I felt awful, but the board was clear, and Melinda had agreed. From Midway I sent my orders, moving F STP(sc)-GOB, A MOS-STP, A WAR-LVN, A KIE-HOL and supporting Italy to BUR. Turkey was in the dark as I was worried he'd tip off Bill. (I was worried Melinda would tip him off, too, but a Tsar's got to trust someone.) I didn't feel good about the decision to stab Bill, but I had finally decided, for better or worse. And that felt worth something.

Arriving home, I was mortified to see an apologetic email from Vince telling me Turkey would take up "defensive positions" against Russia in S'07, in part because my S'06 *misorder of F ROM* had made him nervous. (I suspect he'd remembered the intentional '04 misorder and the new one has been bugging him.) There was no time to get in touch with Turkey (or Italy) as, by design, the email had arrived just before deadline. I quickly sent of orders canceling my stab of England, and

throwing together a southern defense. Instead of attacking the Northern Witch in S'06, Russia had shifted against her wicked southern sister. *(The commentators got this one all wrong, but how could they not? They had no way of seeing this coming. Hell, I hadn't seen it coming.)*

It only got worse of course when Vince, citing family issues, resigned to be replaced by ... oh, just-kill-me-now, the uber competitive Gary Behnen. Another blast from the past and another one of my best old hobby friends. Gary's an icon of the 70s, 80s and 90s. Winner of more PBM games and awards than any two other players I know. The second in my top three pantheon of best postal players ever. (As I've named two here, I'll name the third as well – Kathy Byrne/Caruso.) Where the Devil was Doug digging these guys up? (I already knew the answer. Like something out of an old Bloom County strip, he's getting them from the Don Williams Nightmare Closet.) Gary in Turkey was the ultimate Russian bad dream. Not because it was Gary, per se. Gary and I, like me and Mark, have a spectacular history together, some of it spectacularly good, and some of it spectacularly bad. No, this was bad because: 1) after a solid R/T alliance of six-years Gary had arrived at the absolute nadir of Russo-Turkish trust; 2) Gary and Melinda go back forever and are friends and Italy's loyalty will be up for grabs; and, 3) Gary and David will almost assuredly call a cease fire to deal with the largish bear in the East.

The diplomacy was blistering, and Melinda was in the thick of it, with RUM/SER as the crucible. I offered her SER while Gary pushed for her support to RUM. He and I talked peace and alliance but, even after not playing together in fifteen or so years, we still remembered each other's "tells" well (Gary's a pro-level poker player and uses the term often) and we were just off. Turkey and Russia were primed for war. And why not? Fighting France was a loser, Russia was at the door with armies but no fleets, and Turkey already owned BLA. R/T had stabbed Italy, but the new Turk could claim innocence and offer an unsullied alliance. I had to up the ante and so asked Melinda what she'd need for her alliance. She wanted the Italian homeland and two centers more and I eagerly agreed. I knew she'd eventually use them against me to get back into the game but I felt I had no choice with Gary's entrée.

How Bill and Gary would react to each other was the biggest unknown. Their styles are polar opposites, with Gary's being opportunistic and aggressive, and Bill's being conservative, even plodding. While I wasn't party to their diplomacy, I quickly sensed from both it had started poorly and went down from there. Russian ~~policy~~ survival dictated that keeping England and Turkey apart would be a good thing and while I never lied, I did nothing to lessen the immediate tension they seemed to develop towards each other.

F'07 fortunately went well as Italy, England and Russia remained allied in a post-Vince world and Turkey lost SER to Italy. (The tactical nuances were such that, had Gary held and not attacked RUM as promised, he'd have kept SER.) Moreover, England had graciously offered HOL as a borrow so I could build F SEV to partially counter the Turkish fleet advantage. (Like I said, Bill and Gary had really gotten off on the wrong foot.) The rest went as expected, with E/I/R battling F/T. Gary's removal of F MAO signaled the R/T war was on. *(Once more, the commentators had it wrong and right; Gary had absolutely been paying attention and tried hard to sway Italy ... it just didn't work and she didn't help him. And, yes, I tried to convince Italy to gamble that MAR would be open, and would be part of paying off the deal. Finally, Gary knows my tells and I know his and predicting each other's moves correctly from time-to-time was inevitable.)*

A clarification is needed. While I helped Bill and Melinda (sounds like a power couple, doesn't it?) in France with a move here or there in this period, I rarely participated with their tactics. Frankly, I'd have attacked France differently, but had learned that while Bill would listen to such discussions, he was very much his own general and would generally ignore my offerings. For this and other reasons (his slow progress vs. David being an obvious one), I mostly stayed out of those discussions and just did as Bill requested except when Russia was directly impacted. David seemed to sense this because while we rarely talked, it felt like we'd work things out between us sooner or later.

1908

All this happened, more or less. – Kurt Vonnegut

There was some talk in here somewhere about an E/R/T three way draw but it never came close to happening. The fighting continued along alliance lines with Russia helping Italy and England to move forward in their spheres against France and Turkey while biding time, building trust, and strengthening the southern line while England disengaged in the north. Russia gave the borrowed HOL back with thanks. Gary's diplomacy was probably a little rusty and so a bit hard edged and tough and he was urgently pushing me to attack England, France and Italy, saying the Russian solo was at hand and that I should stop fiddling around. He was convincing and relentless but I resisted. With 12 centers and the battle firmly joined with Turkey, I did in fact finally start seriously looking to see how a Russian solo might happen. I doubted I'd break through Gary's excellent defenses but thought, with Italy, that we could eventually contain him once Italy was retaken. The six centers needed weren't that far away (Scandinavia and France) and, somewhat surprising to

me, wouldn't require more than another fleet or two. There was some interesting tactical play in here, too. Gary's convoy to an open RUM from ARM caught me by surprise, showing Gary could guess my moves as well as I could guess his ... that move just hid in a blind spot and caught me off guard. There was also some fun tactical play in Italy with me trying to keep the Russian fleet alive while Gary tried to kill it; he knew it was a seriously problematic unit for him. Russia stayed even while England and Italy both grew.

1909

Frankly, I'd like to see the government get out of war altogether and leave the whole field to private industry. – Joseph Heller

This was almost an "autopilot" year, and it showed. In the real world, I was on an extended honeymoon with my new wife and, well, the game just wasn't foremost in my mind. I was graciously offered an extended deadline which helped, but the S '09 was a crop of mistakes, though none serious. Gary captured SER and we took it back. (I think SER changed hands five times in Rotary.) I'd moved to PAR to cut David's support to help Bill only to find I'd accidentally walked in! The English moves to NTH/SKA were a little surprising, but cracked open a door that needed opening and I was actually glad Bill had done so. Tactically, Italy and Russia outslugged an outnumbered Turkish fleet garrison in Italy. The E/I/R was still clunking along and, though it was slow going, France was crumbling. (*To the commentators ... I moved to BRE at Bill's request and David defended PAR. I'd have done things differently but nobody asked.*) Again, I thought Bill was distracted at this point as his focus was split between entering the Med to get after Gary (and Italy), finishing off France, and keeping an eye on me.

I ordered F STP(sc) – GOB and A MOS – LVN in Fall '09. Ostensibly a defensive response to England's unannounced fleet movements east (and so I'd told Bill), these two "defending" units were the actually vanguard of a planned 1910 Russian attack north. Building A MOS in W'09, and with two key agreements in place, I was finally ready to take the solo shot. The tactics would be similar to the aborted S'07 attack, the agreements were with Italy and France. Negotiating to forestall a retaliatory "stop the leader" alliance, Russia reminded Italy that the '07 deal had been honored (she now had Italy plus two) and asked the question; would Italy accept a Russian solo attempt? She said yes. For the first time in many seasons I contacted France, and asked the same question. After years of fighting England, and still irked over Bill's 1904 stab, David was not only okay with it, he said France would help.

1910

No country can act wisely simultaneously in every part of the globe at every moment of time. – Henry Kissinger

The Bear finally roared and lashed out from Scandinavia to Spain. The tactical details don't matter. The five dots Russia needed were NWY, SWE, DEN, MAR, and SPA. Other possible targets were HOL, BEL and VEN though they all had defenders nearby. Italy had okayed the solo attempt, but didn't know about MAR. (She'd traded out POR for SPA.) The Spring moves came off almost perfectly ... almost! With agreements, Italy and France wouldn't retaliate in the Fall, and Turkey and England couldn't.

Well, that wasn't quite true, was it? Russia's near perfect stab for the solo was thwarted by England's single unexpected move of F HOL – NTH. Damn Bill! There would be a guessing game around DEN and NWY after all. England's fleets could stop the attack, but only for a season. It was also possible, though, to convoy A BEL – NWY with support, which would have given England the ability to stop the Russian attack in '10 and '11, and beyond, shutting down the north. Double damn! I (badly) assumed Bill would see that door-slamming move and play it, which led me to my biggest mistake of the game. With NWY probably permanently blocked (based on my bad assumption), I opted for one of the secondary dots and ended up with a 50-50 shot at BEL or VEN. I thought A BEL would convoy and so decided to take the shot there instead of VEN. Italy had F ADR to defend VEN anyway and, call me weak, I had hoped not to take Melinda's home center. Finally, I was "victimized" by a classic Behnen "tell the truth and screw up the opposition" move; Gary called to say VEN would be undefended and I should take it for the win. Now I just *knew* the move to BEL would work as I wasn't about to fall to a Behnen misdirection. Well, my attack on BEL didn't work ... Gary had told the truth. I'd also taken MAR, one of the centers I'd promised to Italy and Melinda was unhappy. Russia had fallen a center short of the solo and had attacked everyone but France in the process. England had already reacted in the Fall by disengaging in the Med and making peace with Turkey. Italy would likely follow suit. Turkey and Russia were already at war. It was about to turn ugly.

Well, let's see...this is Don's first stab at a solo. (Pun intended.) He had 13 at the end of 1909 and needed 5 more. In the Spring he took Sweden, Denmark, and Spain, and presuming there was a lack of coordination in the area of France (and we'd seen no such coordination all game), he was in good position to pick up Marseilles. If Melinda was not going to

stop him, the obvious move (in my mind) was to take Venice. After all, if she was going to work with England, Don had no hope of holding onto Spain.

The thing to do was to order Tyrolia -> Venice. Don moved Tyrolia -> Munich, but there was only one English force next to Munich, and it could have been defended by Russian Army Ruhr. Don ordered Ruhr – Holland, but that was highly unlikely to succeed. England was not going to let Don walk into Norway, Holland, or Belgium one turn after Don took Denmark and Sweden. And Bill had more than enough forces to cover all of that. But Rick, you say, Melinda had more than enough forces to defend Venice! Sure she did, but I figured she wouldn't care. I thought she was throwing the game to Don. And, indeed, she didn't bother to defend Venice.

Back to Don using italics...

Yes, Rick, I agree, this was one of many things Don did that delayed his solo, and potentially killed it. You know, one thing that keeps hitting home to me is that for a game without luck, luck plays such a major role.

1911

In the fight between you and the world, back the world. – Franz Kafka

And it did. I tried again to take the battle to the board in S'11, but it was too late. The stop the leader (STL) alliance manifested and, except for France, E/I/T coordinated a masterful response to the Russian power grab. The dreaded fight with both witches and Italy was now on and I figured Russia would lose three or four centers in '11, and more thereafter as the E/I/T ground Russia down across the board. Having lived it before in a couple games, I knew Russia could quickly be dropped to seven or eight dots if she fought across all three fronts. Maybe worse. I reopened negotiations with an irritated-but-still-talking-England, and offered to return everything I'd taken from him in 1910, promised a few more in 1912 to boot, and proffered a two-way for the first time. England insisted on STP to make sure I was never tempted again, and demanded I help eliminate France. With few options, I agreed to it all. I know Gary (and Rick Desper) saw this as excessive but I was certain it was the right move as it kept Turkey from gaining serious momentum as a result of the STL alliance. In the Fall, I ordered as agreed as did Bill; Bill didn't follow through on several promised moves to I/T. By doing so, he helped Russia's F MAR barely escape being annihilated (for the second or third time), and kept Turkey's gains to one center. That fleet was needed to help England back into the Med. Russia would lose five centers in W'11, with three going to England, and one each to Turkey and Italy.

In '10 Russia had grown from 13 to 17, and then had plummeted to 12 in '11, a net loss of one dot over two years, and still three ahead of England, the next largest power. If the E/R held, I thought things had turned out better than I deserved. *(Once more, Jim Burgess showed that he knows me well when he called the rebalancing act. I pulled A STP to make good on the promise to England to hand over STP, and to keep a remnant of Russian power projected in the west.)* Having taken my shot at a solo, I was sure my chance to win was over and was ready to honor an E/R two-way. Surprisingly, Italy and Turkey had other ideas.

I think Don is being honest here, I do note that I in commentating seem to have gotten the point that the solo was at hand for Don before Don himself realized it was. This was evident to me in the play over these couple of years.

1912

A man's most open actions have a secret side to them. – Joseph Conrad

After some hardball negotiation from England, and some fierce diplomacy with Italy, I realized that the STL alliance had all but collapsed after achieving its objective in '11. I was surprised but happy. Italy, for reasons I hope Melinda will disclose in her endgame statement, once again decided to trust Russia and opted to join the E/R two way against Turkey. The tension between Gary and Bill had grown more pronounced since Bill had reformed the E/R and may have spilled over into relations with Italy. I knew I'd done my best to fan the flames of discord against Turkey, but that was to be expected. In any case, England re-entered the Med and Italy took TRI from Turkey. Russia readied the final assault on Turkey by emptying Germany and flooding south. I was still trying hard to negotiate David's survival, even offering a Russian center to keep France in, but Bill was adamant and English armies were on the march. In the Fall, England had a grand season as she captured STP and PAR, and eliminated France with Russia's support. (Sorry, David.) Italy surprised Turkey yet again and convoyed to ALB with my help. Gary was extremely frustrated with both Italy and England for siding with a perfidious Russia over his honorable Turkey and started pushing me again to consider a solo run. I built two armies, wondering what to do. And, for what it's worth, it was Gary putting out the proposals for the Russian concession.

1913

A man is never more truthful than when he acknowledges himself a liar. – Mark Twain

While I'd promised England the two-way, Gary was doing his best to convince me otherwise. He eventually insisted that I take another run at the solo or he would fight Russia to the death while opening the Med and Italy to throw England the game. (I learned later that he'd offered the same deal to Bill who, being of better character and stronger moral fiber, declined to bite the hook.) Gary had removed A ARM in W'12 to show his sincerity. He would also help me take out Melinda to repay her treachery to him. His only deal points were that Russia vacate the Balkans, not take any Turkish centers, and agree to an E/R/T three-way if the solo failed. I had trouble with that last one and told him so, setting the stage for a lot of arguing and mistrust.

It took no time at all. Much as we wanted to trust each other, we couldn't. As Russian armies marched north (again), and I stabbed Bill (again), I wasn't moving everything out of the Balkans as Gary wanted and as he became more distrustful so did I. (We have a long history of this, we do.) He also took ROM (which we'd agreed on), but in W'13 built A SMY, an unneeded and destabilizing unit in my opinion. I'd calculated with Gary that I'd need France to win, and especially PAR, but England annihilated a key unit blunting the Russian attack almost before it's started. (I thought Gary was playing both sides of the fence by helping Bill with tactics but he denied it; Melinda later admitted to "maybe assisting Bill a little bit" in the defense of France.) Because of his insistence that I agree to a draw if the solo stalled, I was concerned I'd been spoofed (to use a Fassian term) by Gary into giving up the promised E/R two-way for a three-way. In W'13, Italy fell to two dots but kept A VEN and F ADR; England built two armies (headed for the mainland) and I built my ninth or tenth A MOS, getting ready to defend from England's counter-attack through France and Germany. Things were ugly all over.

1914

One never goes so far as when one doesn't know where one is going. – Goethe

With a total trust meltdown, Gary and I, knowing each other's tells so well, went crashing back to war as Russian armies reversed again and marched south while Turkey struck north. Promising to work with the E/R, Melinda again helped us and convoyed into the Balkans; for her help we'd sworn Italy would outlast Turkey. Pushing hard into France and with convoys into DEN and BEL, England shut the center of the board down for good even as I'd promised (again) that Russian was on board all the way for the E/R draw. I/R took GRE and divided Turkey's forces in half. But Bill, no doubt frustrated with my many broken promises, would say no more about the draw and replied only that Rotary would end with Turkey's destruction. I agreed, and why not? Reading the situation, though, I was concerned that we'd hit the tipping point and now it was England's game to win as Bill could reach 18 while Russia scrabbled to break through Turkey's brutal hedgehog defense. I began to get resigned to the fact that Bill's characteristically conservative strategy was going to prevail and win England the game. He'd earned it. But, for one last time, Gary had other ideas.

1915

It does not do to leave a dragon out of your calculations, if you live near him. – JRR Tolkien

England was on the advance everywhere, moving into the Med and sparring in Germany. When he convoyed the new A LON – BEL it looked like he was setting up for a final push into the German centers. Turkey lost TUN and BUL to combined E/I/R attacks while the noose tightened in Italy. Uber competitor that he is, Gary just couldn't stop the grinding. Reading the board, he saw as I had that England was poised against Germany, Iberia and Italy. In the Fall, Bill and I disagreed about who should take TYN. Originally I'd suggested he take it (to get closer to the Italian centers that were his as part of a 17-17 draw) but I wanted to get my fleet closer to Turkey. England supported me but the distrust grew. England took RUH with support and claimed it was an accidental use of blunt force. Bill had done this once or twice earlier in the game and I'd put it down to nerves, but this felt different. Not that I blamed him. Uncharacteristically, Melinda and I had fallen out of contact for a season or two and she was treading water and protecting her position. In two short seasons, Rotary had taken on the air of impending finality and we all felt it.

During the W'15 adjustments, I got an email from Gary telling me to call if I wanted to win the game. I called him back thinking there was nothing to lose in the face of an English win. He said that if I'd trust him and work out the two seasons of moves with him in 1916, he thought we could get Russia the solo before England took it. If I'd agree he'd remove armies ARM and CON and set the stage for a Russian twelfth hour win. I agreed and he pulled the armies. I was stunned by Gary's offer and wary, but I didn't have anything to lose as England bore down.

The slow conservative English Tortoise was about to be overtaken by a hare in Socrates' clothing.

1916

War is a series of catastrophes which result in victory. – Albert Pike

Gary and I coordinated closely and carefully walked through what was mostly a Turkish plan. England could force KIE which meant Russia would need to gain six dots to win, the five Turkish centers and Melinda's GRE. It required complete trust of the Sultan and opened Russia to ugly calamity if I was wrong. I believed Turkey didn't want England to win so I ignored my fears of ruin and moved as needed to execute the final Turco-Russian twist ending. There were tactical intricacies all over, but especially so in the collapsing defense of Germany and the invasion of Turkey. Even into the Fall the game was in the balance as Italy's fleet could influence the transfer of the 18th center, meaning England would win in 1917. When the smoke cleared, though, the dot count declared that Rotary was over and Russia was – by the skin of her teeth – victorious. "Win ugly" had never looked so good.

Closing Thoughts

I thought I played a good game, but not an overpowering game. The take away for me here will not be a new lesson, but an old one relearned at the knees of some masterful players: Russia cannot win with a down-the-middle strategy and must develop against one or the other of her flanks, preferably sooner over later. (I came close to winning down the middle in 1910 only by sheer luck.) Because Austria and Germany represented overwhelmingly strong/obvious early threats to Russia, though, and because I held France as ineffective and England as rusty and enigmatic (in the opening game), I felt compelled to neutralize the central powers before they neutralized me, and didn't focus on developing a flank like I should have. Of necessity, England became Russia's ally of choice over France in the battle for Germany, so the north flank didn't present as an opportunity until mid-game. The same was true in the south; I'd normally have looked hard at developing against Turkey, but Vince and I were doing so well it was hard to see it, especially once Italy made herself such an extraordinary target.

What seldom happens, though, is that when Russia misses the solo, that's almost always the death of them. But not here, so many things came together to make this game wrap around and around and around.

In the mid-game when I finally opted to strike north, Turkey's surprise moves/resignation of 1907 effectively whiplashed Russia north to south with a one-two punch. Try as I might, it was impossible to safely hit one flank without the other flank coming into play, especially after the 1905 stab of Italy reduced her ability to be a counter balance in the south. The same was true of France's troubles which kept her from playing a stronger counterweight in the north. As was clearly shown at the end of Rotary, only the Sultan's last minute self-immolation allowed Russia to move into the centers needed to win.

As always, the player changes created their own challenges and opportunities and required the other players to evolve and adapt in mid-strategy. Buz's replacement by David Hood was especially monumental and absolutely changed the tenor of the game. I delayed stabbing Bill for fear David would be the big winner of that fight, something that wouldn't have factored with Buz; it was only when Turkey and Italy were also nibbling at France that I felt ready to go. Though less dramatic, Vince's replacement by Gary had a similar effect; Vince and I would probably have been able to work through the 1907 tensions in a way that Gary and I could not. And what of the mugging of Italy? Would Melinda have trusted Gary and I as far as she trusted me and Vince? I don't think so, meaning the I/R I'd envisioned from the beginning might have lasted game-long.

In summary, what I did best in this game was to stay on good terms with (almost) everyone even through the treachery and stabs and mistrust and broken promises. As the commentators said over and over, alliances were made and broken and remade and broken again, and in this way Rotary was truly a classic postal game reflective of its era. Melinda and I mended fences four or five times (it helped that I always had a loaded gun at her head), as did Bill and I, and even me and Gary, and that lent an incredible amount of flexibility (and hopefully entertainment) to the game. Russia tried to solo twice and failed. It was the third attempt (with Turkey's suicide) that succeeded, and the Sultan's willingness to not only do it, but to actually suggest it, supports my premise. With little exception, I was able to work with everyone well throughout the game, and for that I am thankful to my fellow players and their very sportsmanlike understanding of the game. And, speaking of my fellow players ...

Steve (AUSTRIA) Well done under the circumstances, old friend. As I said earlier, I don't think you ever stood a chance, surrounded and swamped by PBM old farts from the beginning. Yeah, Mark's attack didn't help you any, but I don't think it was a game changer – a three-way dog pile would have been almost as quick. Thanks for being classy, and go easy on Mark. He was under the influence of old fiends ... er, friends.

Bill (ENGLAND) I am impressed, Bill, by your tenacity and perseverance. To come out of 15 or more years of retirement and almost pull this off is testament to your style. I enjoyed our on-again off-again alliance more than you know, and hope you will remain active now that Doug's dragged you out into the sunlight. And thanks for letting your better angels guide you to not eliminating Italy even though you had the chance and right to do so; not everyone is the gentleman you are.

Buz (FRANCE 1) Buz, Buz, Buz ... we hardly knew ye, old friend. Thanks for bringing back some KK press memories I hadn't pondered in 30 years, and thanks to you (and Gladys) for trying to restart some old press war magic. It wasn't to be in this game, Buz, but I wish you well and hope this finds you in good spirits and better health.

David (FRANCE 2) I have to wonder, David, what Rotary would have been like had you been in it from the start. (I said earlier that the mid-game F/R is a beauty to behold.) Your arrival got my pulse pounding. I did try to repay your loyalty (and those critical supports) with survival but I think England was weary of the war and had one too many wounds from his long fight you and your predecessor. It's a Diplomacy truism that we often bite the hand that feeds us. Thanks for joining the game as a standby and for providing such a spirited and brilliant defense.

Mark (GERMANY) Once more we have the scars to prove we're good friends. Maybe too many scars this round? Only time will tell. Thanks for a wonderful opening year and, as always, I am awed by your sheer brilliance and your many talents. I am also sorry for unkind things I said in the heat of the moment. You are one of the best, a deadly competitor, and a good man. Until we meet again on a board, or otherwise, I bid you farewell ... *ciao e ci vediamo, vecchio*.

Melinda (ITALY) Well, damn, Miss Kitty. I thought it would work out, really I did ... I told you we shouldn't move my fleet that far forward ... uh, it wasn't my fault. Thanks for a wonderful game, for being an exciting conspiratorial sounding board, and for all the personal support you gave me through a couple of emotionally trying years. I'd like to say I wish the outcome here had been different, but I'd be lying (and you'd know it), so let me end instead by saying I hope we again have a chance to try out this alliance thing. It's got to work out sooner or later.

Vince (TURKEY 1) You were the biggest surprise and the most fun to run across again after two or so decades. Our alliance was quiet and grand and I doubt I'll ever be involved in a better stab than the one we pulled off on uh ... Elinda-May. Now that you've read my true and unadulterated endgame statement, you know that I really did love you better, and that the misorder was an accident. My bad. Let's do it again when things are less hectic for you and your family.

Gary (TURKEY 2) Gary, as usual, you poked and prodded me to play a better game than I'd have otherwise played. (You, Mark, and Melinda have always had that effect on me.) The mistrust was never personal, and it certainly wasn't about old grudges. It was about respecting you and all those games and awards (and scalps) you've collected over the years. If Mark is the master psyops warrior, you're the master salesman; you've sharpened your play on the twin whetstones of poker finesse and a career in sales and I still check my pockets and my dot count every time we talk! <evilgrin> Thank you, as well, for coming into this as a standby and really shaking things up. Thanks, too, for deciding to play Kingmaker, and for deciding in the end to crown a Russian king. I know you've said you're done, but I sincerely hope this wasn't our last game together. Say it ain't so.

Doug (GM) Thank you very much, Mr. Kent, for a flawless and perfectly run game – you did not make a single adjudication error in 80 (!!!) seasons of play. Quite extraordinary. I appreciate the invitation you extended to me to play in Rotary and hope I held up my end of the bargain, with the exception of the press. (More on that below.) We all know what a thankless job GMing is and if there's anything I can do to show you our appreciation, please let me know. (Wait, I know – I'll send you a DVD as a prize! What's your pleasure, Mr. Kent? Pick or I'll be forced to send you one of my favorites ...)

About that press ... thanks to those of you who wrote it and entertained us, and to those of you who thought I had anything to do with it. I wrote the little bit of *Malice in Centerland* stuff early on and the *Tantrum of the Ottoman* bit near the end (sorry Gary, but it was funny), but the other stories were Melinda's and (probably) Mark's. Me? I just couldn't get the juices going in this game, for several reasons. The players and Doug know that my family suffered a serious tragedy in the early seasons of the game and my negotiations and press-writing were impaired for a while. There were several other related setbacks thereafter, too. Then in October 2011 (around 1909 in game time), I remarried and between planning the wedding, having the wedding, and the long honeymoon thereafter, I was not doing much more than what was required to negotiate and get orders in. Some of the (inevitable) animosities between players also cooled my creativity as it just wasn't fun. To all who expected more, I hope you understand.

That's a wrap, gentle readers. A final thank you is due you for reading this and for making it worth writing.

I would like to dedicate this game to the memory of Nikolai Aquino.

RD: *Not much more to say about Don's endgame that we hadn't said before. I continue to be amazed that, even after he made the greedy move for 18, Bill quickly forgave him and resumed his futile attacks in France instead of driving into the German centers.*

Vince Lutterbie (Turkey – Original Player): It all started innocently enough. I figured that Don and Melinda would be a high percentage initial alliance, so I sent letters to all, with a brief note to England that maybe we could consider a mid game alliance.

3 people told me that Austria was coming for me. I got a reassuring letter from Don saying that he would not take an opening to the Black Sea as a sign of war. Therefore, I opened defensively and decided to stave off the Austrian. Melinda stabbed him immediately, and I knew that the I/R would have me next on the hit list.

Luckily, Germany opened strong with 3 builds, so Don had to let Melinda and me finish Austria off, which took awhile. Buz sent me one note, not game related, and dropped out after doing very little. I like Buz and was hoping for some help there.

Anyway, I was mostly under the assumption that there was a strong I/R and a secondary E/R, despite protestations to the contrary.

Several game years passed with the destruction of Germany and Austria. I was hoping to do something with Germany, and we were communicating, but I could not yield too much to Italy, or else I might never gain the open seas. Russia and I were in a peaceful co-existence, but I have no doubt that if I expanded too quickly, that Russia would make peace with Germany and perhaps let England run all over France. It was tough for me to read every turn, but finally, Russia couldn't resist hitting Italy for a monster stab. I thought it was a good idea, as then, Russia would have to take England on; or so I thought.

Things got bogged down in the north and England kept asking me to let him into the Med. I could see no good reason to do this as he and Russia were clearly tap dancing in place in the north. It might be that they were waiting on me to make a move, but my options against England were limited and Melinda was a whirling dervish. The only constant was that Germany and Austria were out and Italy and France could play spoilers.

In real life, I had taken a new job which required me to drive several hours each way every day. The plan was to eventually move closer to work. I enjoyed the job, but it left little time for phone calls and detailed letters. Don kept in touch, and he also knew what I was going through. My mom is ill and has Alzheimer's, while my in-laws are both late 80s with one blind and the other needing assistance. My wife is an only child and my sole brother lives several states away. It was mostly up to my wife to care for all 3, and doctor's visits were becoming commonplace. Anyway, I had to return home several times from work during emergencies when my wife could not be in 2 places at once. Then came the news that my wife needed surgery as well, and perhaps 2 surgeries which would require no driving for 6 weeks each. I looked for, and found 2 part time jobs nearer home and she had her surgery (just one, after all) which went well. My time was spent taking people to the doctors and my second job required me to be out of town at times, so juggling the schedule became a trial.

Back to the game. England was making inroads against Russia and could basically take out France at any time with a concerted effort.

I could not keep up with my fellow dentist's (England) demands and he grew suspicious of my motives; as I was of his. Both asked the other to stab Russia, but I never did. I knew that my game was suffering and as Gary Behnen is a close friend (as a true friend and also geographically) I was beginning to think of him as a replacement. I felt that this was a serious game and Doug had put a lot of time into it. I finally succumbed to the inevitable and asked Doug to replace me; suggesting Gary.

I knew that there was some competition between Gary and Don, but didn't quite know the extent (I love both of those guys, and Melinda too, and would not hold a stab against any of them, as their reasons would be sound). Anyway, I thought that Gary would do very well and might turn England.

There appear to have been some inroads, but England has become a monster, and Gary may actually have to work with Don. That would be interesting and rewarding to see those 2 work it out.

Anyway, to summarize; mine was mostly a defensive position with the exception of the big stab, and I never, ever truly trusted Don, so I was always trying to keep an extra something in reserve for him. I appreciate his game play; and perhaps he could have soloed if he had stabbed me. I think he held back because he did not feel like piling on while I was having troubles. He sent my wife a card (she cried) and kept in touch by phone (Thanks Don!).

I had a good time, but made the correct call to leave the game.

I would love to play a game with Cooley where we are on opposite sides of the board and could perhaps work together toward an end game alliance; otherwise this was a great experience and I enjoyed playing my first non face-to-face game in 14 years.

Thanks again Doug.

Gary Behnen (Replacement Turkey): The call from an old friend Vince Lutterbie came as a surprise, however, he may have been the only person I could not say "no" to given the circumstances and that it was a Demo Game in Diplomacy World. I had been retired since my last game ended, had passed the BNC on to Vince and he and I had hosted Dipcon XXV in KC. Roughly 17 years and though I missed Diplomacy I knew it had long since changed from the game/hobby I knew and enjoyed. However reluctantly, I said yes. I would be willing to be the replacement. Demo Games always meant something to me as the very 1st one run in DW pages were part of my introduction to this grand game and hobby.

What I found was what appeared to be an alliance breaking down with Russia, Italy recently stabbed by that alliance, France in frustration, David himself a replacement player and Bill in England that seemed to be playing a different game. I received everyone's view of what had transpired except from Bill who immediately demanded I pull back and support him into Brest against France...had I known that this would be the sanest season until the end of the game I may have reconsidered!

After reviewing the board it was obvious that this was Russia's game to win. It was evident Don managed his opportunities very well and indeed, only the last season did Vince/Turkey put even a little fly in his ointment. What would absolutely astound me was the sheer total toadyism of England and Italy to Russia. Now Don is a fine communicator, but hypnotist? I didn't think that was one of his skills...apparently I was wrong.

David told me right up front that England and Italy were not playing "well" at least what you would expect from a Demo game i.e. players not toadying but playing the game. However, Melinda seemed fine in missives and indeed, open to turning the tables on Russia. I didn't take David's frustration into account enough and Melinda stabbed immediately. Unfortunately, to help her help us I convinced David to leave Marseilles open so she could have enough force to do so. Had I not been successful in that or simply didn't trust her, this game may have played quite differently. Perhaps Melinda had decided after the opening destruction of A/G that this would be Don's game...maybe her end game will help me to understand. Had she not joined back up with E/R England would have been crippled in his position on the continent and we would have Don rolling back in 1 game year. Whatever her motivation, I must say congrats to Don as he was and would continue to be the benefactor of E/I allegiance for most of the game.

Bill in England was perhaps one of the oddest players I've ever played with in a game. His one line missives, demands were actually funny but he didn't seem amused when I replied in kind. It was apparent he would not be someone I could expect to see the board for what it was and would be...this made somehow splitting the interwoven R/I the only way to change my course in the game.

Don knew his position well and although he wouldn't (and didn't) prosecute things as I would have, he knew he had E/I inexplicably "wrapped" as one of the intrepid commentators noted. Although he immediately said he had spoken with Bill and that they saw this as a quick 3-way that charade was quickly erased by Bill's first one line demand. Don and I rekindled the old give and take we had years ago, but it was obvious to me he felt he had this game and because of that working together fruitfully would never really take hold. It seemed I was tasked with stopping Russia as E/I simply would not raise a unit against Russia. Indeed, his resistance to coordinated moves made it more obvious and my unwillingness to be a "toady" made me #1 enemy/concern for Don. Although we toyed with alliance it wasn't until the very end that he would work with me and then only to salvage the win he passed up earlier. More on that later.

Surprisingly to me it seemed that David and I were against the E/I/R for most of the game. That they took so long to prosecute this war says more about them than us but suffice it to say that only Don's play impressed me and not really the tactical, but his ability to keep E/I in the fold and to pull them back after repeatedly stabbing them. That I never stabbed

them and he did and yet they willingly gave all to him is quite impressive to me regardless of how flawed they were or how ineffective my diplomatic overtures were. Kudos Don, that was an important part to your eventual success, but not all of it.

I've mulled this over and rather than rehash moves ad nauseum I will address a few important junctures in the game.

Italy and the stabs: Melinda is a good player in her own right and that assessment of her abilities is what she used against me. She knew she was willing to give Don this win. I didn't until I saw the 2nd stab coming. I know the commentary had us not talking, many stabs, etc., but really it was twice and the most important was right out of the gate. (The E/I/T came together when Don passed up Venice on his 1st failed solo bid. That alliance was close to changing the game when England stabbed I/T to return to his #1 Toady status to Russia.) We communicated frequently until the die was cast the last time. From that point I was "all in" against E/I/R and as I mentioned in the press, at that point it was against E/I. Why? Because they asked for it by toadying to the clear power/leader on the board.

Don's 1st attempt at a solo. I was bored; everyone was, so yes I implored him to put all of us out of the misery. It was there for the taking and that he bypassed Venice for a poor shot at Holland meant many more game years. Let me qualify that. His bypassing Venice when he took/stabbed for Marseilles coupled with his ploy to give Bill back his centers and Bill's willingness to fall in line like an obedient puppy meant many more game years.

Turning Point: Perhaps the most important moment of this game was when Bill eschewed the I/T that saved him for the exchange of centers from Russia. That he took the exchange, well, who wouldn't? The moment? Not only taking them but stabbing I/T that same move. He could have crippled Russia and made himself the clear power by accepting the centers AND prosecuting the attack on Russia for that one turn. The impact on Russia in France/Germany/W.Med if England had followed through as planned crushing to Russia. What could Don do? NOTHING! What could I/T do? NOTHING! If he then pushed into Russia what could Don do? NOTHING! If he just played that season out he could have then turned on I/T and sold it to Don as "hedging his bets" and Don would have had no choice but to accept facing the E/I/T otherwise. The game then would have been Bill's to win or dictate the results.

RD: *Yeah, this is the bit I never understood. Bill could have had his cake and eaten it, too.*

Russia's 2nd solo attempt and not willing to accept a 3-way if he didn't make it. Don always thought I was ready to stab him, indeed, it cost him this attempt or at least a 50/50 chance because he didn't beat England to the contested centers because he hedged his bets and left a couple units in the Balkans too long. In the most cogent email from England Bill finally asked/agreed to a 3-way. I told him yes, if he could stop Russia from soloing because I wouldn't break the alliance I had with Russia. I think that one season was my turn to frustrate Bill. When Don saw that he couldn't make it and agreed he cost himself the chance he then said he wouldn't accept the 3-way because he felt he could control England and at worst take a 2-way if he couldn't find another opening to take England down. His total honesty told me I already had lost my chance with England and that Don had him back in the fold.

England blissfully prosecuted the attack into the Med and spurned any overtures to attack Russia and go for the win. In retrospect, why should he? Other than the brief alliance with Don I was faithful in holding Russia back. Don was loathe to fight England because he didn't need to as England was not a threat to be aggressive. I guess Bill believed I would fight to the end to stop Russia for his benefit. He was wrong, again. I let Don know my "brother witch" was getting "heavy."

The game was nearing a conclusion and I mentioned earlier Russia's success in holding his toady's together. In the end Don's desire to play for the win, indeed, how he had played throughout and Bill's unwillingness to "play the game" made my decision easy...the execution would have to be precise.

Finishing as the largest power to a solo win is not a good place to be. Truly, it means you played the worse as you had the most to play with. Bill (and Melinda to a lesser degree) had really made this game an odd one, but Don had used everything he had to win. I had worked against Don's position to solo and indeed used his failed attempts to try and forge a different result as Bill's play left me that as my only viable course. In the end Don's "play" swayed me to offer him a chance to grasp a solo from the jaws of a draw or worst yet, defeat. Don in the end realized trusting me and the tactics was his only opportunity to actually win. When asked about Bill's execution up north I replied I was all for it! :D Obviously, the execution was perfect in the end.

Bill: I strongly feel your unwillingness to seize on multiple opportunities in this game and an outright slavish toadying really skewed this game. No hard feelings on my part but I am not a fan of that type of play, especially in a Demo Game. I am positive you are a good guy as evidenced by the time you gave in service to the hobby as BNC.

Melinda: I'm sure you have a reason for how you played this. Perhaps you felt you could manipulate Don letting him think he was controlling you. Maybe I just pushed too hard. Regardless, I wish you hadn't stabbed me so much in our last game together! <g> All the Best Melinda and thank you, again, for being my publisher, I truly could not have done it without you!

David, did I apologize enough for asking you to give Marseilles to help Italy??? In my defense it was hard to believe Bill's play given the 800# Bear in the room; it was incomprehensible to me that Melinda would also be infected enough to ally with the power that gutted her!!! Obviously, my Dip senses had been in mothballs too long as they were not yet tingling! Great to see you in the game, never the less and it reminds me it is high time I wander down to a Dixiecon again!

Donald, my fine feathered friend. Congratulations! You had this one in hand when they awakened me from my long slumber and I stumbled in. No, when you wouldn't ally I would not pledge Today's R Us, hey, if all your friends were cutting their throats???...Anyway, it was fun to be reacquainted through the game after all these years and it brought back moments of why I loved this hobby so much. Your play has grown and your diplomacy is as sharp as always. I'm glad we had this chance to play one more time. In the end, you did it man! All the best to you and your new bride, be happy my friend.

To the commentators: What a difficult job to do well, thank you!

Richard: Although not too much insight to the game it definitely brought back memories of the 70s and 80s. Thank you for those!

Jim: Yes, I've played poker since I was 4 and after Diplomacy really turned my gaming attention to live and tournament play. It is no surprise to me skills I had honed in playing Dip served me well at the tables especially playing with the some of the same players time and again. It was a pleasure meeting you for dinner on my way to Foxwoods I actually wish we had crossed paths before my Diplomacy involvement had waned. Specifically to your commentary I found you missed the mark a little more than Rick. Perhaps a little too much trying to impart grand design/motives to the moves. (Unless you had some insight from the players) I agree Don played well and it was all ducky and because of that in the end I played kingmaker at the last possible moment to be sure a certain style of play didn't triumph, even by accident. Thank you for all you have done for Diplomacy, it has been very impressive and when we needed you most.

I actually avoided talking to all the players in this game about ANYTHING at all while this game was going on. I really, really, really missed Don Williams. We hardly talked as this game went on. We've started talking again since this ended, and I relish that. I always try as a commentator to be entertaining, I know I'm not always right, but I hope I'm entertaining. Gary, I enjoyed meeting you too, and would like to be in better touch as well now that this game has ended.

Rick: I found you to be a little more discerning in this one. I know this is an impossible task but you made it entertaining and with Jim helped to offer potential insights into the play. I agree that commentary can and does influence play, however, there are so many potential influences on the game it is a trade off to help new players and those open to learning become better and hopefully more engaged players. Thank you!

Lastly, but certainly not least, our GM, Doug: You are the consummate professional. There have been a handful of outstanding GMs I've had the pleasure of playing in their games and you are one of them. Thank you for running this game. I believe strongly that Demo Games are important to the hobby and hope you continue them. Thank you, ever so much, for so ably accepting and executing the mantle of DW. You stand on the shoulders of others that have given so much to the hobby and you make it stronger by all you have done and continue to do for this great game and hobby. I know it can be thankless, which makes it all the more impressive. All the Best!

RD: *Hey, a player who addresses us! Is that allowed?* ☺

Richard Walkerdine (Commentator): ENDGAME 1916

On board the 'Further Glory' The Doctor rushed to General U'til. "General," he said, "we are almost there. Another half hour should see the voyage completed."

"Good news indeed old friend. I will brief the crew." He rushed away to summon his crew and trainees.

"Gentlemen," he began, "The Doctor says our journey is almost over and you are about to experience your first example of what a Fndili soldier is expected to do."

"Hail Fndili," shouted his audience as they all waved five tentacles in the sign of 'Never give up, never surrender'.

The old soldier felt very proud and this time actually smiled. "Thank you Gentlemen," he replied. "As the humans and these Orc creatures are likely to be in close combat we cannot risk the use of bombs. So the plan is for Lieutenant R'lok to use our laser cannon to take out as many as possible and then you will descend on jet packs to finish the rest. Go and prepare your kit and may the Goddess be with you."

"Hail Fndili," they shouted again as they left the briefing.

Meanwhile, back on Middle Earth, Galadriel brushed away more tears. "There is one possible way Legolas. Come, to that wooded hill to the east."

The four companions rode to where she directed. "Here," said the Elf Queen, "behind these bushes. There is a hidden tunnel that will take us into the heart of Helm's Deep."

They followed her as she directed and after riding through some rough and prickly undergrowth they found the entrance. They all dismounted and ran into the tunnel. Merlin again used his staff to light the way and Brooklyn kept a very firm grip on Excalibur.

At the end of the tunnel they emerged to a scene of almost total chaos. Men and Orcs were fighting and screaming and the men were being pushed back. Legolas used his bow and Brooklyn used Excalibur while Merlin sent fire bolts into the enemy with his staff. Galadriel used her rapier to defend herself as she rushed into the human defenders. "Araborn," she shouted, "where is he?"

"Heading to the Keep lady," replied a soldier. "I fear that will be our last chance."



"Not if I can help it," she replied as Brooklyn sliced off the heads of two Orcs and then an Uruk-hai, with great cheering from the human fighters. Then she saw the King on his steed and rushed to him.

"King Araborn," she gasped, "I am Galadriel and I have brought who I could to help in this battle."

The King gave a wry smile. "My Lady," he replied, "I thank you most sincerely, but I fear it is too little and too late." Though he raised his eyebrows as he saw Brooklyn slice through two more Orcs.. "But we ride to the keep for what I fear will be our last stand."

"Hold fast Araborn," replied the Elf Queen, "more help should be here soon. Watch the sky."

The King looked up with a puzzled expression and then saw the clouds growing more dense. There was a sound of thunder and then the 'Further Glory' appeared, firing its laser cannons at the Orc forces.

Several hundred were killed with the first blast and many more with the next, to much delighted cheering from the human defenders and much screaming from the Orcs, who began to retreat. Further salvos were fired until the Orcs were reduced to only a few thousand in isolated groups.

The human defenders cheered and rushed at them, with Brooklyn near the front. Then the Fndili soldiers began descending on their jet packs to assist, armed with hand lasers. With the Orcs now in retreat the humans continued to rush at them, brandishing their weapons and shouting. The Fndili took up station behind the retreating Orcs, trapping them between the two forces. The Orcs had nowhere to go.

It took an hour but then it was over, with much cheering from all involved. The 'Further Glory' slowly settled on the ground beyond Helm's Deep and The Doctor and General U'til emerged. Araborn looked at Galadriel. "Strange creatures indeed My Lady, but most welcome."

The Elf Queen smiled. "Come King Araborn, I will make the introductions."

There was much celebrating over the next few hours as men and Fndili met and greeted each other, and all celebrated a great victory. Then Araborn, Brooklyn, Galadriel, Merlin, Legolas, The Doctor and General U'til all met for a final conference. King Araborn bowed deeply. "General, I cannot thank you enough. Without your help I fear all would have been lost. The Orcs are now finally defeated and Middle Earth will be forever in your debt."

"It was the least we could do King Araborn," replied the General. "After Merlin, The Doctor and young Brooklyn saved our own realm it was us who were in debt. But now I fear we must depart. The training mission is ended and Homeworld awaits us, with the help of The Doctor." He bowed to the King, who smiled and nodded in return.



Brooklyn looked at the Elf Queen with some tears in his eyes. "Will you be coming also Queen Galadriel?" he asked.

She smiled her lovely smile.

"I fear not Brooklyn. Legolas and I will stay here with King Araborn for a few days and then return to our own realm. There is a labyrinth some miles to the north and we can use it to make our return. But you have done well, oh so very well, and I thank you." She leaned down and kissed him on the forehead. "Your destiny is now fulfilled."

Merlin, The Doctor, General U'til and Brooklyn (brushing away some more tears) returned to the 'Further Glory' and it slowly ascended with Araborn, Legolas and Galadriel waving a last

farewell.

The return trip was uneventful but General U'til called one last briefing session. "Gentlemen," he began, "you have helped win an epic battle and proven yourselves true warriors of the Fndili Empire. When we return to Homeworld I will add this to the Fndili Book of Legends and will name it 'The Great Battle of Fearlessness'. I thank you all. Hail Fndili"

"Hail Fndili," shouted his audience as they all waved five tentacles again in the sign of 'Never give up, never surrender'.

The old soldier returned to the Tardis to say his last farewells. Brooklyn gave him a final hug, brushed away a few more tears, and then he, Merlin and The Doctor entered the Tardis to return to Earth in Brooklyn's timeframe.



Once again Brooklyn threw Excalibur into the water and once again the Lady of the Lake caught it.

But this time it was not returned. Merlin rested a hand on the young boy's shoulder. "Queen Galadriel was of course correct. Your destiny has now been fulfilled and both our galaxy and all of Middle Earth will be forever in your debt".

The young boy brushed away some more tears. "But will I ever see you or the Doctor again?"

Merlin smiled. "Who knows Brooklyn? The timestreams weave intricate patterns and there is no knowing what may befall. But now you must return home and get some much needed sleep".

Brooklyn made his way back to his room in the stadium. He was very tired and quickly got into his bed. As he started to drift off he held the Orb of the Goddess and thought about his adventure. 'Merlin, The Doctor, elves, Excalibur, aliens. Oh crikey, I wonder if that means there really is a Stargate?'

And then he fell asleep.

RD: I write this commentary on the day that Doug posted notice to Facebook that Richard passed away on September 6. I did not know Richard at all, but enjoyed his contributions to this game immensely.

JFB: I similarly write on the same day after hearing this sad news. I am hoping we can get some people to write about Richard elsewhere in Diplomacy World, we shall see. But I know for me, I met Richard in person once, at Manorcon/World DipCon many years ago, but I spent many an hour sorting through his writing in old Mad Policy szines and read everything here with relish. I also missed that this WAS him at first as well. Strike up the band, let the band play on.....



Appendix

World DipCon 22 - Report on the top board

Assembled by Rick Desper

The game started with the power selection.

From the report of Dan Burgess, tournament director:

"Michael " Doc" Binder was the third seed in the World Championship Game. Joining him on that board were Don Scheifler of Houston (1); Matt Shields of Portland, Ore. (2); Adam Sigal of State College, Penn. (4); Robert Rousse of Vermont (5); Peter Yeargin of Herndon, Va. (6); and Peter Lokken of Chicago (7)."

The seeding did not determine the power selection order. Rather, it set up a process whereby the players selected their selection order. Basically, the top seed got to pick his selection position, the second player got to pick his selection position relative to the lower seeds, and so on.

The effects of the selection order were many. The people who chose earlier would have a better chance at getting the power(s) they desired, but the people who selected later would have a better idea where other people were playing. Also, the tie-breaker for the final board was reverse selection order. So in the case of a tie between two or more players at the end of the game, the one who selected last would be declared the winner.

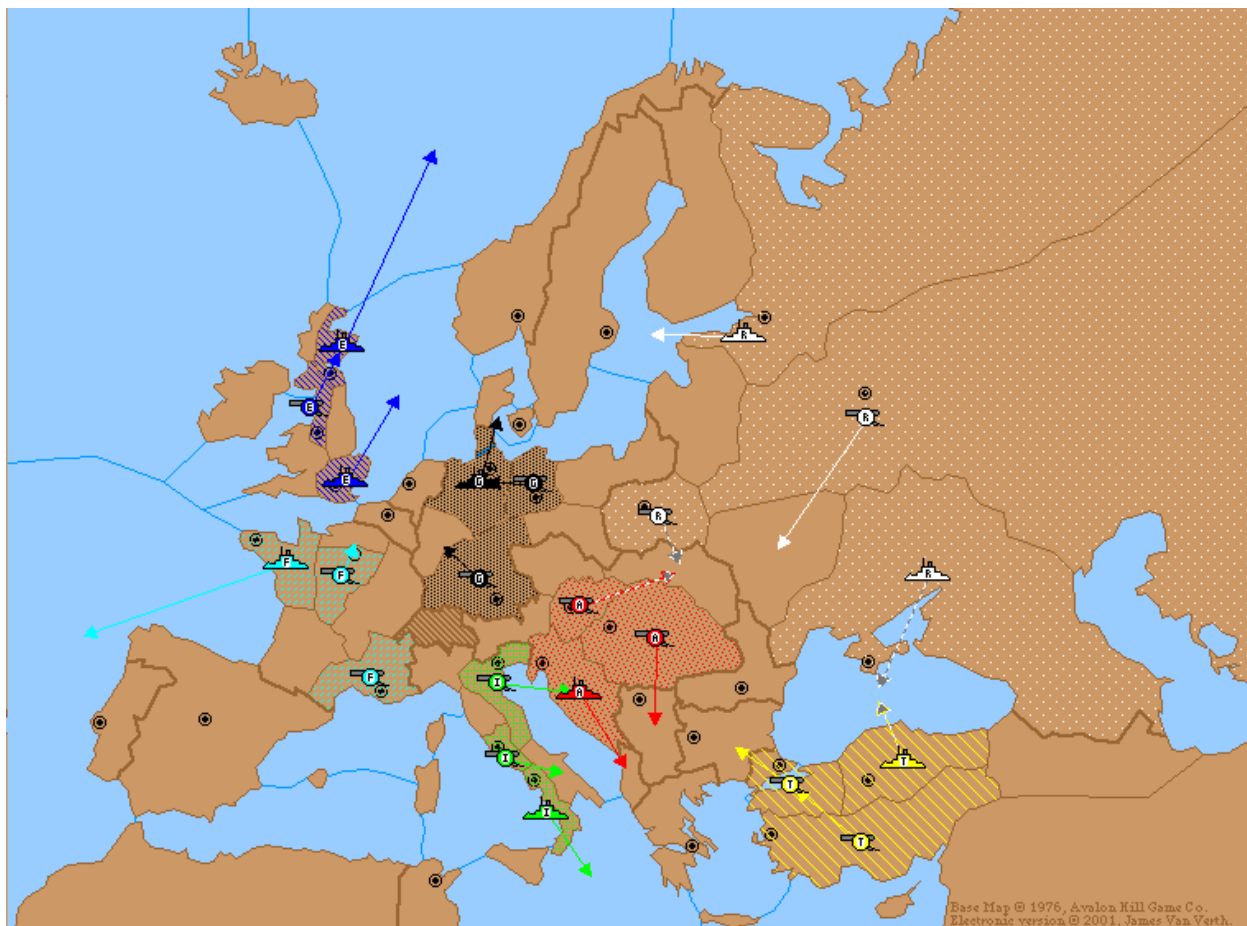
It might be simpler to explain the process as it transpired.

1. Peter Lokken had no choice to make as the final qualifier.
2. Peter Yeargin went next, and chose to pick his country before the other Peter. (Order so far: PY, PL)
3. Robert Rousse was next, and chose to pick before either of them. (Order so far: RR, PY, PL)
4. At this point, Adam Sigal decided to select his power after Robert but before either Peter. (Order so far: RR, AS, PY, PL)
5. Next, Doc decided to select his power before Robert. (Order so far: MB,RR, AS, PY, PL)
6. Matt Shields had the second-to-last choice; he chose to go after Adam but before the Peters. (Order so far: MB, RR, AS, MS, PY, PL)
7. Finally, Don Scheifler, the top seed coming in, decided to pick third. (Selection order: MB, RR, DS, AS, MS, PY, PL)

The powers they then selected, in order:

1. Binder – France
2. Rousse – England
3. Scheifler – Turkey
4. Sigal – Italy
5. Shields – Austria
6. Yeargin – Germany
7. Lokken – Russia

And away we go...



Spring 1901

Austria:

A Budapest - Serbia
F Trieste - Albania
A Vienna - Galicia (*Bounce*)

England:

F Edinburgh - Norwegian Sea
A Liverpool - Edinburgh
F London - North Sea

France:

F Brest - Mid-Atlantic Ocean
A Marseilles Hold
A Paris - Picardy

Germany:

A Berlin - Kiel
F Kiel - Denmark

A Munich - Ruhr

Italy:

F Naples - Ionian Sea
A Rome - Apulia
A Venice - Trieste

Russia:

A Moscow - Ukraine
F Sevastopol - Black Sea (*Bounce*)
F St Petersburg(sc) - Gulf of Bothnia
A Warsaw - Galicia (*Bounce*)

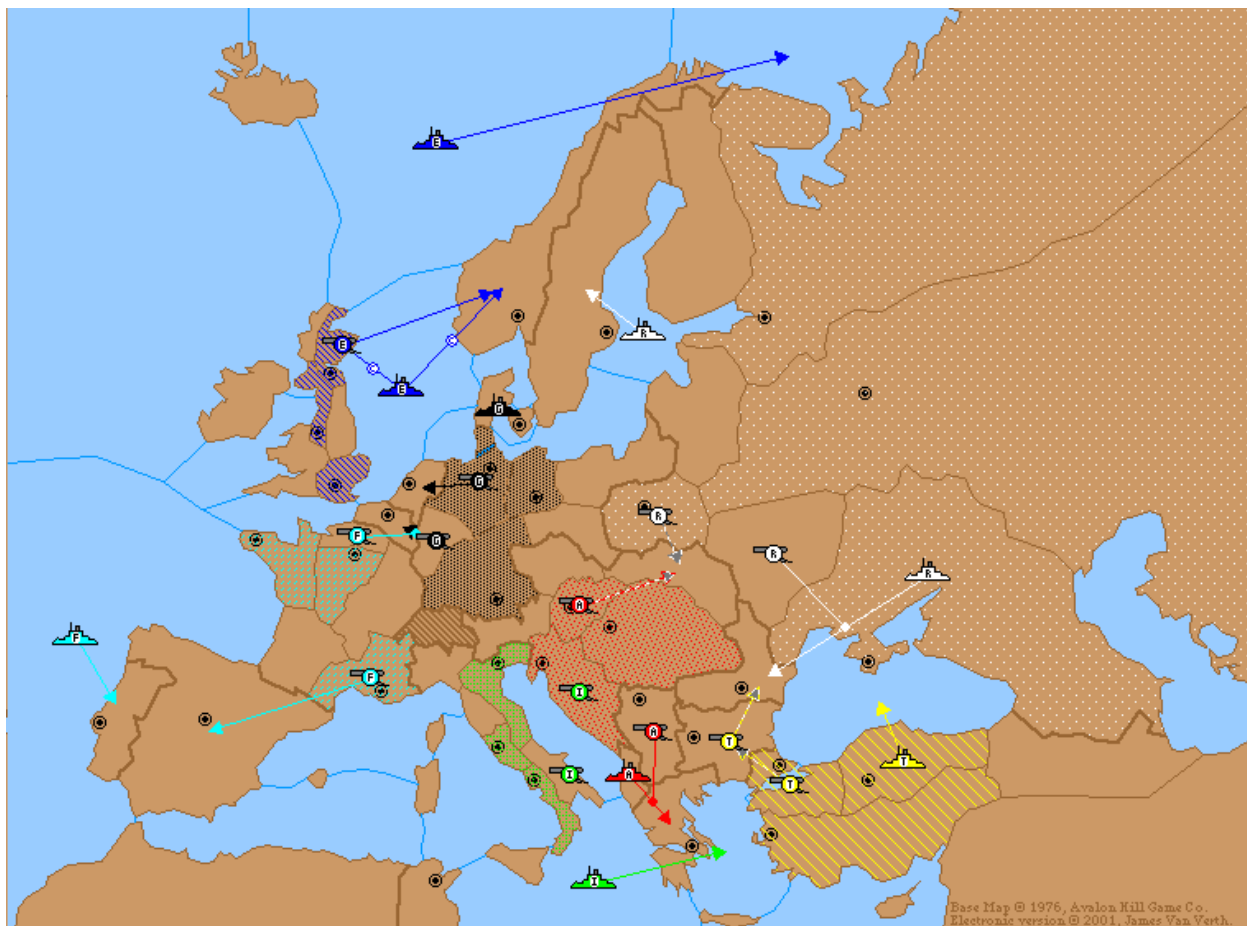
Turkey:

F Ankara - Black Sea (*Bounce*)
A Constantinople - Bulgaria
A Smyrna - Constantinople

Observer's thoughts:

We see Italy in Trieste. Was this move arranged or not? With time pressure a factor as well as the need to top the board, Sigal likely thinks he needs to go for the fastest potential growth strategy for Italy.

"Can't tell anything yet." - Robert Rousse.



Fall 1901

Austria:

F Albania - Greece
A Serbia Supports F Albania - Greece
A Vienna - Galicia (*Bounce*)

England:

A Edinburgh - Norway
F North Sea Convoys A Edinburgh - Norway
F Norwegian Sea - Barents Sea

France:

A Marseilles - Spain
F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - Portugal
A Picardy Supports A Ruhr - Belgium

Germany:

F Denmark Hold
A Kiel - Holland

A Ruhr - Belgium

Italy:

A Apulia Hold
F Ionian Sea - Aegean Sea
A Trieste Hold

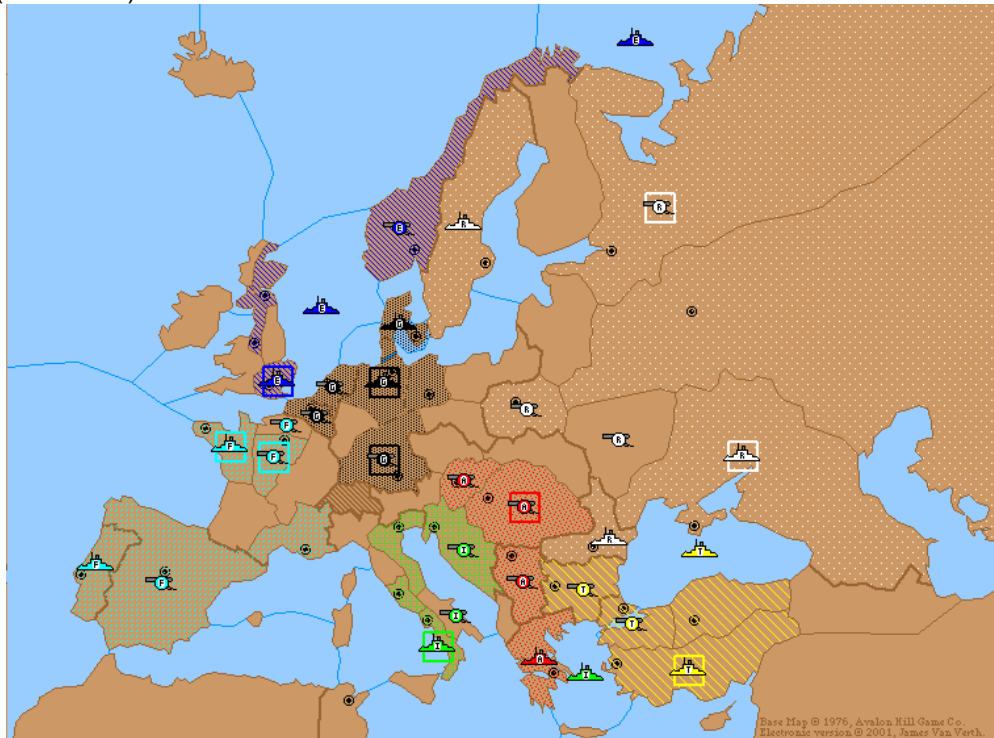
Russia:

F Gulf of Bothnia - Sweden
F Sevastopol - Rumania
A Ukraine Supports F Sevastopol - Rumania
A Warsaw - Galicia (*Bounce*)

Turkey:

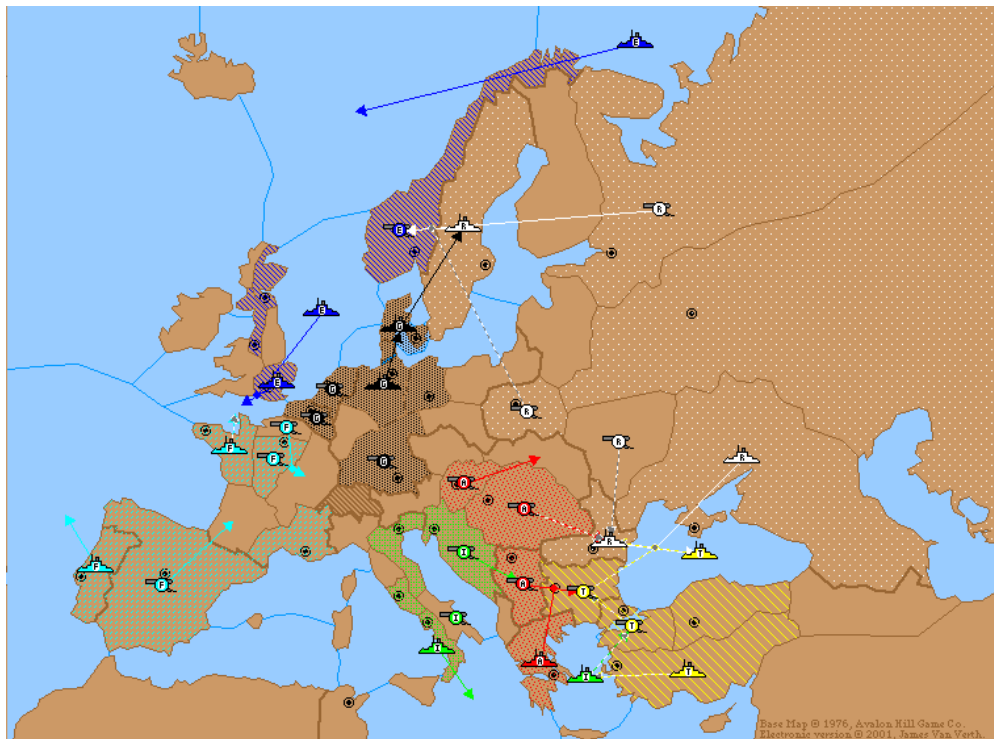
F Ankara - Black Sea
A Bulgaria - Rumania (*Fails*)
A Constantinople - Bulgaria (*Fails*)

Winter 1901 map (with builds)



Overheard at roughly this point: Binder -> Shields "Looks like an I/R to me."

Spring 1902



Austria:
 A Budapest - Rumania (*Bounce*)
 F Greece Supports A Serbia - Bulgaria

A Serbia - Bulgaria
 A Vienna - Galicia

England:
 F Barents Sea - Norwegian Sea
 F London - English Channel
 F North Sea Supports F London - English Channel
 A Norway Hold (*Dislodged*) (Retreats to Finland)

France:
 F Brest - English Channel (*Fails*)
 A Paris - Burgundy
 A Picardy Supports A Paris - Burgundy
 F Portugal - Mid-Atlantic Ocean
 A Spain - Gascony

Germany:
 A Belgium Hold
 F Denmark - Sweden
 A Holland Hold
 F Kiel - Denmark
 A Munich Hold

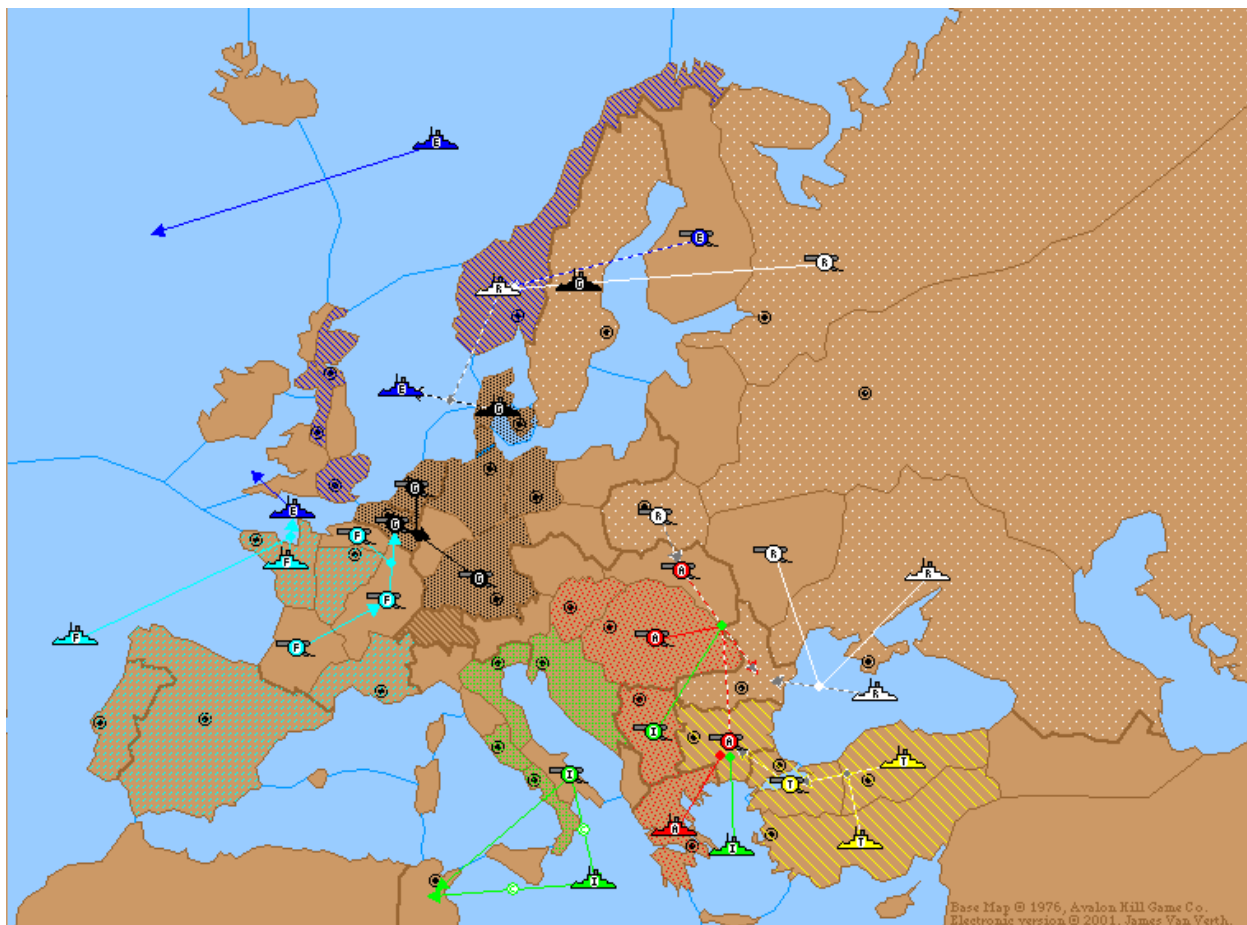
Italy:
 F Aegean Sea - Constantinople (*Fails*)

A Apulia Hold
 F Naples - Ionian Sea
 A Trieste - Serbia

Russia:
 F Rumania - Black Sea
 F Sevastopol Supports F Rumania - Black Sea
 A St Petersburg Supports F Sweden - Norway
 F Sweden - Norway
 A Ukraine - Rumania (*Bounce*)
 A Warsaw Supports F Sweden - Norway (*Fails*)

Turkey:
 F Black Sea - Rumania (*Dislodged*)
 A Bulgaria Supports F Black Sea - Rumania (*Disbanded*)
 A Constantinople Supports A Bulgaria (*Cut*)
 F Smyrna - Aegean Sea (*Fails*)

Asked for comment, Scheffler says "it would be an expletive deleted."



Fall 1902

Austria:
 A Budapest Supports A Galicia - Rumania
 A Bulgaria Supports A Galicia - Rumania (*Cut*)

A Galicia - Rumania (*Bounce*)
F Greece Supports A Bulgaria

England:
F English Channel - Irish Sea
A Finland - Norway (*Fails*)
F North Sea Hold
F Norwegian Sea - North Atlantic Ocean

France:
F Brest - English Channel
A Burgundy - Belgium
A Gascony - Burgundy
F Mid-Atlantic Ocean Supports F Brest - English Channel
A Picardy Supports A Burgundy - Belgium

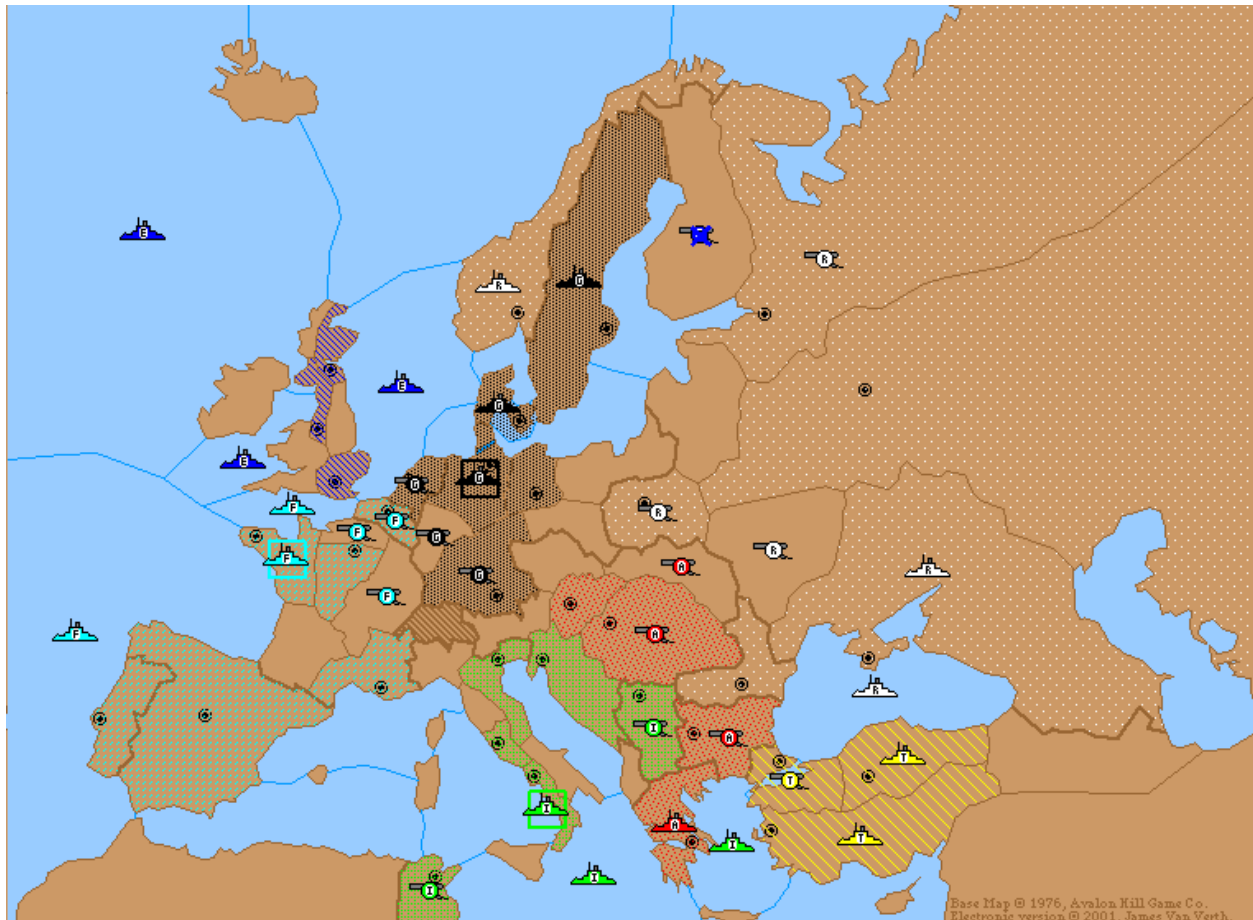
Germany:
A Belgium - Ruhr
F Denmark - North Sea (*Fails*)
A Holland Supports A Belgium - Ruhr

A Munich Supports A Belgium - Ruhr
F Sweden Hold

Italy:
F Aegean Sea Supports A Bulgaria
A Apulia - Tunis
F Ionian Sea Convoys A Apulia - Tunis
A Serbia Supports A Galicia - Rumania

Russia:
F Black Sea - Rumania (*Bounce*)
F Norway Supports F Denmark - North Sea (*Cut*)
F Sevastopol Supports F Black Sea - Rumania
A St Petersburg Supports F Norway
A Ukraine Supports F Black Sea - Rumania
A Warsaw - Galicia (*Fails*)

Turkey:
F Ankara - Constantinople (*Fails*)
A Constantinople - Bulgaria (*Fails*)
F Smyrna Supports F Ankara - Constantinople (*Fails*)



Winter 1902

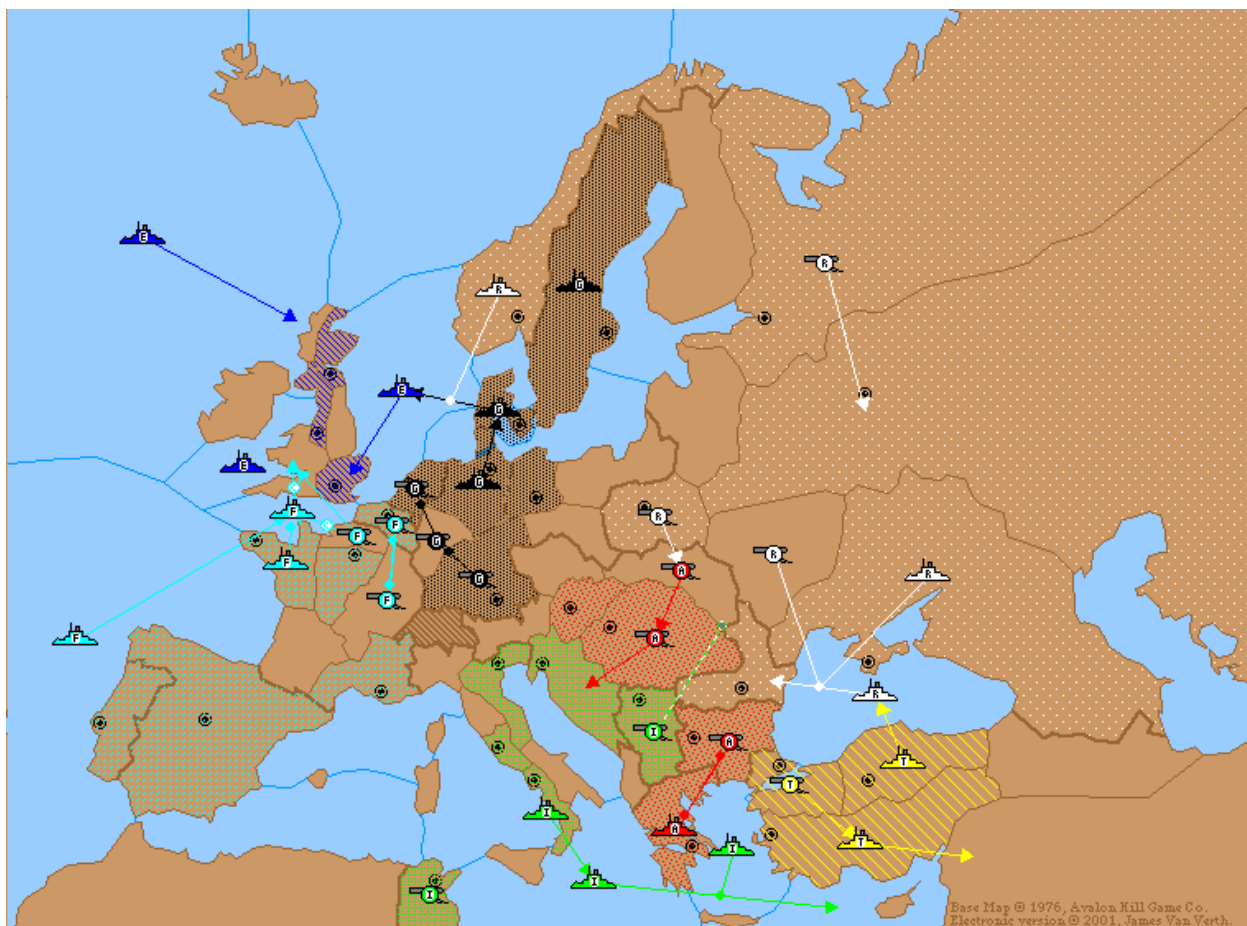
Ownership:

Austria: Budapest, Bulgaria, Greece, Vienna.

England: Edinburgh, Liverpool, London.
 France: Belgium, Brest, Marseilles, Paris, Portugal, Spain.
 Germany: Berlin, Denmark, Holland, Kiel, Munich, Sweden.
 Italy: Naples, Rome, Serbia, Trieste, Tunis, Venice.
 Russia: Moscow, Norway, Rumania, Sevastopol, St Petersburg, Warsaw.
 Turkey: Ankara, Constantinople, Smyrna.

Adjustments:

Austria: Supp 4 Unit 4 Build 0
 England: Supp 3 Unit 4 Remove 1
 France: Supp 6 Unit 5 Build 1
 Germany: Supp 6 Unit 5 Build 1
 Italy: Supp 6 Unit 4 Build 2
 Russia: Supp 6 Unit 6 Build 0
 Turkey: Supp 3 Unit 3 Build 0



Spring 1903

Austria:
 A Budapest - Trieste
 A Bulgaria Supports F Greece
 A Galicia - Budapest
 F Greece Supports A Bulgaria

England:
 F Irish Sea, no move received

F North Atlantic Ocean - Clyde
 F North Sea - London

France:
 A Belgium Supports A Burgundy
 F Brest Supports F English Channel
 A Burgundy Supports A Belgium
 F English Channel Convoys A Picardy - Wales
 F Mid-Atlantic Ocean Supports F English Channel
 A Picardy - Wales

Germany:

F Denmark - North Sea
A Holland Hold
F Kiel - Denmark
A Munich Supports A Ruhr
A Ruhr Supports A Holland
F Sweden Hold

Italy:

F Aegean Sea Supports F Ionian Sea - Eastern
Mediterranean
F Ionian Sea - Eastern Mediterranean
F Naples - Ionian Sea
A Serbia Supports A Galicia - Rumania (*Void*)
A Tunis Hold

Russia:

F Black Sea - Rumania

F Norway Supports F Denmark - North Sea

F Sevastopol Supports F Black Sea - Rumania

A St Petersburg - Moscow

A Ukraine Supports F Black Sea - Rumania

A Warsaw - Galicia

Turkey:

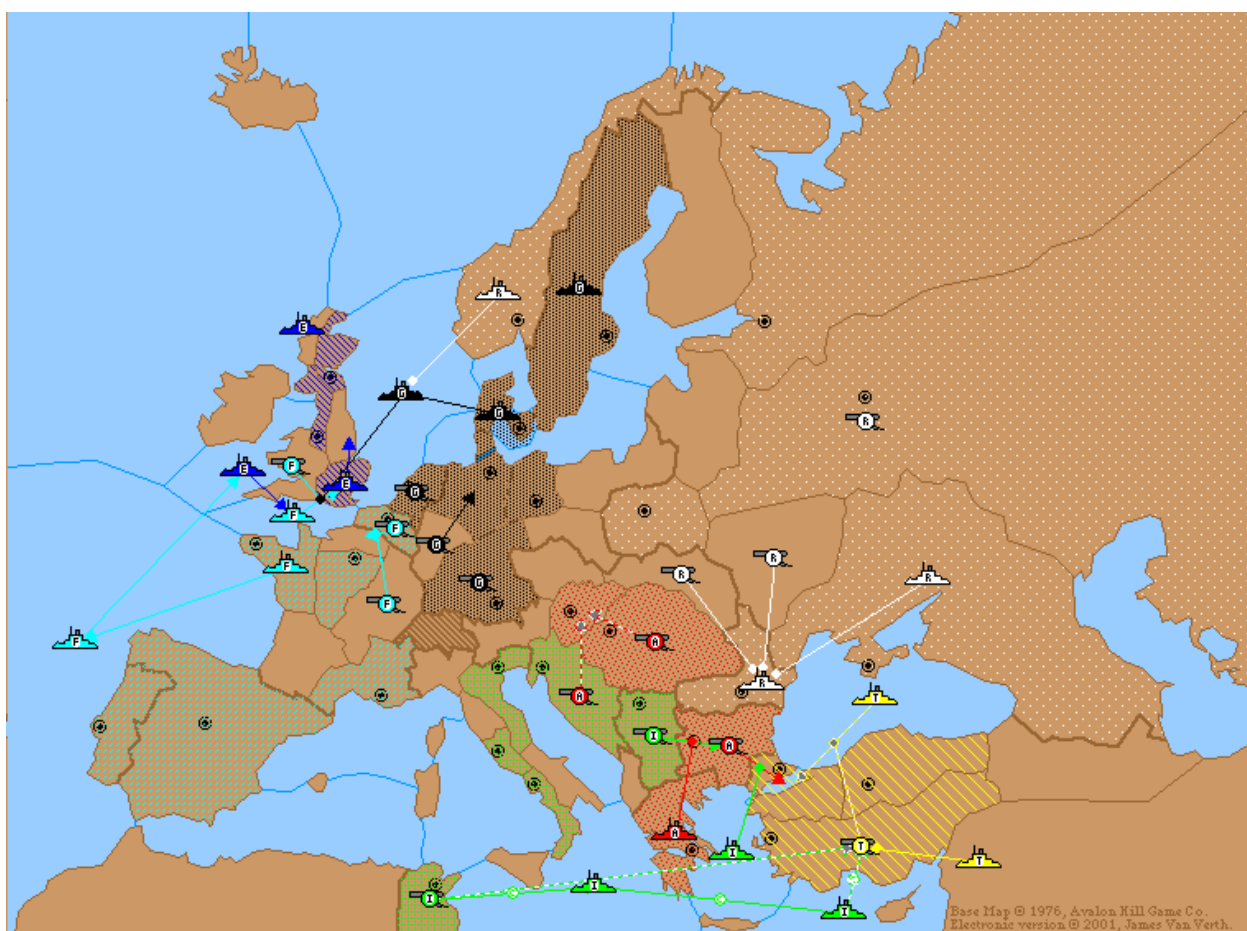
F Ankara - Black Sea

A Constantinople - Smyrna

F Smyrna - Syria

Robert Rousse had intended to order Iri – Wal, but forgot
to write any order for F Iri.

“That disorder seals my fate.”



Fall 1903

Austria:

A Budapest - Vienna (*Bounce*)
A Bulgaria - Constantinople
F Greece Supports A Serbia - Bulgaria
A Trieste - Vienna (*Bounce*)

England:

F Clyde, no move received

F Irish Sea - English Channel

F London - Yorkshire

France:

A Belgium - Picardy

F Brest - Mid-Atlantic Ocean

A Burgundy Supports A Belgium - Picardy

F English Channel - London

F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - Irish Sea

A Wales Supports F English Channel - London

Germany:

F Denmark Supports F North Sea

A Holland Hold

A Munich Hold

F North Sea Supports F English Channel - London

A Ruhr - Kiel

F Sweden Hold

Italy:

F Aegean Sea Supports A Bulgaria - Constantinople

F Eastern Mediterranean Convoys A Tunis - Smyrna

F Ionian Sea Convoys A Tunis - Smyrna

A Serbia - Bulgaria

A Tunis - Smyrna (*Fails*)

Russia:

A Galicia Supports F Rumania

A Moscow Hold

F Norway Supports F North Sea

F Rumania Hold

F Sevastopol Supports F Rumania

A Ukraine Supports F Rumania

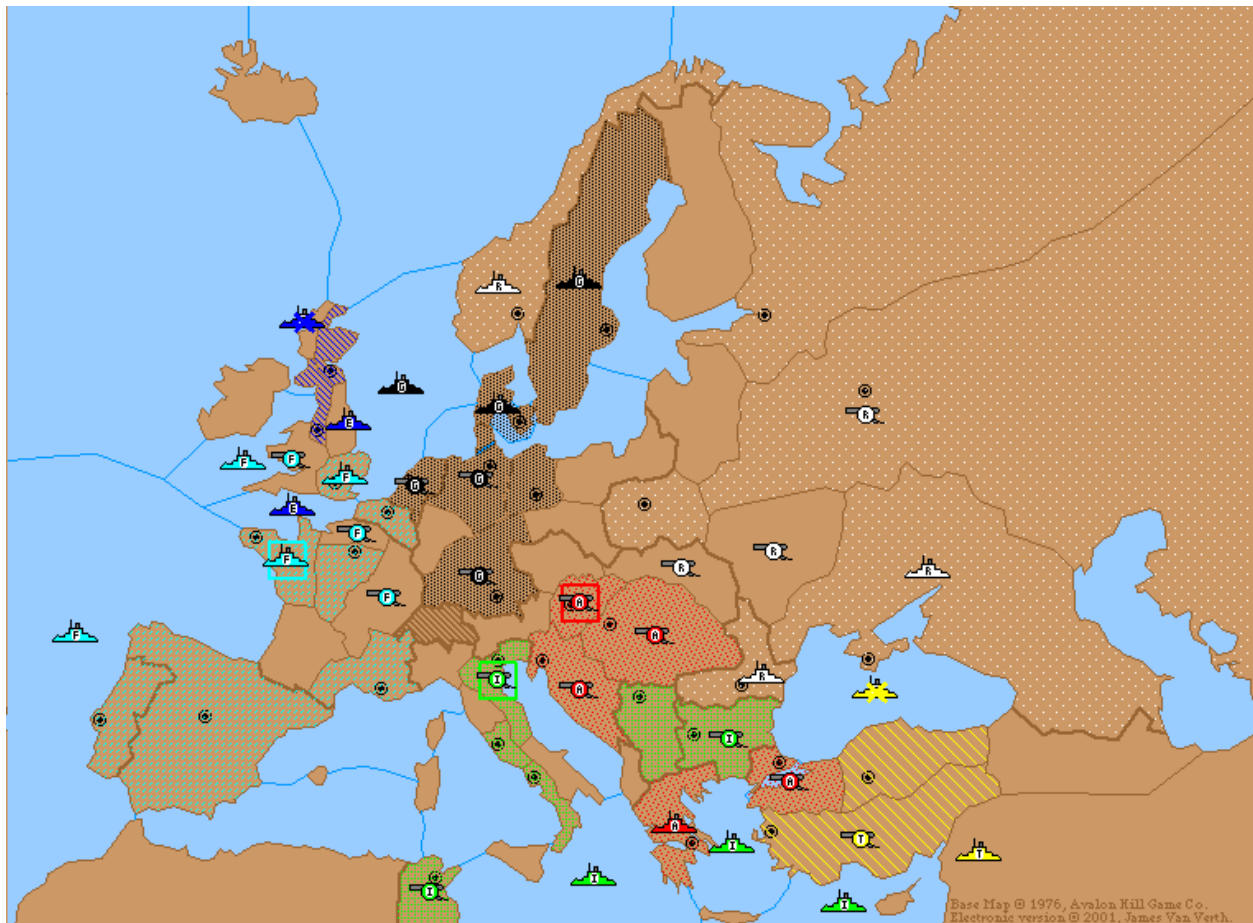
Turkey:

F Black Sea - Constantinople (*Fails*)

A Smyrna Supports F Black Sea - Constantinople (*Cut*)

F Syria Supports A Smyrna

Note that the misdirection from Austria and Italy tricked Turkey into leaving Constantinople under-defended.



Winter 1903

Ownership:

Austria: Budapest, Constantinople, Greece, Trieste, Vienna.

England: Edinburgh, Liverpool.

France: Belgium, Brest, London, Marseilles, Paris, Portugal, Spain.

Germany: Berlin, Denmark, Holland, Kiel, Munich, Sweden.

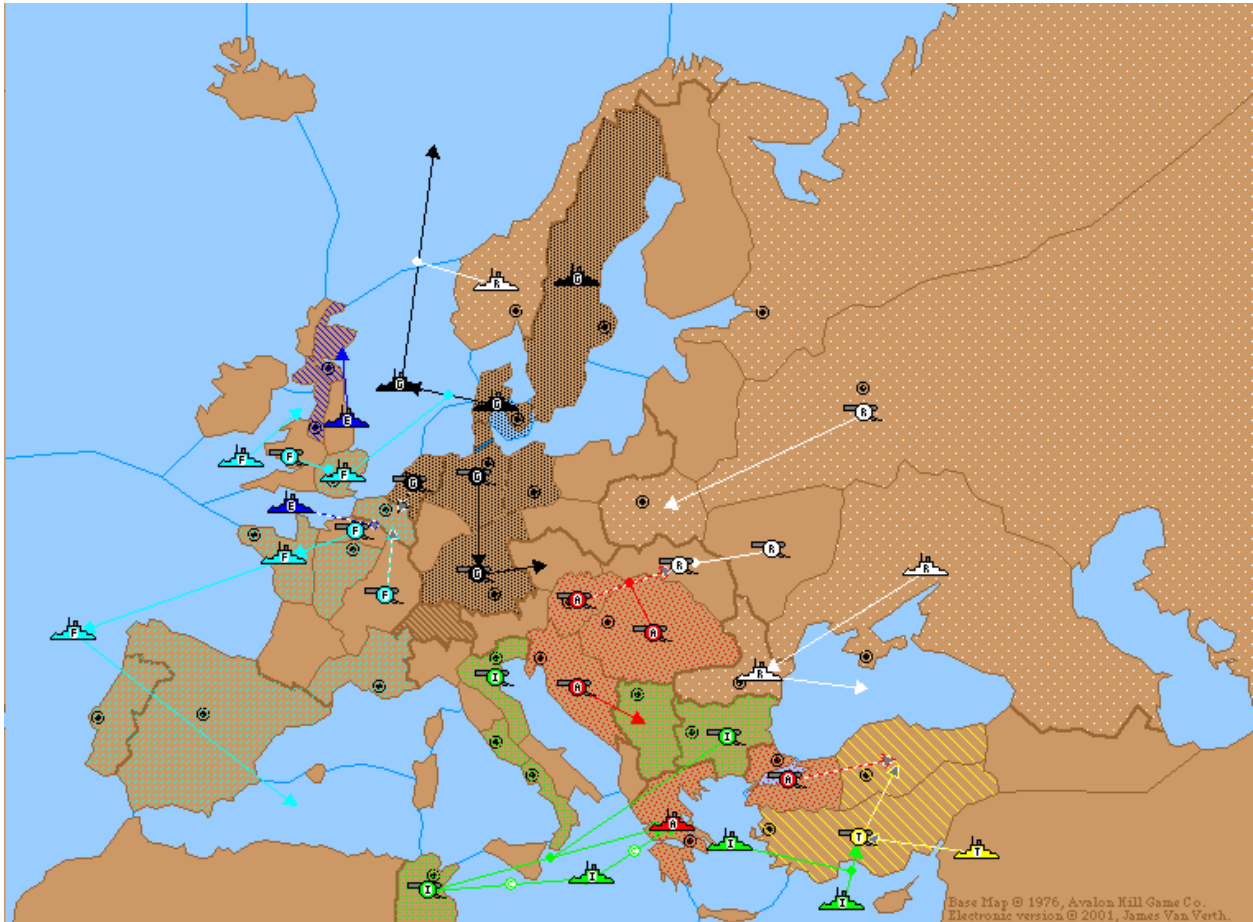
Italy: Bulgaria, Naples, Rome, Serbia, Tunis, Venice.

Russia: Moscow, Norway, Rumania, Sevastopol, St Petersburg, Warsaw.

Turkey: Ankara, Smyrna.

Adjustments:

Austria: Supp 5 Unit 4 Build 1
England: Supp 2 Unit 3 Remove 1
France: Supp 7 Unit 6 Build 1
Germany: Supp 6 Unit 6 Build 0
Italy: Supp 6 Unit 5 Build 1
Russia: Supp 6 Unit 6 Build 0
Turkey: Supp 2 Unit 3 Remove 1



Spring 1904

Schiefler: "Germany is quietly gaining great position"
Lokken: "That's how he does it."

Austria:

A Budapest Supports A Vienna - Galicia
A Constantinople - Ankara (*Bounce*)
F Greece Hold (*Dislodged*) (Disbanded!)
A Trieste - Serbia
A Vienna - Galicia (*Fails*)

England:

F English Channel Supports A Picardy - Belgium
(*Void*)
F Yorkshire - Edinburgh

France:

F Brest - Mid-Atlantic Ocean
A Burgundy - Belgium (*Bounce*)
F Irish Sea - Liverpool
F London Supports F Denmark - North Sea
F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - Western Mediterranean
A Picardy - Brest
A Wales Supports F London

Germany:

F Denmark - North Sea
A Holland - Belgium (*Bounce*)
A Kiel - Munich
A Munich - Bohemia
F North Sea - Norwegian Sea

F Sweden Hold

Italy:

F Aegean Sea Supports F Eastern Mediterranean - Smyrna

A Bulgaria Supports A Tunis - Greece

F Eastern Mediterranean - Smyrna

F Ionian Sea Convoys A Tunis - Greece

A Tunis - Greece

A Venice Hold

Russia:

A Galicia, no move received

A Moscow - Warsaw

F Norway Supports F North Sea - Norwegian Sea

F Rumania - Black Sea

F Sevastopol - Rumania

A Ukraine Supports A Galicia

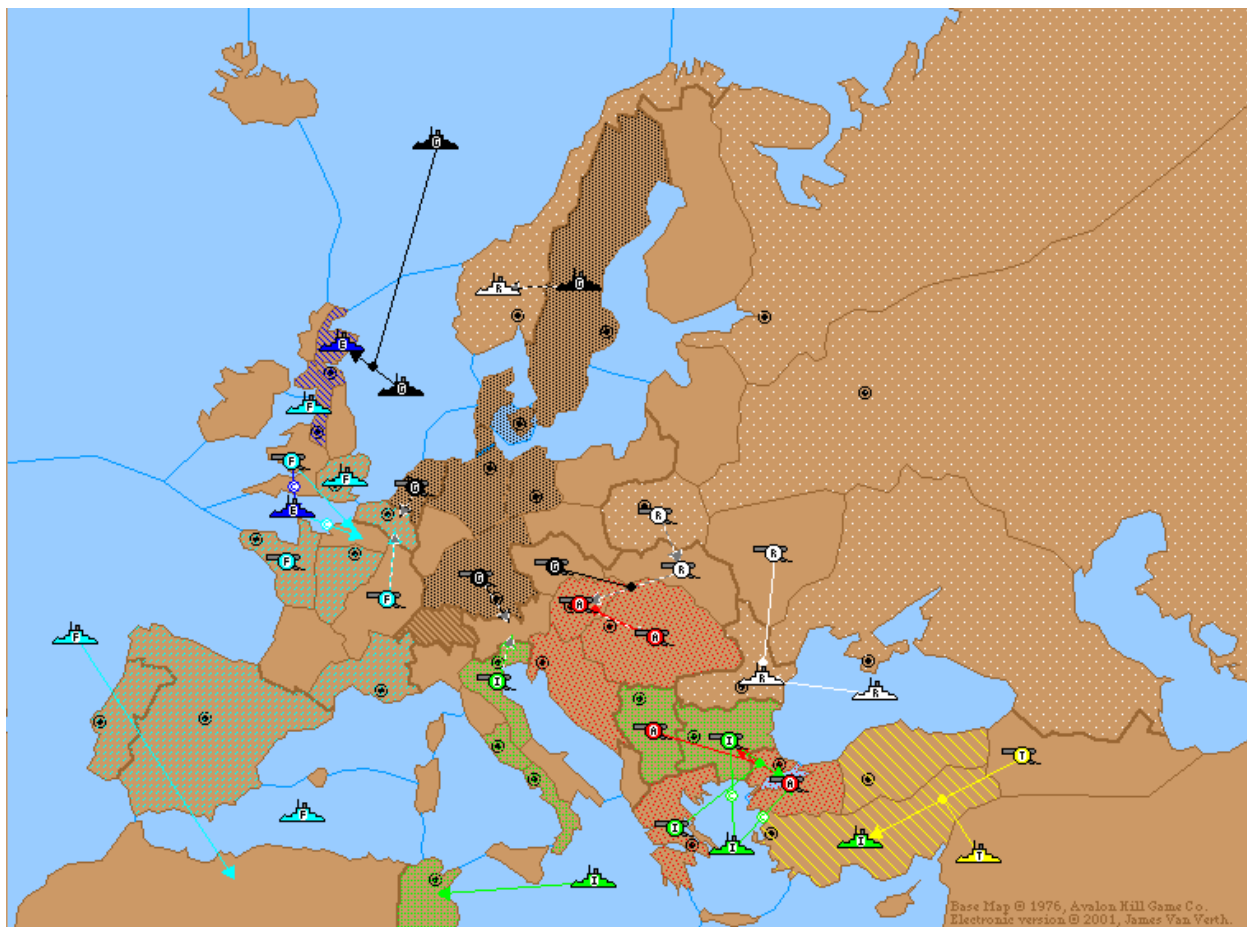
Turkey:

A Smyrna - Ankara (*Dislodged*) (Retreats to Armenia)

F Syria - Smyrna (*Fails*)

Binder: "I think there will be a big change in the way things are going in the next year."

Matt: "I suck at Diplomacy."



Fall 1904

Austria:

A Budapest Supports A Vienna

A Constantinople - Bulgaria

A Serbia Supports A Constantinople - Bulgaria

A Vienna Supports A Budapest (*Cut*)

England:

F Edinburgh Hold (*Dislodged*)

F English Channel Convoys A Wales - Picardy

France:

A Brest Hold

A Burgundy - Belgium (*Bounce*)

F Liverpool Hold

F London Hold

F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - North Africa

A Wales - Picardy

F Western Mediterranean Hold

Germany:

A Bohemia Supports A Galicia - Vienna

A Holland - Belgium (*Bounce*)

A Munich - Tyrolia (*Bounce*)

F North Sea - Edinburgh

F Norwegian Sea Supports F North Sea - Edinburgh

F Sweden - Norway (*Fails*)

Italy:

F Aegean Sea Convoys A Bulgaria - Constantinople
A Bulgaria - Constantinople
A Greece Supports A Constantinople - Bulgaria
F Ionian Sea - Tunis
F Smyrna Hold (*Dislodged*) (Retreats to Eastern Mediterranean)
A Venice - Tyrolia (*Bounce*)

Russia:

F Black Sea Supports F Rumania
A Galicia - Vienna (*Fails*)
F Norway Hold

F Rumania Hold

A Ukraine Supports F Rumania

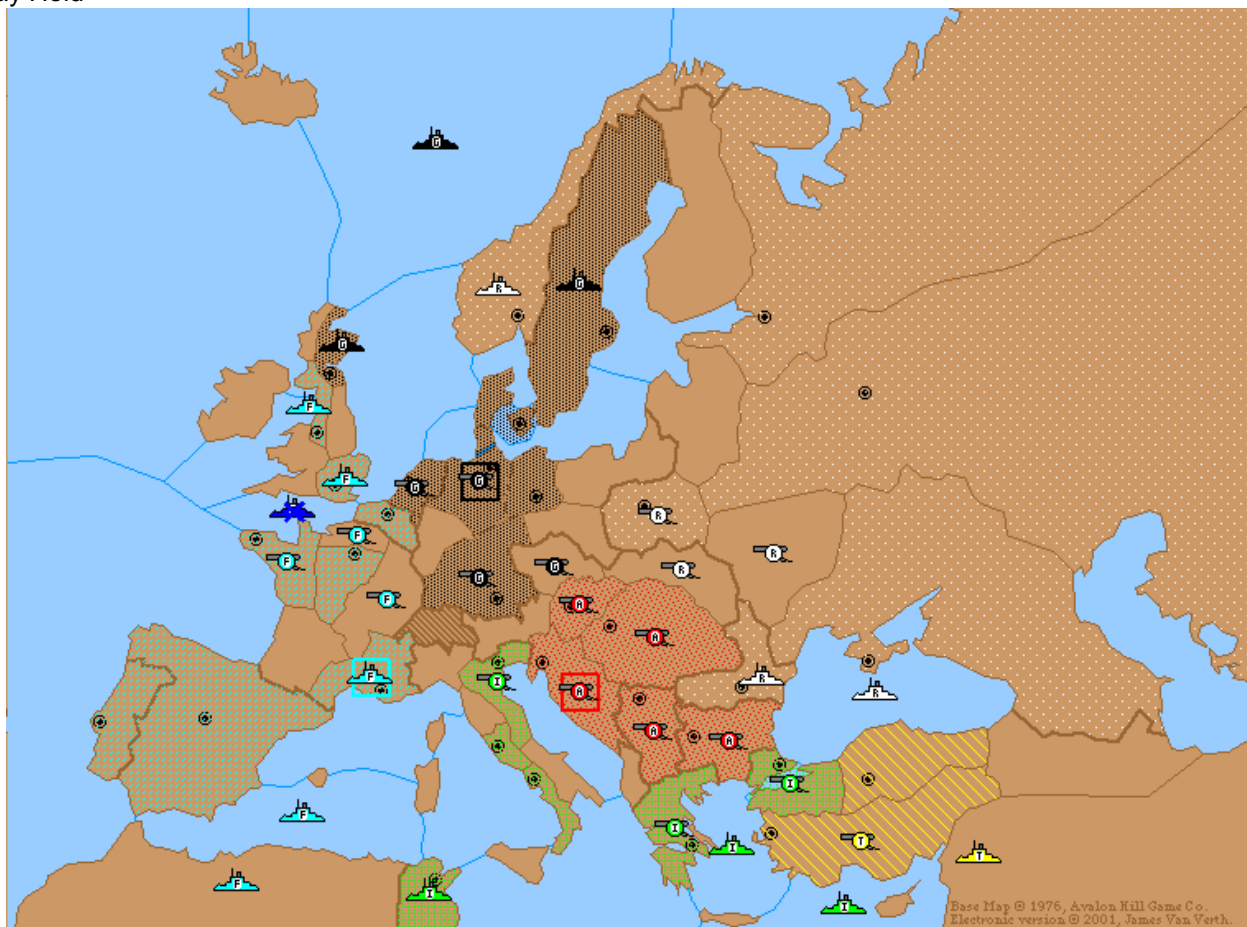
A Warsaw - Galicia (*Fails*)

Turkey:

A Armenia - Smyrna

F Syria Supports A Armenia - Smyrna

RD: Turkey takes Smyrna from Italy, who could have easily held it with support from either F Aeg or from the Austrians in Constantinople. Indeed, had Italy ordered F Aeg S F Smy and had Austria ordered Con – Ank, Turkey would have been eliminated.



Winter 1904

Ownership:

Austria: Budapest, Bulgaria, Serbia, Trieste, Vienna.

France: Belgium, Brest, Liverpool, London, Marseilles, Paris, Portugal, Spain.

Germany: Berlin, Denmark, Edinburgh, Holland, Kiel, Munich, Sweden.

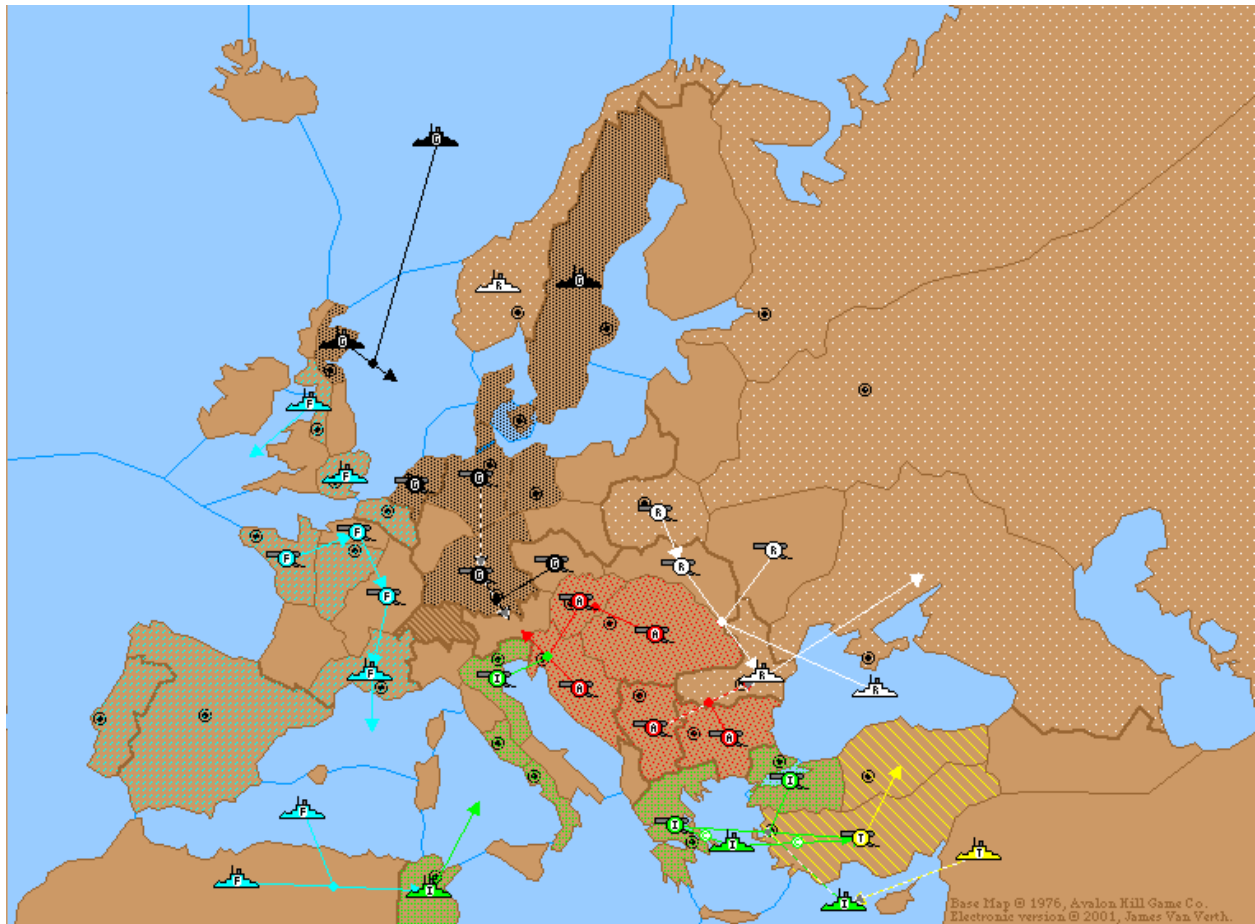
Italy: Constantinople, Greece, Naples, Rome, Tunis, Venice.

Russia: Moscow, Norway, Rumania, Sevastopol, St Petersburg, Warsaw.

Turkey: Ankara, Smyrna.

Adjustments:

Austria: Supp 5 Unit 4 Build 1
 England: Supp 0 Unit 1 Remove 1
 France: Supp 8 Unit 7 Build 1
 Germany: Supp 7 Unit 6 Build 1
 Italy: Supp 6 Unit 6 Build 0
 Russia: Supp 6 Unit 6 Build 0
 Turkey: Supp 2 Unit 2 Build 0



Spring 1905

Austria:

A Budapest Supports A Vienna
 A Bulgaria Supports A Serbia - Rumania
 A Serbia - Rumania (*Fails*)
 A Trieste - Tyrolia
 A Vienna Supports A Trieste - Tyrolia

France:

A Brest - Picardy
 A Burgundy - Marseilles
 F Liverpool - Irish Sea
 F London Hold
 F Marseilles - Gulf of Lyon
 F North Africa - Tunis
 A Picardy - Burgundy
 F Western Mediterranean Supports F North Africa - Tunis

Germany:

A Bohemia Supports A Munich - Tyrolia
 F Edinburgh - North Sea
 A Holland Hold
 A Kiel - Munich (*Fails*)
 A Munich - Tyrolia (*Fails*)
 F Norwegian Sea Supports F Edinburgh - North Sea
 F Sweden Hold

Italy:

F Aegean Sea Convoys A Greece - Smyrna
 A Constantinople Supports A Greece - Smyrna
 F Eastern Mediterranean Supports A Greece - Smyrna (*Cut*)
 A Greece - Smyrna
 F Tunis - Tyrrhenian Sea
 A Venice Supports A Trieste - Tyrolia

Russia:

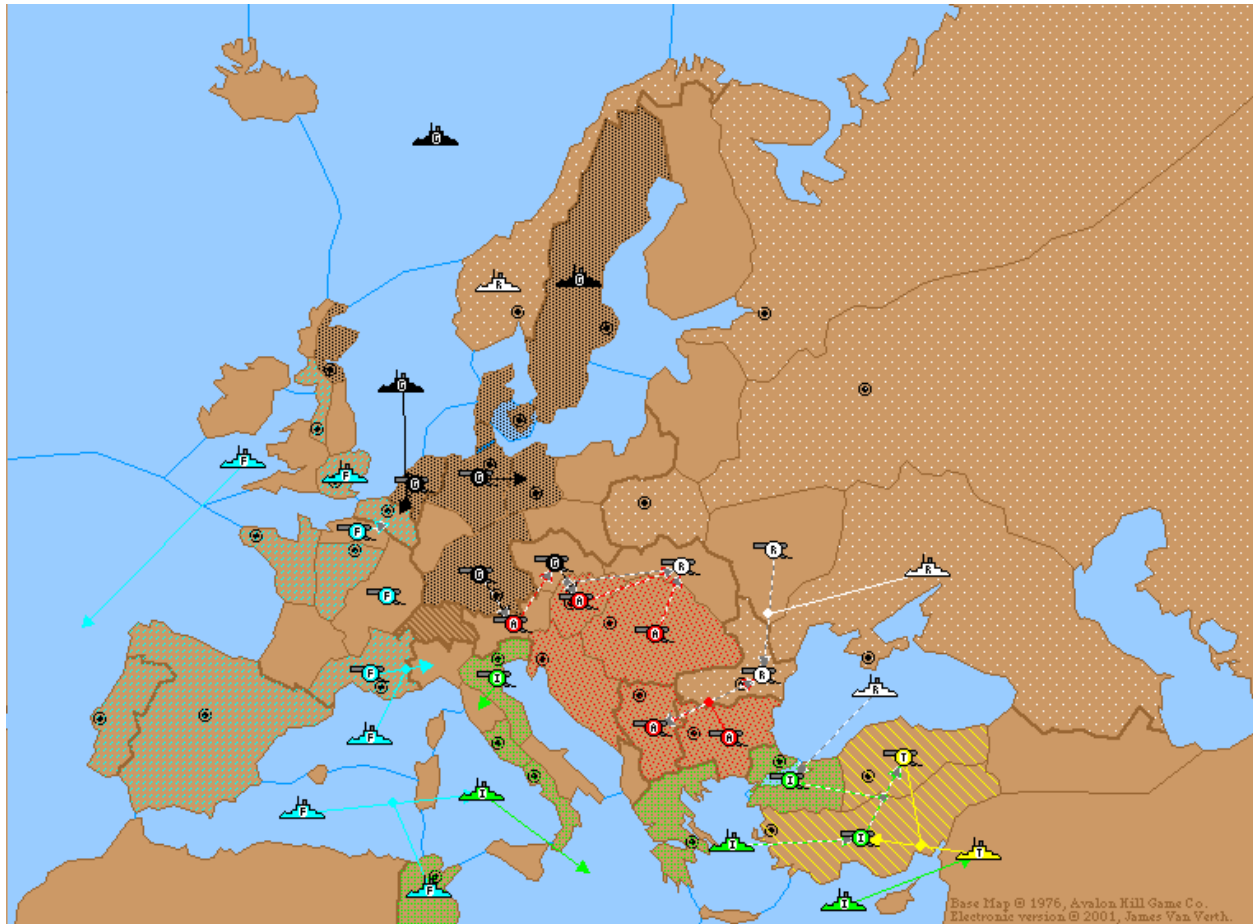
F Black Sea Supports A Galicia - Rumania
 A Galicia - Rumania

F Norway Hold
 F Rumania - Sevastopol
 A Ukraine Supports A Galicia - Rumania
 A Warsaw - Galicia

A Smyrna - Ankara
 F Syria - Eastern Mediterranean (*Fails*)

"This is a very stressful board" – Yeargin.

Turkey:



Fall 1905

Austria:

A Budapest - Galicia (*Bounce*)
 A Bulgaria Supports A Serbia - Rumania
 A Serbia - Rumania (*Bounce*)
 A Tyrolia - Bohemia (*Fails*)
 A Vienna - Galicia (*Bounce*)

France:

A Burgundy Hold
 F Gulf of Lyon Supports A Marseilles - Piedmont
 F Irish Sea - Mid-Atlantic Ocean
 F London Hold
 A Marseilles - Piedmont
 A Picardy - Belgium (*Fails*)
 F Tunis Supports F Western Mediterranean - Tyrrhenian Sea
 F Western Mediterranean - Tyrrhenian Sea

Germany:

A Bohemia - Vienna (*Fails*)
 A Holland - Belgium
 A Kiel - Berlin
 A Munich - Tyrolia (*Fails*)
 F North Sea Supports A Holland - Belgium
 F Norwegian Sea Hold
 F Sweden Hold

Italy:

F Aegean Sea - Smyrna (*Fails*)
 A Constantinople Supports A Smyrna - Ankara (*Cut*)
 F Eastern Mediterranean - Syria
 A Smyrna - Ankara (*Dislodged*) (Retreats to Armenia)
 F Tyrrhenian Sea - Ionian Sea
 A Venice - Tuscany

Russia:

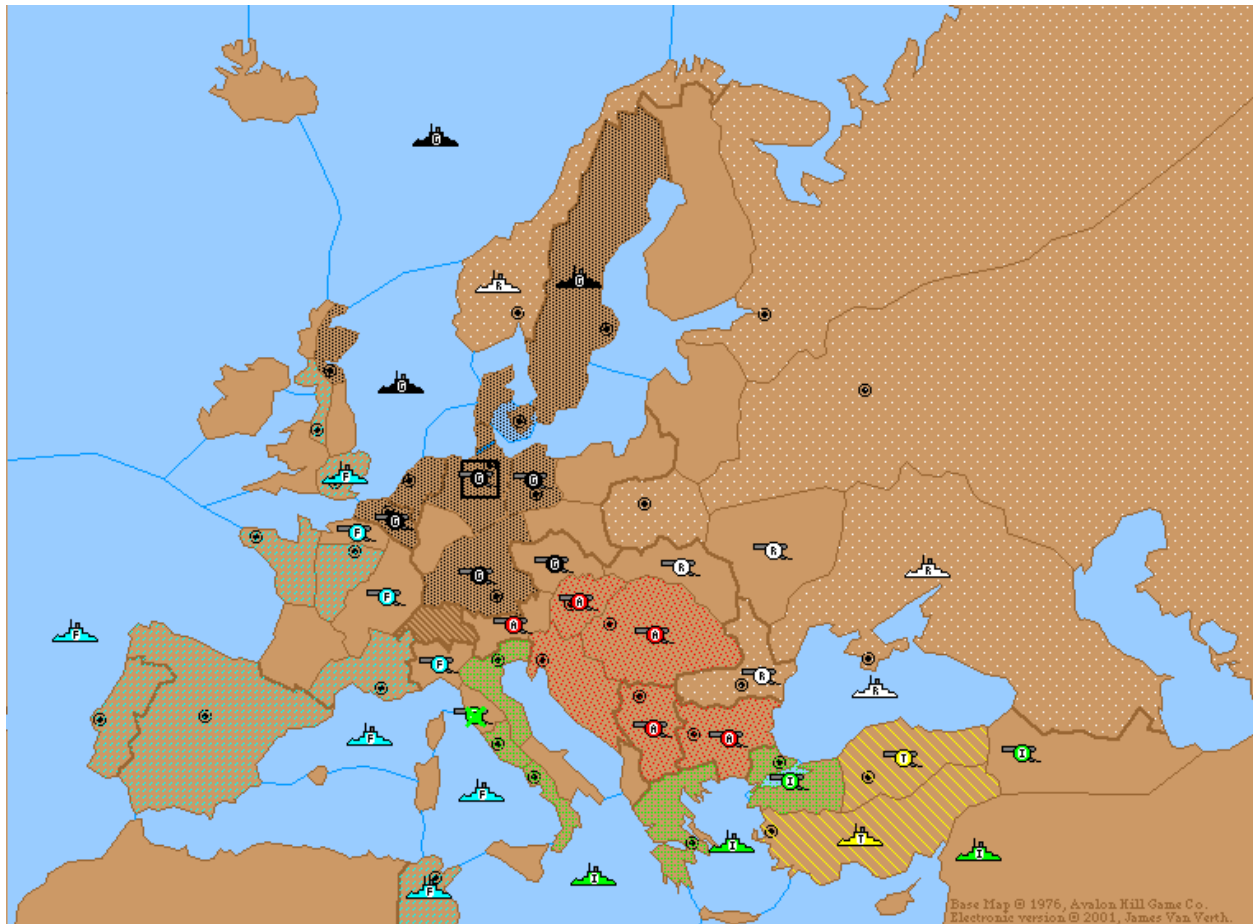
F Black Sea - Constantinople (*Fails*)
 A Galicia Supports A Bohemia - Vienna (*Cut*)
 F Norway Hold
 A Rumania - Serbia (*Fails*)
 F Sevastopol Supports A Ukraine - Rumania
 A Ukraine - Rumania (*Bounce*)

Turkey:
 A Ankara Supports F Syria - Smyrna

F Syria - Smyrna

For the third year in a row, a surprising retreat from Smyrna!

At this point, Adam Sigal (Italy) removes A Tus and declares his intent to throw as many centers as possible to Doc Binder (France)



Winter 1905

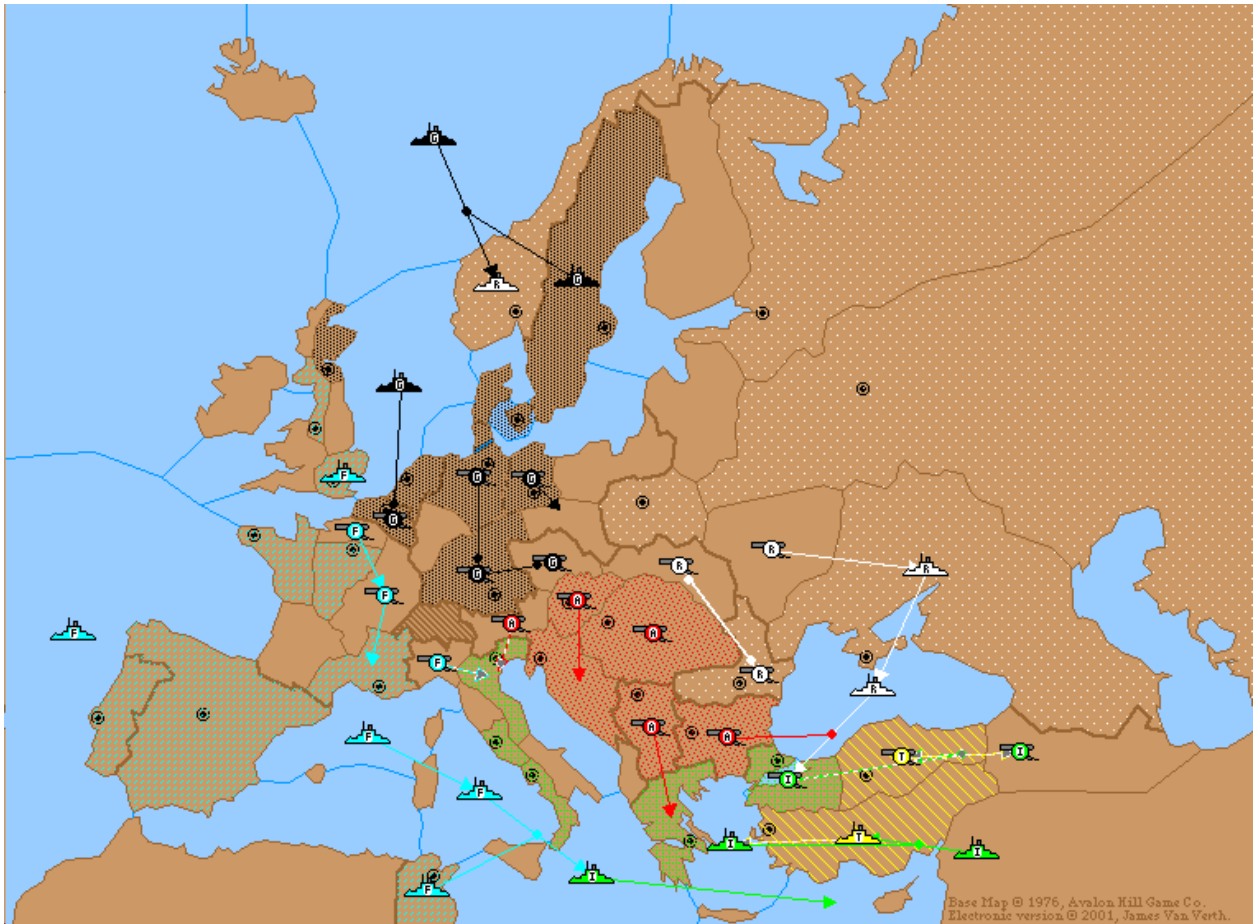
Ownership:

Austria: Budapest, Bulgaria, Serbia, Trieste, Vienna.
 France: Brest, Liverpool, London, Marseilles, Paris, Portugal, Spain, Tunis.
 Germany: Belgium, Berlin, Denmark, Edinburgh, Holland, Kiel, Munich, Sweden.
 Italy: Constantinople, Greece, Naples, Rome, Venice.
 Russia: Moscow, Norway, Rumania, Sevastopol, St Petersburg, Warsaw.
 Turkey: Ankara, Smyrna.

Adjustments:

Austria: Supp 5 Unit 5 Build 0
 England: Supp 0 Unit 0 Build 0
 France: Supp 8 Unit 8 Build 0
 Germany: Supp 8 Unit 7 Build 1

Italy: Supp 5 Unit 6 Remove 1
 Russia: Supp 6 Unit 6 Build 0
 Turkey: Supp 2 Unit 2 Build 0



Spring 1906

Austria:

A Budapest Hold
 A Bulgaria Supports F Black Sea - Constantinople
 A Serbia - Greece
 A Tyrolia - Venice (*Bounce*)
 A Vienna - Trieste

France:

A Burgundy - Marseilles
 F Gulf of Lyon - Tyrrhenian Sea
 F London Hold
 F Mid-Atlantic Ocean Hold
 A Picardy - Burgundy
 A Piedmont - Venice (*Bounce*)
 F Tunis Supports F Tyrrhenian Sea - Ionian Sea
 F Tyrrhenian Sea - Ionian Sea

Germany:

A Belgium, no move received
 A Berlin - Silesia
 A Bohemia Hold

A Kiel Supports A Munich
 A Munich Supports A Bohemia
 F North Sea Supports A Belgium
 F Norwegian Sea - Norway
 F Sweden Supports F Norwegian Sea - Norway

Italy:

F Aegean Sea Supports F Syria - Smyrna
 A Armenia - Ankara (*Fails*)
 A Constantinople Supports A Armenia - Ankara
 (*Disbanded*)
 F Ionian Sea - Eastern Mediterranean
 F Syria - Smyrna

Russia:

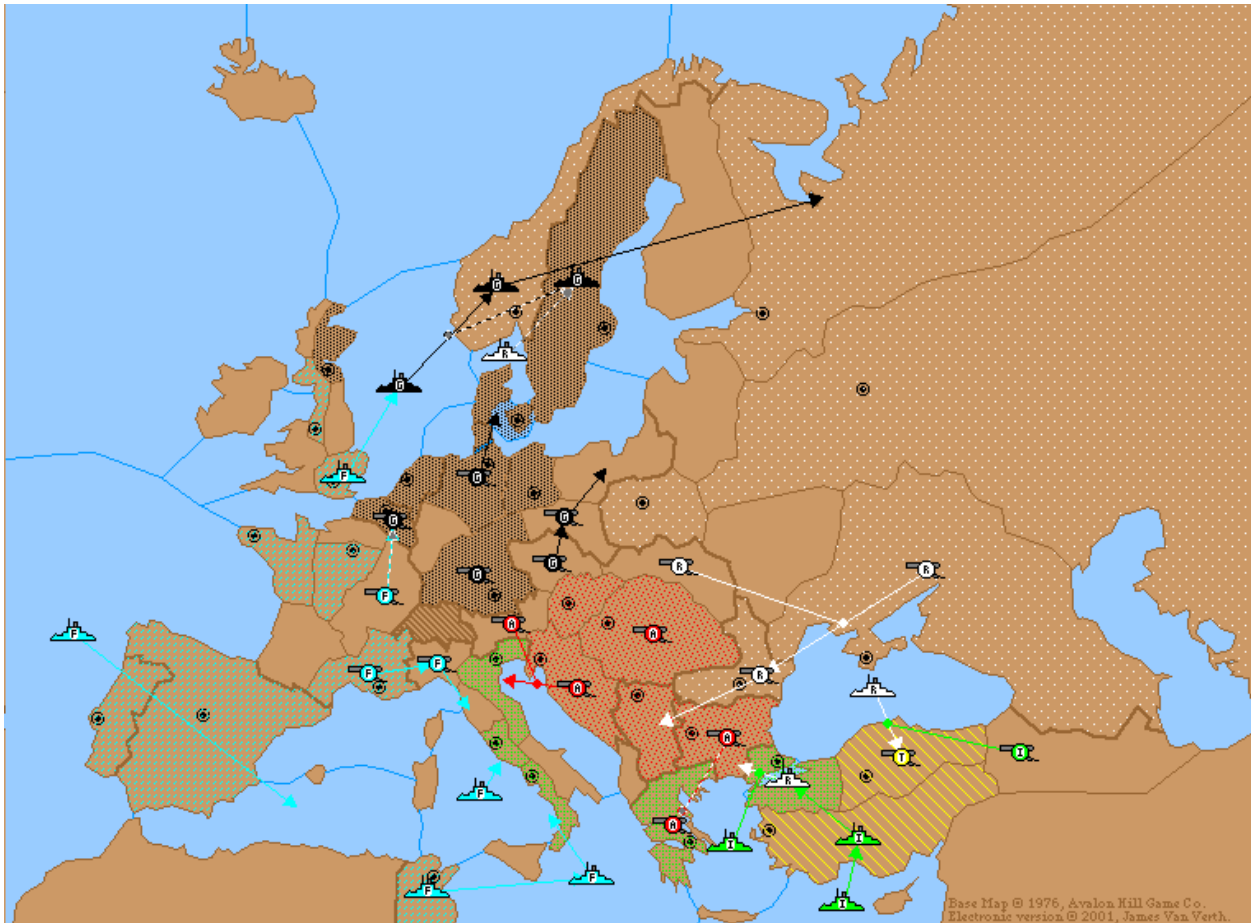
F Black Sea - Constantinople
 A Galicia Supports A Rumania
 F Norway Hold (*Dislodged*) (Retreats to Skaggerak)
 A Rumania Supports A Galicia
 F Sevastopol - Black Sea
 A Ukraine - Sevastopol

Turkey:

A Ankara - Armenia (*Fails*)
 F Smyrna - Aegean Sea (*Disbanded*)

RD: Austria has responded to Italy's threat by working with Russia to eliminate Italian A Con, and has also put

up a defense of Venice. Italy is "on tilt" as they say in poker. We see Germany leave Army Belgium unordered above. As we move to endgame, many idle forces were simply ignored by the players. Only important NMRs will be noted.



Fall 1906

Austria:

A Budapest Hold
 A Bulgaria Supports A Greece (*Disbanded*)
 A Greece Hold
 A Trieste - Venice
 A Tyrolia Supports A Trieste - Venice

France:

A Burgundy - Belgium (*Fails*)
 F Ionian Sea - Naples
 F London - North Sea
 A Marseilles - Piedmont
 F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - Western Mediterranean
 A Piedmont - Tuscany
 F Tunis - Ionian Sea
 F Tyrrhenian Sea - Rome

Germany:

A Belgium Hold
 A Bohemia - Silesia

A Kiel - Denmark

A Munich Hold

F North Sea - Norway

F Norway - St Petersburg(nc)

A Silesia - Prussia

F Sweden Supports F North Sea - Norway (*Cut*)

Italy:

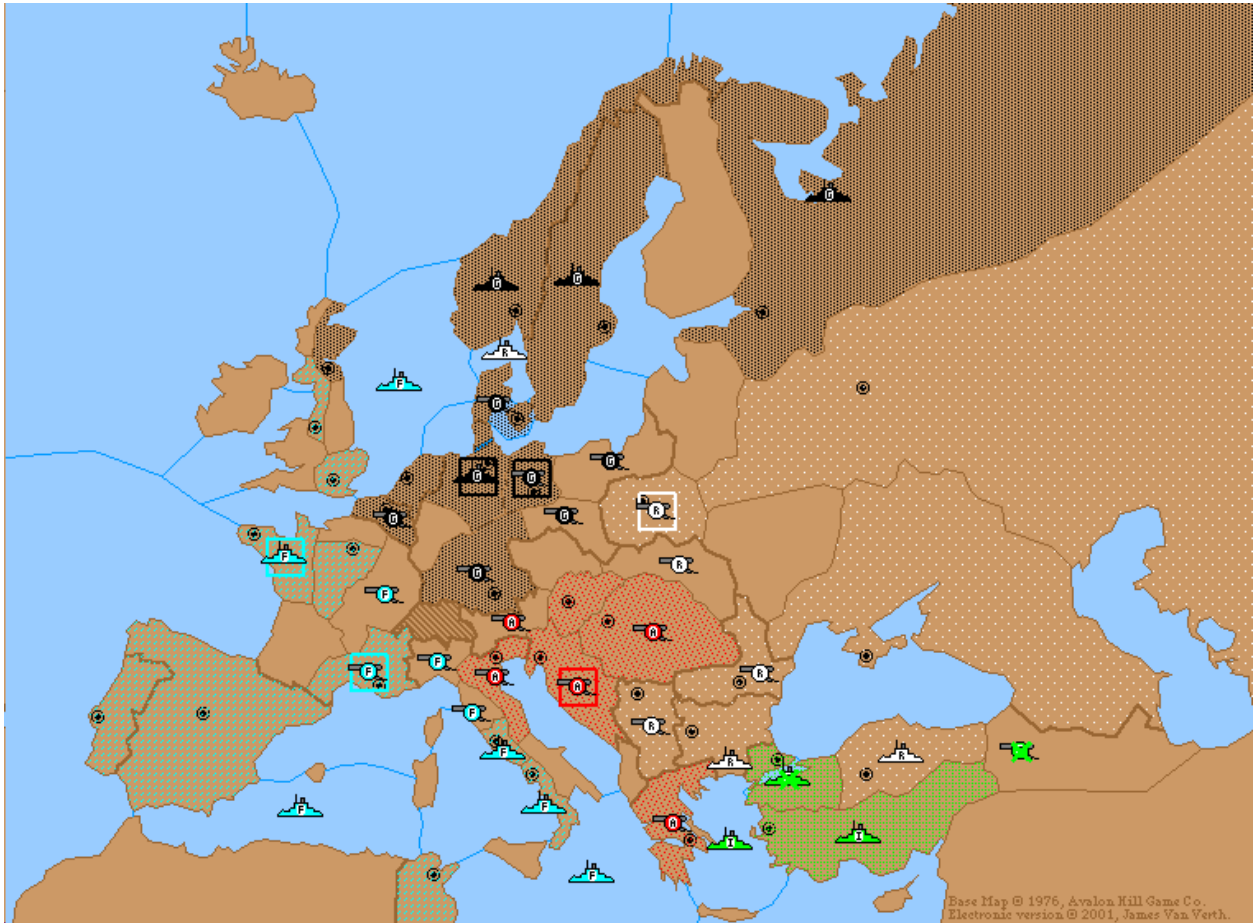
F Aegean Sea Supports F Constantinople - Bulgaria(sc)
 A Armenia Supports F Black Sea - Ankara
 F Eastern Mediterranean - Smyrna
 F Smyrna - Constantinople

Russia:

F Black Sea - Ankara
 F Constantinople - Bulgaria(sc)
 A Galicia Supports A Sevastopol - Rumania
 A Rumania - Serbia
 A Sevastopol - Rumania
 F Skagerrak - Sweden (*Fails*)

Turkey:

A Ankara Hold (*Disbanded*)



Winter 1906

Ownership:

Austria: Budapest, Greece, Trieste, Venice, Vienna.

France: Brest, Liverpool, London, Marseilles, Naples, Paris, Portugal, Rome, Spain, Tunis.

Germany: Belgium, Berlin, Denmark, Edinburgh, Holland, Kiel, Munich, Norway, St Petersburg, Sweden.

Italy: Constantinople, Smyrna.

Russia: Ankara, Bulgaria, Moscow, Rumania, Serbia, Sevastopol, Warsaw.

Adjustments:

Austria: Supp 5 Unit 4 Build 1

England: Supp 0 Unit 0 Build 0

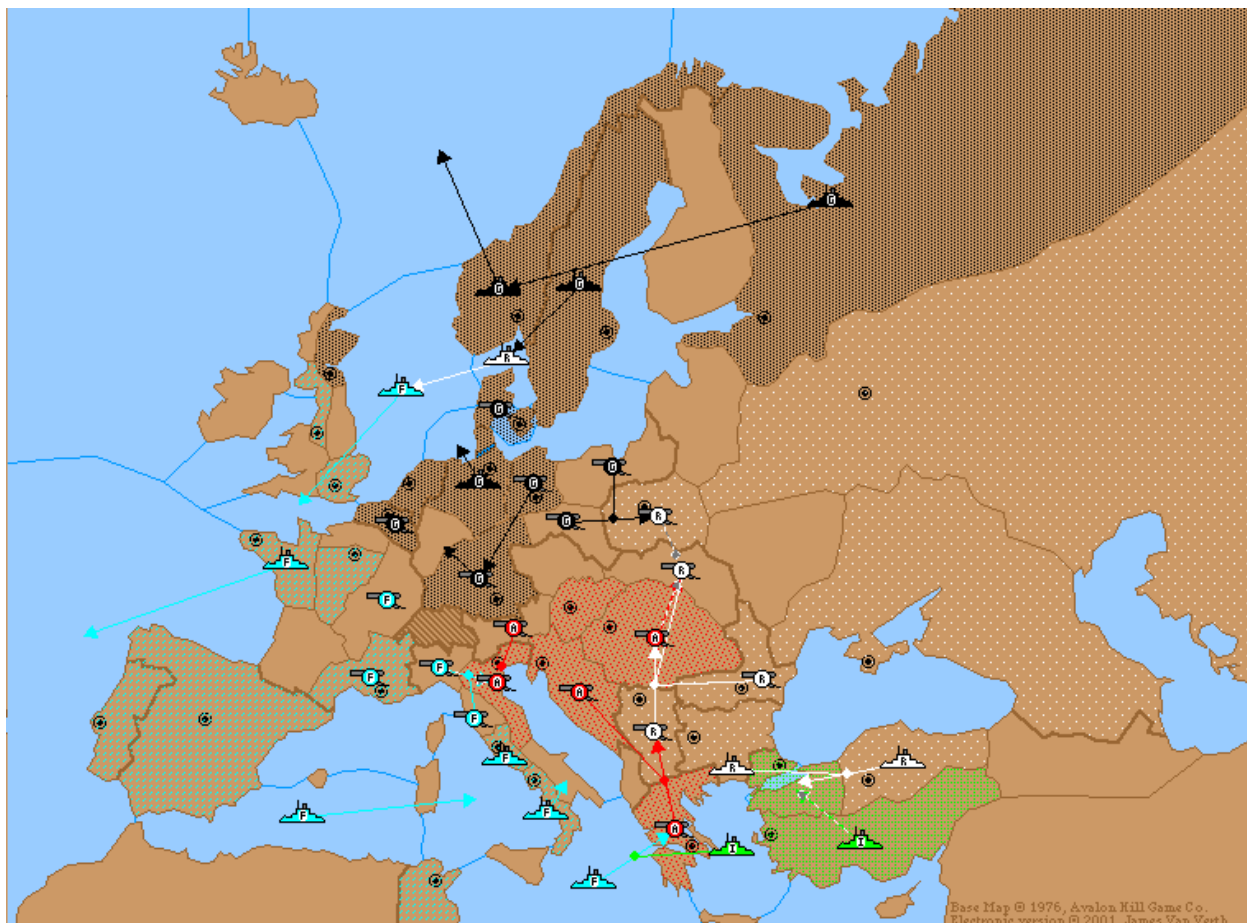
France: Supp 10 Unit 8 Build 2

Germany: Supp 10 Unit 8 Build 2

Italy: Supp 2 Unit 4 Remove 2

Russia: Supp 7 Unit 6 Build 1

Turkey: Supp 0 Unit 0 Build 0



Spring 1907

Austria:

A Budapest - Galicia (*Dislodged*) (Retreated to Vienna)
 A Greece - Serbia
 A Trieste Supports A Greece - Serbia
 A Tyrolia Supports A Venice
 A Venice Hold

France:

F Brest - Mid-Atlantic Ocean
 A Burgundy Hold
 F Ionian Sea - Greece
 A Marseilles Hold
 F Naples - Apulia
 F North Sea - English Channel
 A Piedmont - Venice (*Fails*)
 F Rome Hold
 A Tuscany Supports A Piedmont - Venice
 F Western Mediterranean - Tyrrhenian Sea

Germany:

A Belgium Hold
 A Berlin - Munich

A Denmark Hold

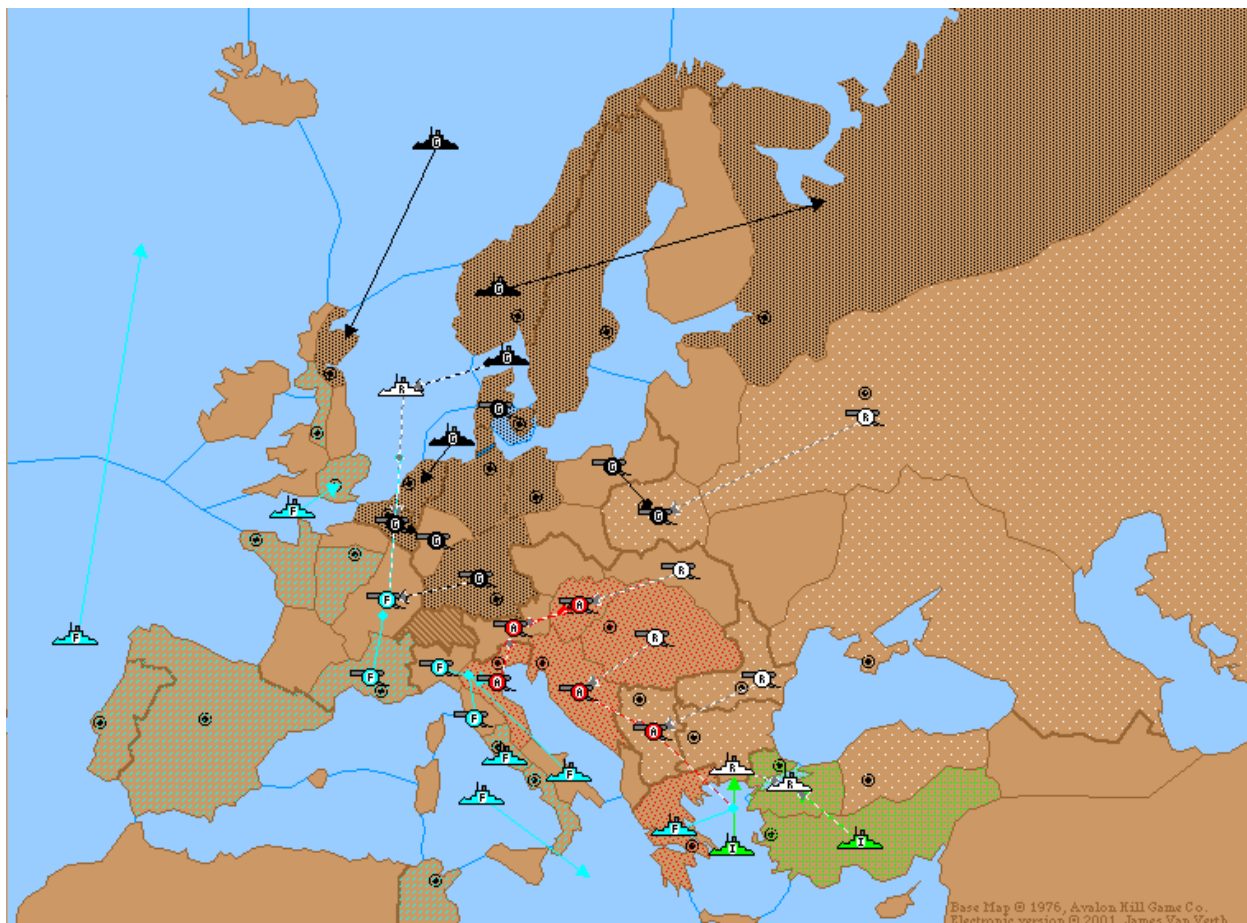
F Kiel - Helgoland Bight
 A Munich - Ruhr
 F Norway - Norwegian Sea
 A Prussia Supports A Silesia - Warsaw
 A Silesia - Warsaw
 F St Petersburg(nc) - Norway
 F Sweden - Skagerrak

Italy:

F Aegean Sea Supports F Ionian Sea - Greece
 F Smyrna - Constantinople (*Fails*)

Russia:

F Ankara - Constantinople
 F Bulgaria(sc) Supports F Ankara - Constantinople
 A Galicia Supports A Serbia - Budapest
 A Rumania Supports A Serbia - Budapest
 A Serbia - Budapest
 F Skagerrak - North Sea
 A Warsaw Supports A Galicia (*Dislodged*) (Retreated to Moscow)



Fall 1907

Austria:

A Serbia Supports F Aegean Sea - Bulgaria(sc) (*Cut*)
 A Trieste Supports A Serbia (*Cut*)
 A Tyrolia Supports A Vienna
 A Venice Supports A Tyrolia (*Disbanded*)
 A Vienna Supports A Tyrolia (*Cut*)

France:

F Apulia Supports A Piedmont - Venice
 A Burgundy Supports F North Sea - Belgium (*Cut*)
 F English Channel - London
 F Greece Supports F Aegean Sea - Bulgaria(sc)
 A Marseilles Supports A Burgundy
 F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - North Atlantic Ocean
 A Piedmont - Venice
 F Rome Hold
 A Tuscany Supports A Piedmont - Venice
 F Tyrrhenian Sea - Ionian Sea

Germany:

A Belgium Hold

A Denmark Hold

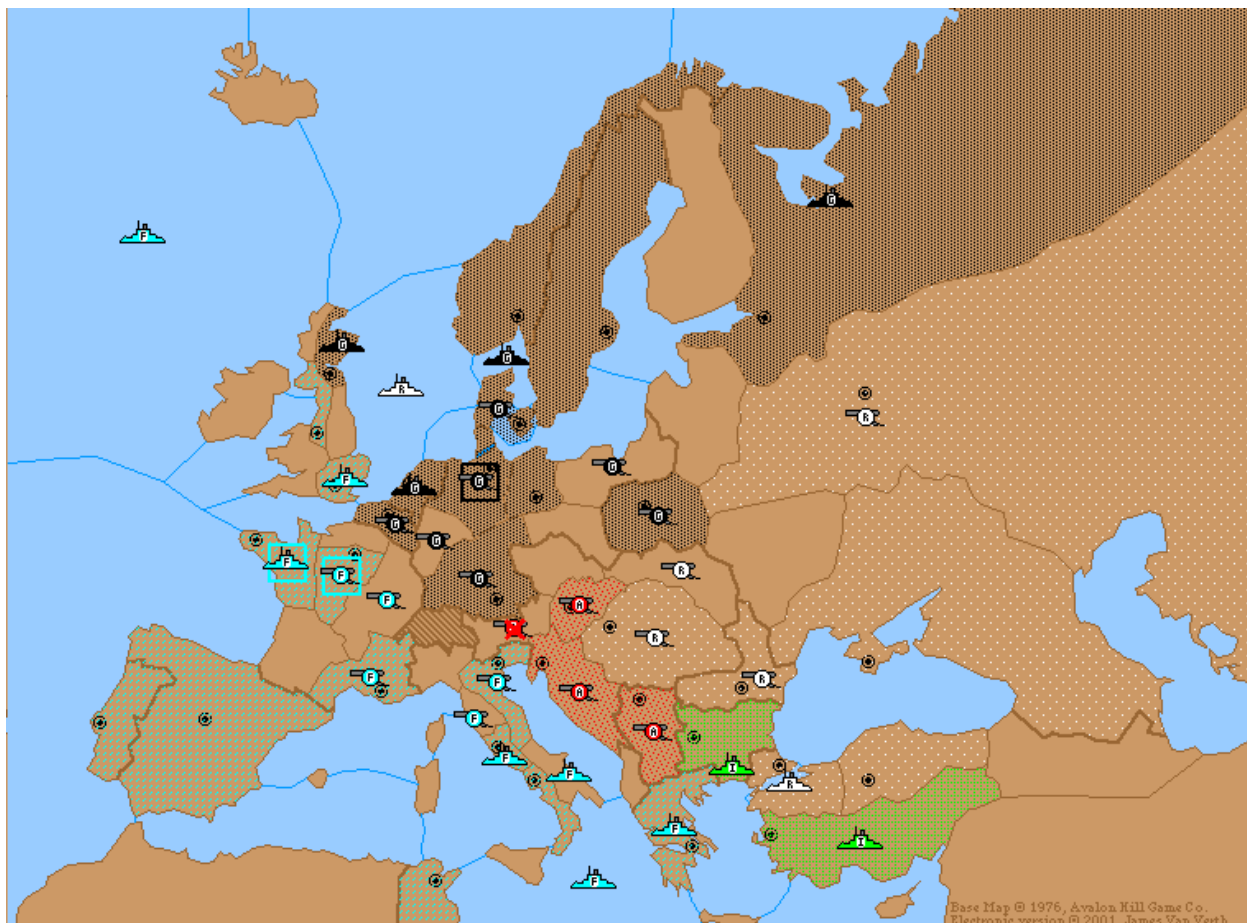
F Helgoland Bight - Holland
 A Munich - Burgundy (*Fails*)
 F Norway - St Petersburg(nc)
 F Norwegian Sea - Edinburgh
 A Prussia Supports A Warsaw
 A Ruhr Supports A Belgium
 F Skagerrak - North Sea (*Fails*)
 A Warsaw Hold

Italy:

F Aegean Sea - Bulgaria(sc)
 F Smyrna - Constantinople (*Fails*)

Russia:

A Budapest - Trieste (*Fails*)
 F Bulgaria(sc) Supports F Constantinople (*Disbanded*)
 F Constantinople Hold
 A Galicia - Vienna (*Fails*)
 A Moscow - Warsaw (*Fails*)
 F North Sea - Belgium (*Fails*)
 A Rumania - Serbia (*Fails*)



Winter 1907

Ownership:

Austria: Serbia, Trieste, Vienna.

France: Brest, Greece, Liverpool, London, Marseilles, Naples, Paris, Portugal, Rome, Spain, Tunis, Venice.

Germany: Belgium, Berlin, Denmark, Edinburgh, Holland, Kiel, Munich, Norway, St Petersburg, Sweden, Warsaw.

Italy: Bulgaria, Smyrna.

Russia: Ankara, Budapest, Constantinople, Moscow, Rumania, Sevastopol.

Adjustments:

Austria: Supp 3 Unit 4 Remove 1

England: Supp 0 Unit 0 Build 0

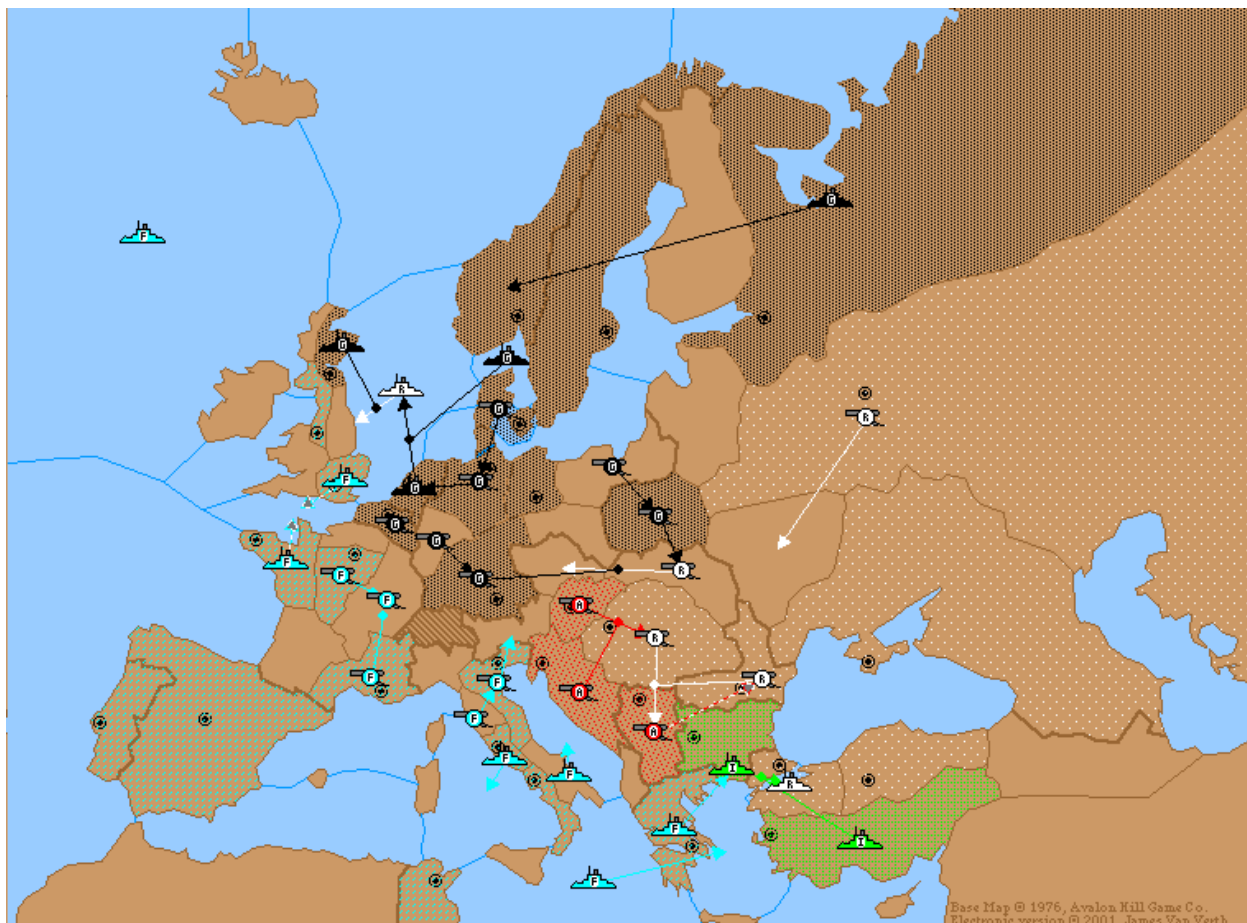
France: Supp 12 Unit 10 Build 2

Germany: Supp 11 Unit 10 Build 1

Italy: Supp 2 Unit 2 Build 0

Russia: Supp 6 Unit 6 Build 0

Turkey: Supp 0 Unit 0 Build 0



Spring 1908

Austria:

A Serbia - Rumania (*Dislodged*) (Retreats to Greece)
 A Trieste Supports A Vienna - Budapest
 A Vienna - Budapest

France:

F Apulia - Adriatic Sea
 F Brest - English Channel (*Bounce*)
 A Burgundy Hold
 F Greece - Bulgaria(sc)
 F Ionian Sea - Aegean Sea
 F London - English Channel (*Bounce*)
 A Marseilles Supports A Burgundy
 F North Atlantic Ocean Hold
 A Paris Supports A Burgundy
 F Rome - Tyrrhenian Sea
 A Tuscany - Venice
 A Venice - Tyrolia

Germany:

A Belgium Hold
 A Denmark - Kiel

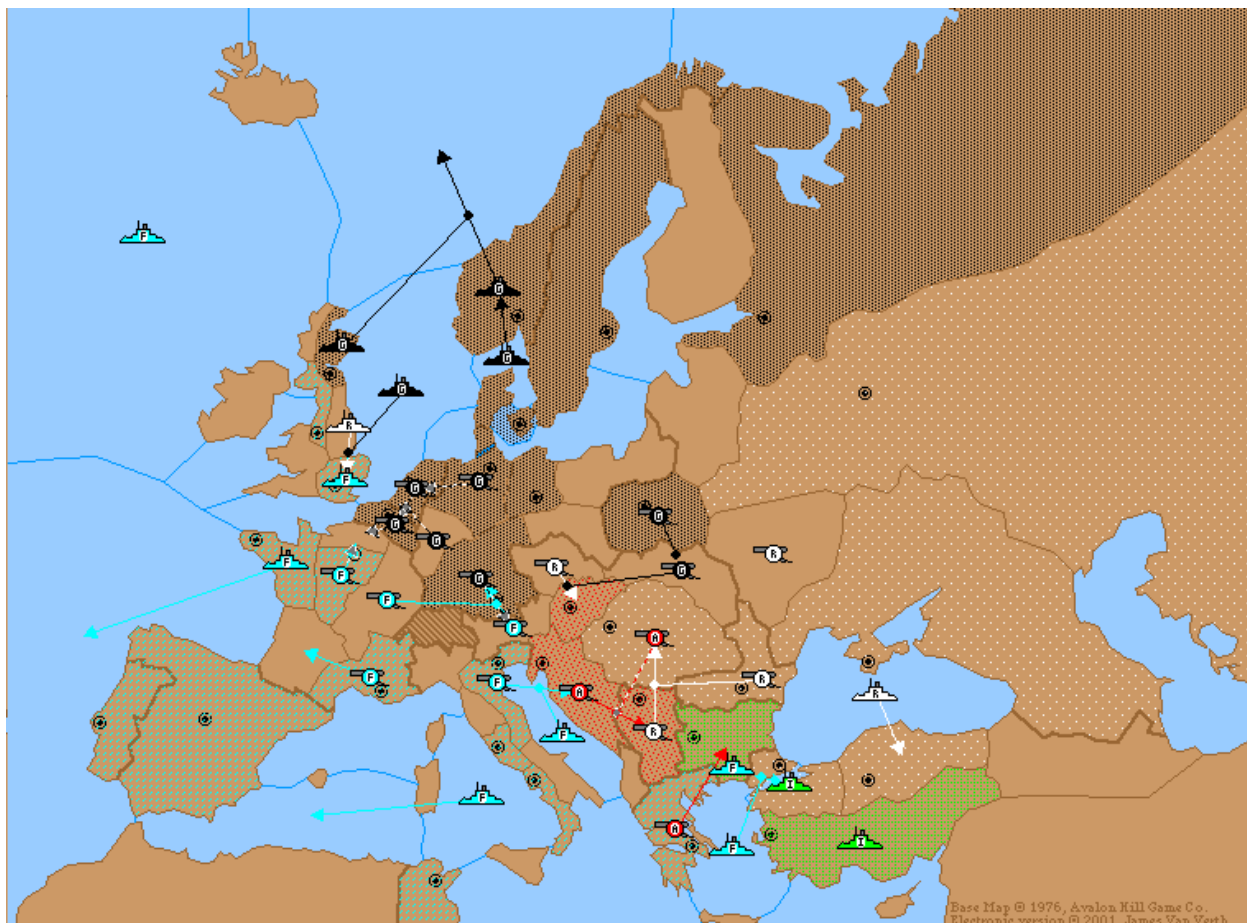
F Edinburgh Supports F North Sea - Yorkshire
 F Holland - North Sea
 A Kiel - Holland
 A Munich Supports A Galicia - Bohemia
 A Prussia - Warsaw
 A Ruhr Supports A Munich
 F Skagerrak Supports F Holland - North Sea
 F St Petersburg(nc) - Norway
 A Warsaw - Galicia

Italy:

F Bulgaria(sc) - Constantinople
 F Smyrna Supports F Bulgaria(sc) - Constantinople

Russia:

A Budapest - Serbia
 F Constantinople Hold (*Dislodged*) (Retreats to Black Sea)
 A Galicia - Bohemia
 A Moscow - Ukraine
 F North Sea - Yorkshire
 A Rumania Supports A Budapest - Serbia



Fall 1908

Austria:

A Budapest Supports A Trieste - Serbia (*Disbanded*)
 A Greece - Bulgaria
 A Trieste - Serbia

France:

F Adriatic Sea Supports A Venice - Trieste
 F Aegean Sea Supports F Bulgaria(sc) - Constantinople
 F Brest - Mid-Atlantic Ocean
 F Bulgaria(sc) - Constantinople
 A Burgundy Supports A Tyrolia - Munich
 F London Hold (*Dislodged*)
 A Marseilles - Gascony
 F North Atlantic Ocean Hold
 A Paris - Picardy (*Bounce*)
 A Tyrolia - Munich
 F Tyrrhenian Sea - Western Mediterranean
 A Venice - Trieste

Germany:

A Belgium - Picardy (*Bounce*)
 F Edinburgh Supports F Norway - Norwegian Sea
 A Galicia Supports A Bohemia - Vienna

A Holland - Belgium (*Fails*)

A Kiel - Holland (*Fails*)

A Munich - Tyrolia (*Dislodged*) (Retreats to Berlin)

F North Sea Supports F Yorkshire - London

F Norway - Norwegian Sea

A Ruhr Supports A Holland - Belgium (*Fails*)

F Skagerrak - Norway

A Warsaw Supports A Galicia

Italy:

F Constantinople Hold (*Dislodged*) (Retreats to Black Sea)

F Smyrna Hold

Russia:

F Black Sea - Ankara

A Bohemia - Vienna

A Rumania Supports A Serbia - Budapest

A Serbia - Budapest

A Ukraine Hold

F Yorkshire - London

RD: Why is Germany losing Munich? Killer disband.



Winter 1908

Ownership:

Austria: Bulgaria, Serbia.

France: Brest, Constantinople, Greece, Liverpool, Marseilles, Munich, Naples, Paris, Portugal, Rome, Spain, Trieste, Tunis, Venice.

Germany: Belgium, Berlin, Denmark, Edinburgh, Holland, Kiel, Norway, St Petersburg, Sweden, Warsaw.

Italy: Smyrna.

Russia: Ankara, Budapest, London, Moscow, Rumania, Sevastopol, Vienna.

Adjustments:

Austria: Supp 2 Unit 2 Build 0

England: Supp 0 Unit 0 Build 0

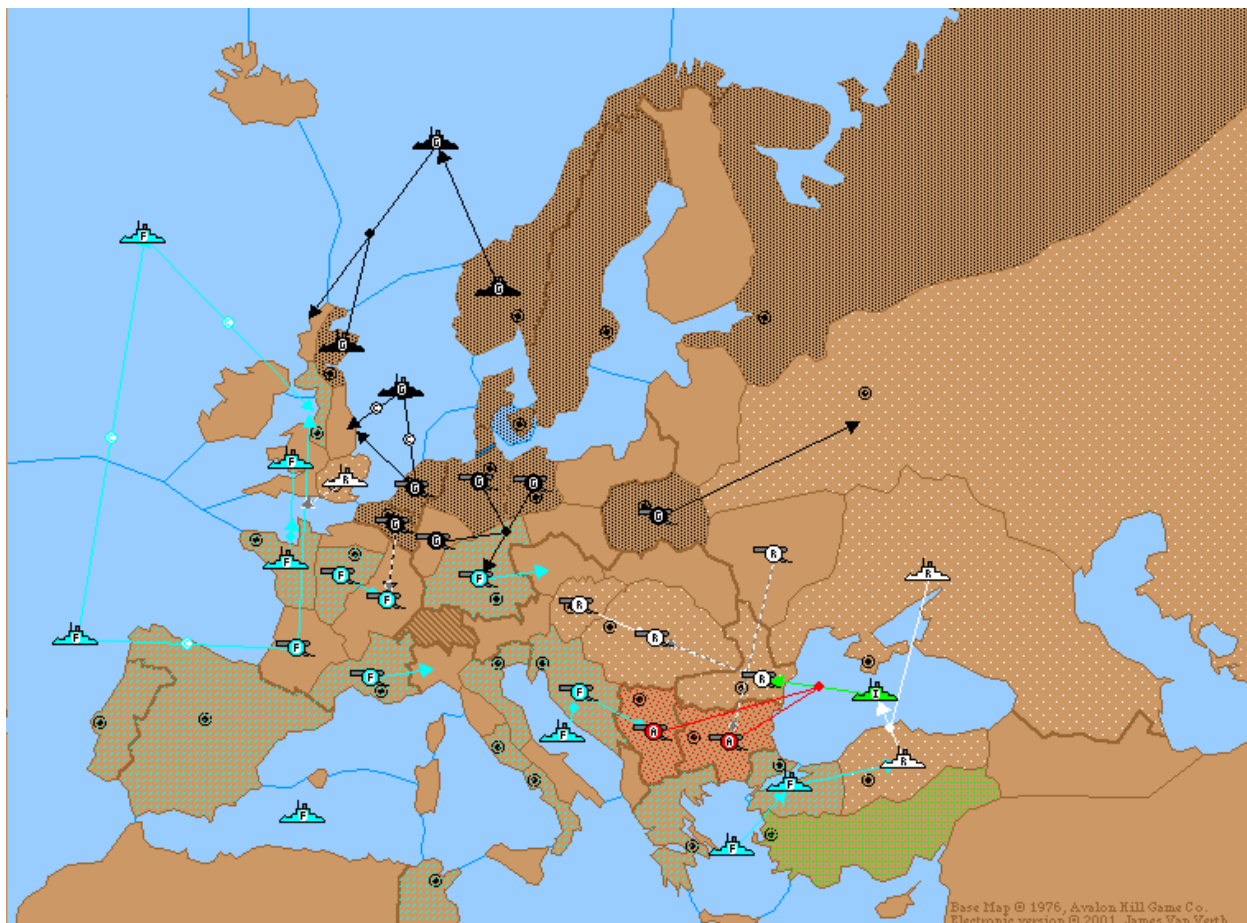
France: Supp 14 Unit 12 Build 2

Germany: Supp 10 Unit 11 Remove 1

Italy: Supp 1 Unit 2 Remove 1

Russia: Supp 7 Unit 6 Build 1

Turkey: Supp 0 Unit 0 Build 0



Spring 1909

Austria:

A Bulgaria Supports F Black Sea - Rumania
A Serbia Supports F Black Sea - Rumania

France:

F Adriatic Sea Supports A Trieste
F Aegean Sea - Constantinople
F Brest - English Channel
A Burgundy Hold
F Constantinople - Ankara
A Gascony - Liverpool
A Marseilles - Piedmont
F Mid-Atlantic Ocean Convoys A Gascony - Liverpool
A Munich - Bohemia
F North Atlantic Ocean Convoys A Gascony - Liverpool
A Paris Supports A Burgundy
A Trieste Supports A Serbia
F Wales Supports F Brest - English Channel
F Western Mediterranean Hold

Germany:

A Belgium - Burgundy (*Fails*)

A Berlin - Munich

F Edinburgh Supports F Norwegian Sea - Clyde

A Holland - Yorkshire

A Kiel Supports A Berlin - Munich

F North Sea Convoys A Holland - Yorkshire

F Norway - Norwegian Sea

F Norwegian Sea - Clyde

A Ruhr Supports A Berlin - Munich

A Warsaw - Moscow

Italy:

F Black Sea - Rumania

Russia:

F Ankara - Black Sea

A Budapest Supports A Rumania

F London - English Channel (*Fails*)

A Rumania Supports A Budapest (*Dislodged*)
(Retreats to Galicia)

F Sevastopol Supports F Ankara - Black Sea

A Ukraine Supports A Bulgaria (*Fails*)

A Vienna Supports A Budapest



Fall 1909

Austria:

A Bulgaria - Rumania (*Fails*)
A Serbia - Budapest (*Fails*)

France:

F Adriatic Sea Supports A Trieste
F Ankara Supports F Rumania - Black Sea
A Bohemia - Vienna (*Fails*)
A Burgundy Supports A Paris - Picardy
F Constantinople Supports F Rumania - Black Sea
F English Channel Supports F Wales - London (*Cut*)
A Liverpool Supports F North Atlantic Ocean - Clyde (*Dislodged*) (Retreats to Edinburgh!!)
F Mid-Atlantic Ocean Supports F English Channel
F North Atlantic Ocean - Clyde (*Fails*)
A Paris - Picardy
A Piedmont - Tyrolia (*Bounce*)
A Trieste Supports A Bohemia - Vienna
F Wales - London (*Fails*)
F Western Mediterranean - Tyrrhenian Sea

Germany:

A Belgium Hold

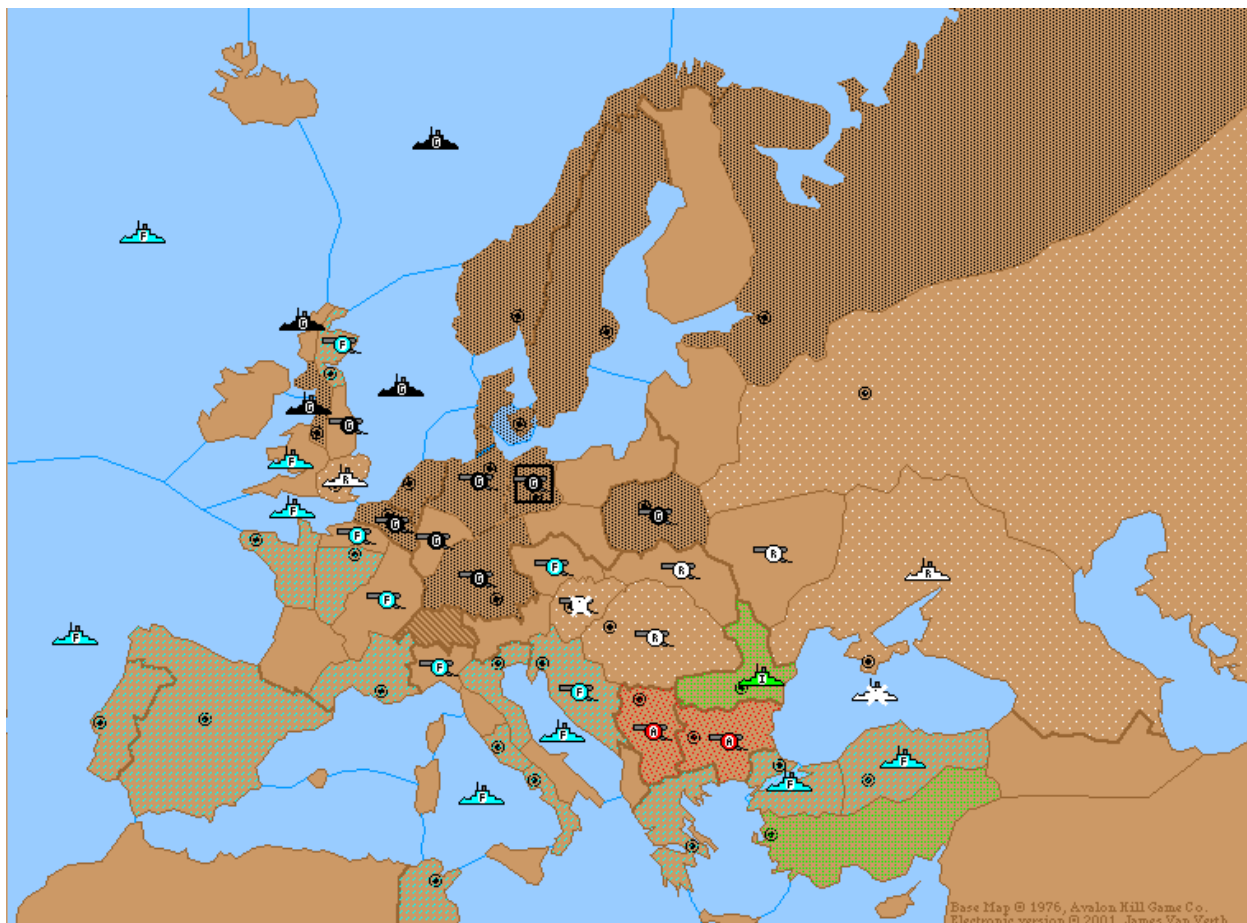
F Clyde - Liverpool
F Edinburgh - Clyde
A Kiel - Munich (*Fails*)
A Moscow - Warsaw
A Munich - Tyrolia (*Bounce*)
F North Sea - English Channel (*Fails*)
F Norwegian Sea Supports F Edinburgh - Clyde
A Ruhr Supports A Kiel - Munich (*Fails*)
A Yorkshire Supports F Clyde - Liverpool

Italy:

F Rumania - Black Sea (*Fails*)

Russia:

F Black Sea - Rumania (*Fails*)
A Budapest - Serbia (*Fails*)
A Galicia Supports A Vienna
F London - Wales (*Fails*)
F Sevastopol Supports F Black Sea - Rumania
A Ukraine Supports F Black Sea - Rumania
A Vienna Supports A Munich - Tyrolia (*Cut*)



Winter 1909

Ownership:

Austria: Bulgaria, Serbia.

France: Ankara, Brest, Constantinople, Edinburgh, Greece, Marseilles, Naples, Paris, Portugal, Rome, Spain, Trieste, Tunis, Venice.

Germany: Belgium, Berlin, Denmark, Holland, Kiel, Liverpool, Munich, Norway, St Petersburg, Sweden, Warsaw.

Italy: Rumania, Smyrna.

Russia: Budapest, London, Moscow, Sevastopol, Vienna.

Adjustments:

Austria: Supp 2 Unit 2 Build 0

England: Supp 0 Unit 0 Build 0

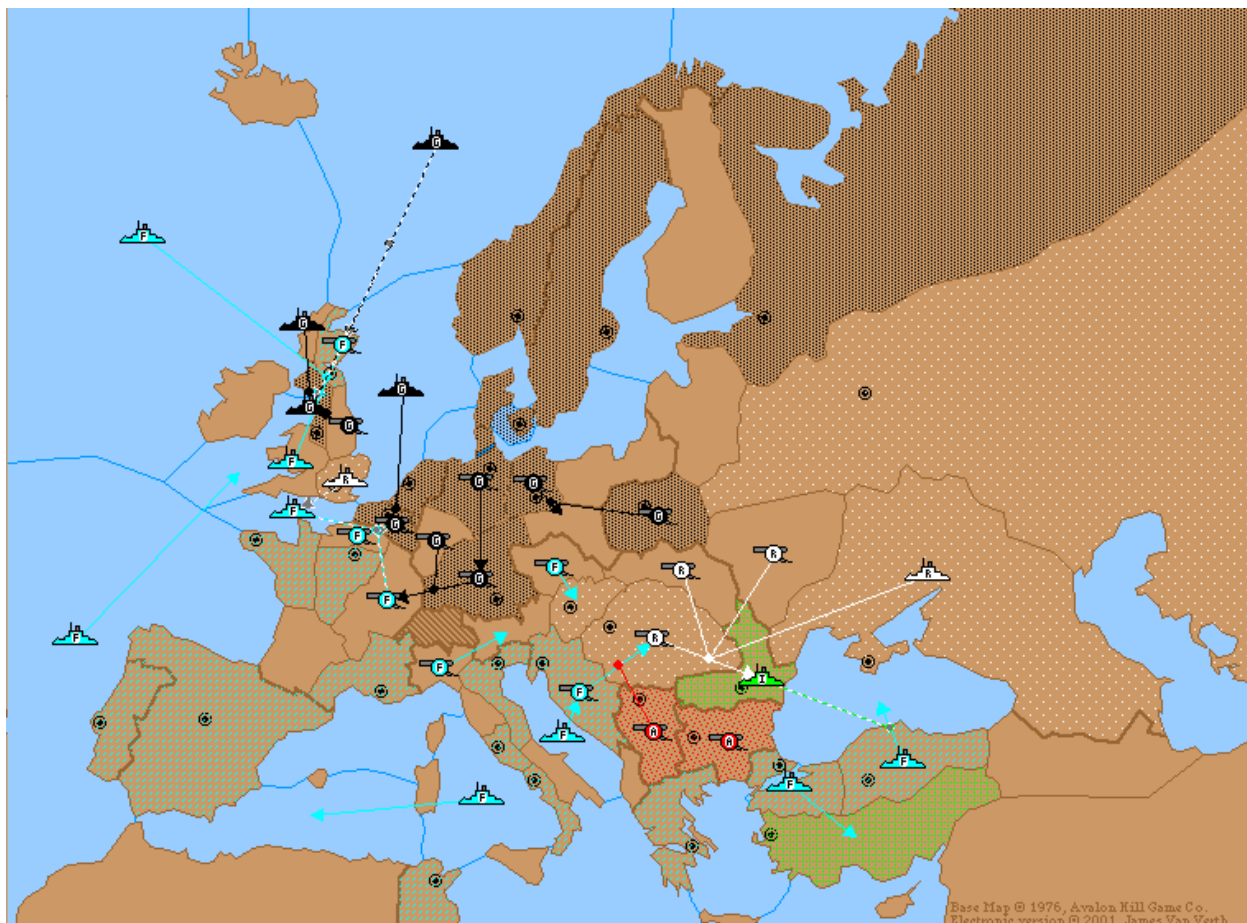
France: Supp 14 Unit 14 Build 0

Germany: Supp 11 Unit 10 Build 1

Italy: Supp 2 Unit 1 Build 0

Russia: Supp 5 Unit 7 Remove 2

Turkey: Supp 0 Unit 0 Build 0



Spring 1910

Austria:

A Bulgaria Hold
A Serbia Supports A Trieste - Budapest

France:

F Adriatic Sea - Trieste
F Ankara - Black Sea
A Bohemia - Vienna
A Burgundy Supports A Picardy - Belgium (*Dislodged*)
(Retreats to Marseilles)
F Constantinople - Smyrna
A Edinburgh - Liverpool (*Fails*)
F English Channel Supports A Picardy - Belgium (*Cut*)
F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - Irish Sea
F North Atlantic Ocean Supports A Edinburgh - Liverpool
A Picardy - Belgium (*Fails*)
A Piedmont - Tyrolia
A Trieste - Budapest
F Tyrrhenian Sea - Western Mediterranean
F Wales Supports A Edinburgh - Liverpool

Germany:

A Belgium, no move received

A Berlin - Silesia

F Clyde Supports F Liverpool

A Kiel - Munich

F Liverpool Supports F Norwegian Sea - Edinburgh
(*Fails*)

A Munich - Burgundy

F North Sea Supports A Belgium

F Norwegian Sea - Edinburgh (*Fails*)

A Ruhr Supports A Munich - Burgundy

A Warsaw Supports A Berlin - Silesia

A Yorkshire Supports F Liverpool

Italy:

F Rumania Supports F Ankara - Black Sea
(*Disbanded*)

Russia:

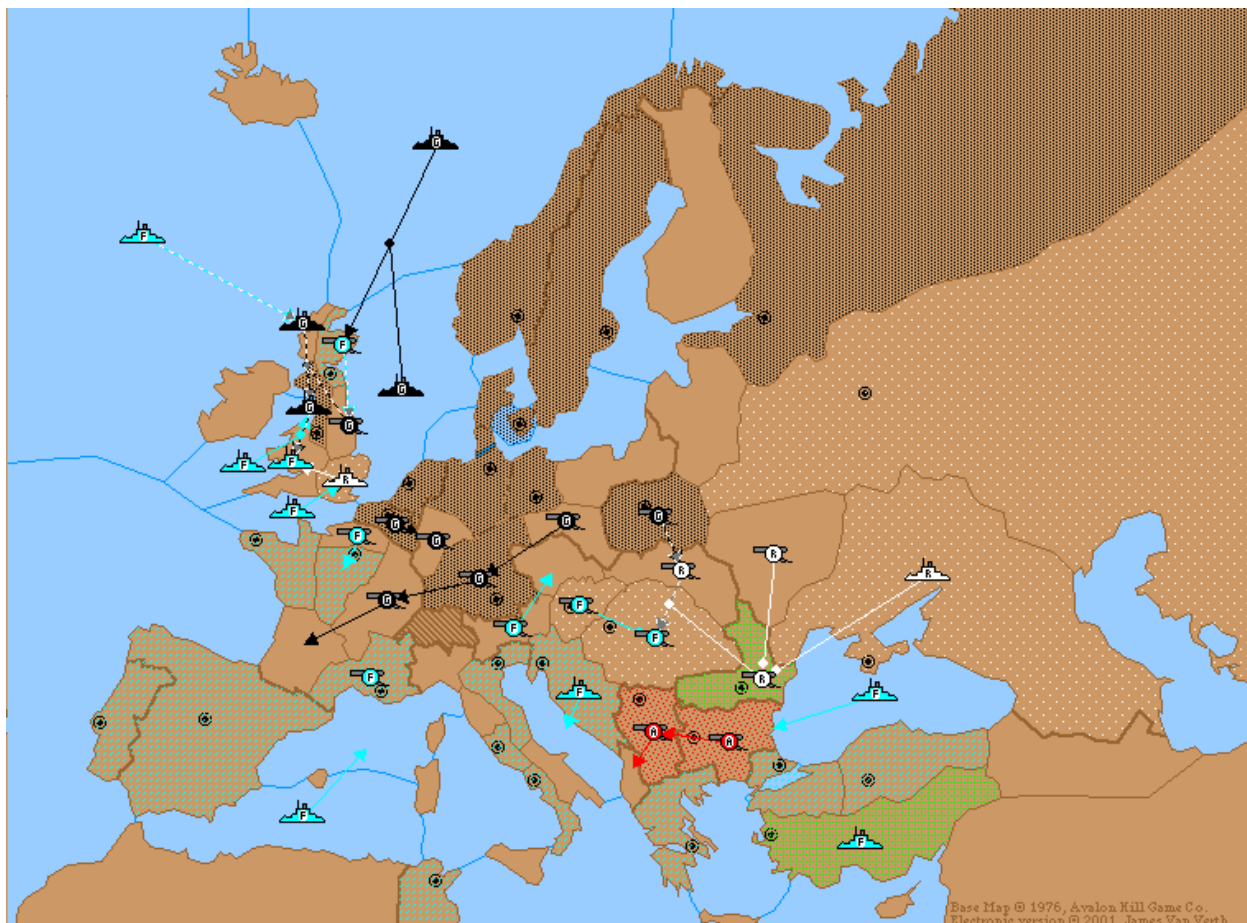
A Budapest - Rumania

A Galicia Supports A Budapest - Rumania

F London - English Channel (*Fails*)

F Sevastopol Supports A Budapest - Rumania

A Ukraine Supports A Budapest - Rumania



Fall 1910

Austria:

A Bulgaria - Serbia
A Serbia - Albania

France:

F Black Sea - Bulgaria(ec)
A Budapest Hold
A Edinburgh - Yorkshire (*Disbanded*)
F English Channel - London
F Irish Sea Supports F Wales - Liverpool
A Marseilles Hold
F North Atlantic Ocean - Clyde (*Fails*)
A Picardy - Paris
F Smyrna Hold
F Trieste - Adriatic Sea
A Tyrolia - Bohemia
A Vienna Supports A Budapest
F Wales - Liverpool
F Western Mediterranean - Gulf of Lyon

Germany:

A Belgium Hold

A Burgundy - Gascony

F Clyde - Liverpool (*Fails*)

F Liverpool - Wales (*Disbanded*)

A Munich - Burgundy

F North Sea Supports F Norwegian Sea - Edinburgh

F Norwegian Sea - Edinburgh

A Ruhr Supports A Belgium

A Silesia - Munich

A Warsaw - Galicia (*Fails*)

A Yorkshire Supports F Clyde - Liverpool (*Cut*)

Russia:

A Galicia - Budapest (*Fails*)

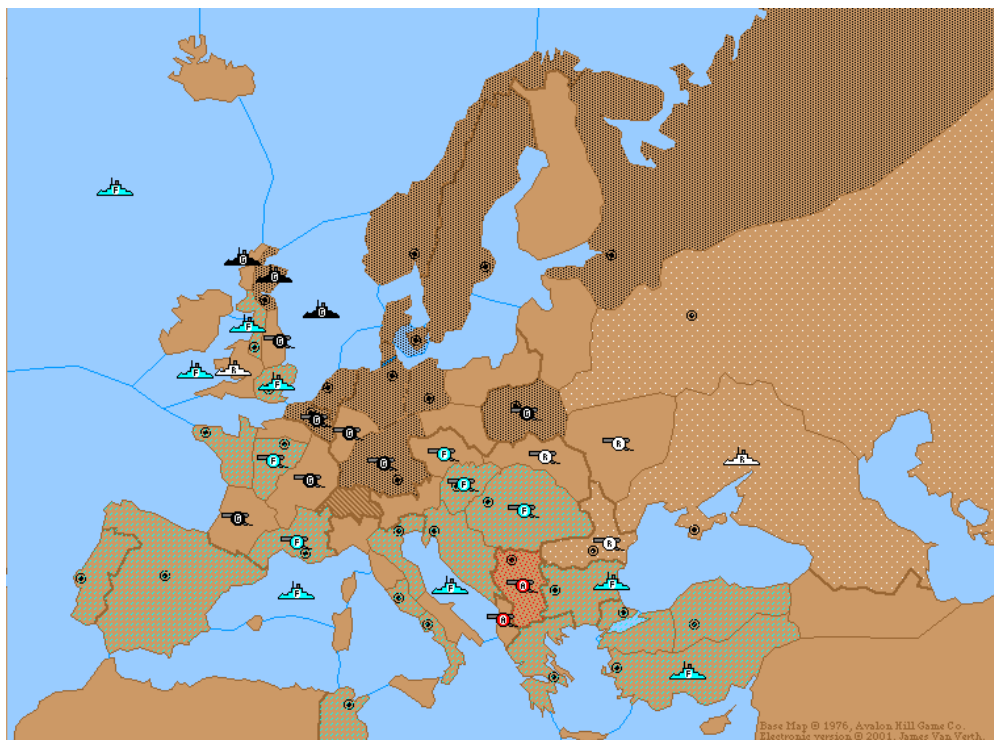
F London - Wales

A Rumania Supports A Galicia - Budapest

F Sevastopol Supports A Rumania

A Ukraine Supports A Rumania

At this point, the players counted the number of SCs France owned and realized the game was over. Germany is in a good position to take a number of SCs, but that doesn't matter!



Winter 1910

Ownership:

Austria: Serbia.

France: Ankara, Brest, Budapest, Bulgaria, Constantinople, Greece, Liverpool, London, Marseilles, Naples, Paris, Portugal, Rome, Smyrna, Spain, Trieste, Tunis, Venice, Vienna.

Germany: Belgium, Berlin, Denmark, Edinburgh, Holland, Kiel, Munich, Norway, St Petersburg, Sweden, Warsaw.

Russia: Moscow, Rumania, Sevastopol.

Adjustments:

Austria: Supp 1 Unit 2 Remove 1

England: Supp 0 Unit 0 Build 0

France: Supp 19 Unit 13 Build 1 (Victory!)

Germany: Supp 11 Unit 10 Build 1

Italy: Supp 0 Unit 0 Build 0

Russia: Supp 3 Unit 5 Remove 2

Turkey: Supp 0 Unit 0 Build 0

Quotes from Edi:

"Do not question what I cannot explain" – Peter McNamara (American)

Jim "Don't fill my mind with all the details." – Carl Ellis

Edi: "If you want me to stop attacking you, you have to stop supporting me to your centers," said to Paul Pa. after Paul misordered, supporting Italian F Wes - Spa

Edi: "When you have a conflict between what you see and what you hear, listen to your eyes."

Scheifler inside info: Edi told Doc to take France