

Issue #124 - Winter 2013
www.diplomacyworld.net



Diplomacy World



Notes from the Editor

Welcome to the latest issue of **Diplomacy World**, which winds up the seventh year of my second tenure as Lead Editor. My first attempt only made it eleven issues – just under three years – before real world crises took away my free time and all of my enthusiasm. But those were different days; you had to collect subscription fees, pay to photocopy every issue, stuff envelopes, address them, apply postage...and often retype articles from postal mail. These days there may be a lot of cutting and pasting that goes on, and of course a good deal of editing and proofreading (which still fails to catch every error) but the expense and manual labor involved in publishing an issue of Diplomacy World is a fraction of what it once was.

Some things, on the other hand, remain the same. I am still a terrible pest, bugging people incessantly about writing an article for DW. I see more of the flaws in every issue than the positives. My favorite types of articles are still the hardest to come by. And I always wonder how much longer I'll be doing this before I give in and pass it on to someone else.

For the time being you're stuck with me. But while I remain the same, other things change and evolve. This issue we welcome our new Clubs and Tournament Editor, the lovely and talented Will J. Abbott. Curiously, as I've been complaining lately about the lack of articles on this topic, we see Will take the helm AND a number of convention reports in this issue. Coincidence? That's for me to know and you to...well, to not know.

This issue also includes another interview from our recently-added Interview Editor, Heath Gardner. Heath won a bet or kidnapped a relative or something, forcing Chris Davis to cooperate and agree to an interview a while back. Maybe he used a photo on the first page of the interview as blackmail material. Judge for yourself.

As always, there are some familiar names in this issue. One of them - our Strategy and Tactics Editor Joshua Danker-Dake – has a new book out which you can purchase from any major bookseller or online. If you'd like to read about Joshua's new book "**The Spare Room and Other Stories**" you can see it on Amazon [here](#) or just do a search at your favorite retailer. No, it isn't about Diplomacy...that's what Diplomacy World is for!

A glance at the meager list of Upcoming Conventions for the second issue in a row means it is time for my annual rant:

If you are organizing or running a Diplomacy event, publicize it in Diplomacy World! Write an article about it, before or after (or both). Produce a simple one-page flyer, which is FREE advertising to thousands of readers. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS RESOURCE! AND PUT YOUR EVENT DETAILS ON THE DIPLOM.ORG WEBSITE TOO!

I just never understand WHY that advice is ignored so often. Don't you WANT people to know about the event, to be informed that it exists, and to consider attending this year or perhaps the next?

IF THEY DON'T KNOW YOUR EVENT EXISTS, HOW CAN THEY ATTEND?

Phew....sorry....that just really gets to me.

I'll close by reminding you the next deadline for Diplomacy World submissions is April 1st, 2014. Remember, besides articles (which are always prized and appreciated), we LOVE to get letters, feedback, input, ideas, and suggestions too. So email me at diplomacyworld@yahoo.com! See you in the spring, and happy stabbing!

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

In This Issue:

| | |
|--|---------|
| Editorial: <i>Notes from the Editor</i> by Douglas Kent | Page 2 |
| Feedback: <i>Knives and Daggers – The Diplomacy World Letter Column</i> | Page 4 |
| Face-to-Face: <i>Clubs and Tournament Report: Welcome the New Editor!</i> by Will J. Abbott | Page 6 |
| Strategy & Tactics: <i>Lessons to Learn in Playing Diplomacy</i> by Tim Haffey | Page 6 |
| Feature: <i>Growing the Hobby: The Secret is Catch 'em While They're Young</i> by Larry Peery | Page 8 |
| Book Review: <i>Playing at the World</i> by Jon Peterson by Ned Leffingwell | Page 10 |
| DWC Tournament: <i>Revisiting "Third Time's the Charm"</i> by Jim Burgess | Page 11 |
| Interview: <i>An Interview with Chris Martin</i> by Heath Gardner | Page 13 |
| Convention Report: <i>Beefy is the New Beefcake</i> by Jim O'Kelley | Page 18 |
| Convention News: <i>Selected Upcoming Conventions</i> | Page 21 |
| Feature: <i>A Tale of Two Cities: Paris and Seattle</i> by Larry Peery | Page 22 |
| Face-to-Face: <i>Team Rounds in Tournaments</i> by Will J. Abbott | Page 24 |
| Strategy & Tactics: <i>The Anschluss Opening</i> by Tim Haffey | Page 25 |
| Convention Flyer: <i>TempleCon 2014</i> | Page 26 |
| Convention Report: <i>Tempest/North American DipCon 2013</i> by Larry Peery | Page 27 |
| Variants: <i>College of Cardinals: The Evolution of a Variant, Part 1</i> by Timothy Hayward and Baron Powell | Page 36 |
| DWC Tournament: <i>Diplomacy World Cup III: Takin' a Lickin', Keepin' on Tickin'</i> by Jim Burgess | Page 40 |
| Strategy & Tactics: <i>The Game is Diplomacy</i> by Tim Haffey | Page 41 |
| Feature: <i>A Turkey's Take on Thanksgiving</i> by Larry Peery | Page 42 |
| Technology: <i>(Re)Visiting Diplomacy for the PC</i> by Joshua Danker-Dake | Page 47 |
| Variants: <i>Fog of War "Radio Tower" Variant</i> by David St. John | Page 49 |
| Demo Game: <i>Thanks for the Roses – Diplomacy World Demo Game – 1905 through 1908 Results</i> | Page 50 |

Knives and Daggers - The Diplomacy World Letter Column

Per Westling - Larry's piece on Team Diplomacy reminded me which is probably my favorite part of Diplomacy, namely the team play. I did enjoy it greatly when I played, and did consider joining one of the team tournaments on the net some year ago but stayed away from it.

Larry wrote something about remembering the team tournament at WDC in 1994. How could I forget....



Pat Piggott - I was talking to someone yesterday about Ethil the Frog and my late husband John Piggott. I thought it might be worth a mention to Diplomacy World as it's coming up to a year since John died suddenly last 19th November aged 60. I still have copies of Ethil in the loft although I was never involved in the game myself.

The photo was taken at our youngest son's graduation about 7 years ago.



We lost too many good friends in the past year or two. John is without question among the most missed.

Larry Peery – Re "Why I Like Team Events"

Over the years I have occasionally been criticized for being too quick to criticize, but I have also been quick to praise where praise was due. Rarely have I been able to do both at the same time. However, if some interpreted the above mentioned article as criticism, so be it. However, let all know that I'm also praising the quick response of the DipCon administrators who took action and restored the team event to its traditional and rightful place in the DipCon pantheon where, hopefully, it will remain. Lauds to Joe, Jeff and Lori for doing the right thing in this case.

Meanwhile, I know I speak for myself. Conrad von Metzke and Rod Walker, and I am sure Allan Calhamer and Walt Buchanan would agree. Although we (Conrad, Rod, Walt and myself) might all think we were DW's greatest editor, I am sure you would be our second choice. On your 6.5 years as DW's senior editor and publisher praise is due. Summa cum laude.

I was saddened by Graeme's article but not surprised. I think we as a FTF hobby need to do some soul-searching about our current state. For starters why don't you send out one of those email announcements/pronouncements you're fond of and ask everybody to submit to submit five suggestions for improving the hobby. You, JB, and I can judge which is the best. I'll donate a ABC tee shirt as a prize.

Other than that, I thought it was a very good issue. I was impressed with Cyrille's article. How does he remember all that stuff? Even with the Databank I can barely remember what cons I've been to. I'm glad I didn't make the top board. I'd still be trying to figure out what country to play.

Lew Pulsipher - I don't know how you do it, Doug. What a great service you provide to Dip fans.

The DW Staff and all the other contributors are way more deserving of thanks than I am.

John Wilman - By way of a change, I checked out Diplomacy World, and found some great stuff by Cyrille Sevin about how he won the latest WDC ahead of Toby Harris (whose reports I had already read). I may have spelt his name wrong - the chain-smoking Frenchie, not the dope-smoking Brit, but I will never forget the only game I played in his august presence.



As Germany, he allowed Toby (Russia) to convoy an army from StP to Sweden in A01, leaving the Russian fleet in GOB free to move to BAL whenever it felt like it. Not content with that, he let the French into Bel for 3 builds! When the moves were read out, he turned a whiter shade of pale France quickly raced to 15 centres.

Anyone, even a world champion, can have a bad day. But my luck was even worse - I was England!

I fared even worse in the only US event I played in (David Hood won that one).

But with all that spare time, I played a lot of railway games instead - no wins, but less stressful on the blood pressure.

My last ever appearance in a ftf dip game was a creditable performance as England, in alliance with Germany, but it was spoilt by the petulant attitude of the player of the French pieces, who played a weak game and was eliminated, that caused me to give up the game. I had played a blinder - he had played like a klutz -= but I felt like the guilty party!

You need a lot of money and a lot of holiday time, even to play in these events. On the Continent, they play C-Diplo, which is an abomination to me. Nobody wins, nobody loses - you just have to top the board after 5/6 years.

Okay folks, John hates the C-Diplo scoring system. Anybody want to debate that, or suggest something new? Plenty of room for more articles next issue!

Steven Douglas - Hello, and thank-you for these decades of Diplomacy.

Does there exist a method for keeping track of the ownership of supply centres beyond memory, notes, or the round SC markers specific to the Great Powers? As a hobby game designer, I find this last adds a lot of tokens, many of which won't come into play, and also messes up the minimalism of the board.

After much searching online to no avail, could it be that no one has produced a set of 34 tokens each showing the name of one supply centre, to be acquired and retained by players once they occupy a SC? How easy then to see who holds what SCs, and to check that a player's number of units is equal to the supply centres they have acquired.

This would be quick enough to mock up on one's own. While at it, a few dozen arrows would make it easy to show the destination of all units that have been ordered to move before they actually move, so that any conflicts would be obvious and support could be read out to resolve the issue... but someone must have thought of that already.

Diplomacy has been a high ideal which I've tried to attain all these long designing decades.

There's always the various adjudication programs, such as Realpolitik. But what about it, readers? Anybody ever create tokens like those Steven describes?

Clubs and Tournament Report: Welcome the New Editor!

By Will J. Abbott

Hello, Diplomacy World readers! My name is Will J. Abbott, and I am the new Clubs and Tournaments editor. This issue I am just introducing myself and making a plea for articles.

I have been playing Diplomacy since my days as an undergraduate in the 1990's but only in the last several years have I begun to participate in tournaments. I have also occasionally played on the judges in the past – both the DPJudge (USDP) and the Ken Lowe njudges. Before I moved from the area, I participated in the Potomac Tea and Knife Society.

I currently live in the Tampa Bay area with my fiancée and our girls (her daughters and my stepdaughters). I am a PhD student in the Catholic University of America, though finished with classes.

So, what am I looking for? I am looking for any information about Diplomacy, as played in clubs and tournaments. Some things to note: nowhere in that phrase is “face-to-face” mentioned. So if you have a club, I'm happy to get info on your goings-on, even if it is an online club. If you are running a tournament (or just played in one) let me know. I don't care if you play in

person or by e-mail, postal mail, telegraph, semaphore, or smoke signals.

If it's just a note or a score sheet, send it to me (wjja9 at yahoo dot com) and I'll write it up. I can take your information in English, German, or French (or if you need to, Latin or Koine Greek!). I will also gladly take full articles, which I will pass along to our intrepid editor, Doug Kent. We'll accept any and all articles on issues related to clubs and tournaments. Articles on how to run a tournament, start a local hobby, or host a house game would be excellent submissions. Last issue boasted an article by Larry Peery on team tournaments; my own take on the same subject is in this issue. I would love to hear your responses to either article! Or come up with your own idea for a tournament and tell the world about it. Have a great idea for a club activity? Write it up. Got tips for how to start a local hobby, like how to find players, where to hold the early games, or how to get publicity? Sounds like a great article idea to me. Finally, if you are starting a hobby in your area, let me know! I'll announce it here in these very pages. The first twenty players to submit something to me relating to clubs or tournaments (or even both!) get a free support to Iceland.

Lessons to Learn in Playing Diplomacy

By Tim Haffey

When playing Diplomacy there are several things to learn. Things like strategies, tactics, playing styles, and different personalities, etc. But, I am going to discuss two other very important concepts.

1. Communications with the other players
2. Giving up.

The first one, Communications with the other players should seem obvious. It applies to all types of gaming: ftf, tournaments, phone, postal, and email games. This is a very important concept and should not be forgotten or ignored. Most people do communicate to some degree, but every now and then you run into a player who simply does not respond to your emails or letters. This pertains to Diplomacy being played via mail or email. It also applies to ftf and Tournaments but perhaps is not so easily avoided when someone corners you to talk.

To serve as an example I will use a game I played in as Turkey, and won a solo in game year 1919. This was DW400 on Dip World. I was Turkey and I sent an email to Russia trying to feel him out about an alliance. I got no response. I send several more emails and still got no

response. In discussions with Austria, Germany and England, I found that they were not getting any responses to their emails either. This guy simply did not communicate with anyone at any time during the game for the short time he existed.

When a player refuses to talk to you or answer your mail/email, you have to assume he is hostile and will attack you. So, I made the anti-Russian move of F Ank-Blk, A Smy-Arm. A Con-Bul. I also worked with Austria and Italy to assure them I was not going to attack them or come after them. Austria moved A Vie-Gal. When the spring moves came out, I was more than a little surprised to see F Sev-Rum. I got into the Black Sea much to my surprise. A War-Gal bounced with Austria and remained in War. Russia moved A Mos-StP much to England's unhappiness as you might imagine. Germany moved to Denmark and would bounce Russia in Sweden in the fall.

In the fall, I captured Rum (A Arm-Rum by a Convoy on F Blk and supported by A Bul). Russia retreated F Rum to Sev. He again moved A War-Gal and was again bounced. Germany bounced him in Sweden and he did not get a build. The whole time I was sending him

emails and he simply would not respond. He was sending his orders in to the GM so his computer must have been working. But, now, because he refused to talk to anyone, he had four nations working against him. To make a long story short, in fall 1903 I took Mos (I had taken Sev in 02), Germany took War with a supported move, and England took StP and the non-communicative Russia went down in flames. Still without a word to anyone. He never submitted an EOG statement either.



So, the lesson learn here is communicate with all the other players all the time or you may go down in flames in F-03, or sooner. I think this would also apply to ftf and Tournament games as well.

The second lesson learned really does not apply to ftf or Tournament games because they have time limits and a solo win is not usually the goal. More like a draw somehow. But, in mail or email games where there is no time limit and the game can go on for a long time (19 years in this game), you need to understand that

anything can happen. Players realign their alliances, players quit and you get a new player, players die for real, GMs quit or just disappear and you have to find a new GM which delays the game and players drift away as well. In DW400 we eliminated Russia in 03, by 06 Italy and I (Turkey) had eliminated Austria. I then gained control of the Ionian Sea and pushed Italy out of Tri and Vie. But, Germany and France were solidly allied and I could not get either one to attack the other one. France was almost all fleets built in order to take out England and stalemate the Med. Germany only had two fleets and had all of his armies on my borders attacking me every turn. France was wide open and all Germany had to do was ally with me and attack France and France would have folded up like a cardboard box. But he would not do it. A newbie's loyalty to his mentor I suppose.

We had all agreed to a DIAS and sent in our votes, but, then it happened. Germany resigned due to family problems and the GM brought in a new player who voted against the DIAS. I raised hell with the GM and later I found out that France did too. Did I mention that Felix was playing France? Well, when he saw Germany start to move toward France, he resigned too. And then Italy resigned. He probably realized that a new French player would take him out anyway. Then, the GM resigned. Now there is no one in the game except me and Germany. So, we became sort of buddies while we searched around for a new GM.

We found one and he got a player for France and Italy. The Italian player turned out to be a sweetheart too. He supported me even while I was taking his centers. Germany moved out of War and StP so I took them and tried to take Mun for the win...but I messed up ☺. By this time I had captured all of Italy but, France had Tun and I could not take it. I only had 17 centers. So, I told Germany I was very sorry about trying to attack Mun and he should go ahead and take the rest of France's centers. He took four of his remaining six centers and France had to remove four units. He removed all his fleets in the Med leaving Tun wide open allowing me to take the win. Germany had an army in Spain and had moved his F Mid into Por, so there was nothing he could do about it. I proposed a Turkey solo and they voted for it.

The lesson here, NEVER GIVE UP, anything can happen and turn the game right around.

Tim Haffey is one of the former Lead Editors of Diplomacy World

Growing the Hobby: The Secret is Catch 'em While They're Young

By Larry Peery

As I think everyone active in the Diplomacy hobby has noticed we're a declining breed. Except for the online hobby and the number of visits to Diplomacy related websites most indicators of the hobby's "health" show a decline: 1) Number of FTF games played; 2) Number and size of DipCon events held; 3) Number of publications devoted to the game and hobby. I can't help but think the passing of Allan Calhamer last year marked a watershed for the hobby.

However, as I pointed out at DipCon in Silver Spring last year this doesn't necessarily mean the end of the hobby: it just means we have to work harder to maintain it and to grow it. When I pointed that out to those in Silver Spring the idea got a good reception. It always does. The problem is NOW do we do it? I said in my comments that it was easy to point out the problem but the challenge was to come up with ways to solve it. This article is the first of several intended to suggest some ways to do just that. I encourage others to send their ideas for growing the hobby to DIPLOMACY WORLD, THE DIPLOMATIC POUCH, and the various online Diplomacy websites; and, if nothing else dust off your Dip email list and send out a cyber "kick in the butt" to some of your Dip friends ---especially those who have become inactive.

I mentioned three specific areas where we need work. Here's some ideas directly aimed at those areas:

1) Increasing the number of FTF games played: This is a no-brainer and really easy. Just get off your butt and host a FTF game for family, friends, and what I called "newbie ought-to-bes! It's good to mix up the people at a house Dip party. If you just have family, or friends, or whomevers you run the risk of not having a "good mix," e.g. a variety of ages, interests, and personality types. After all, who wants to play Dip with six other Type A personalities? Also, there's no reason why you have to have your FTF game at home. Move it out of the box! Now you don't have to do some of the weird things I've done to promote the game and hobby. Playing on a bus, train or cruise ship may not be possible for everybody, but there are ways to make a Dip game an event. One possibility is to piggy-back your Dip game onto another event. Again, you don't have to go to the extreme that Mike and I did in 1984 when we played Diplomacy at one of the Los Angeles Summer Olympics event. I figured there had to be some "newbie-ought-to-bes" among the 45,000 baseball fans attending the medals games in baseball at Dodger Stadium so we dragged a card table, a Dip game, a flag and a sign up to the Stadium parking lot, set it all up in a prime spot near the

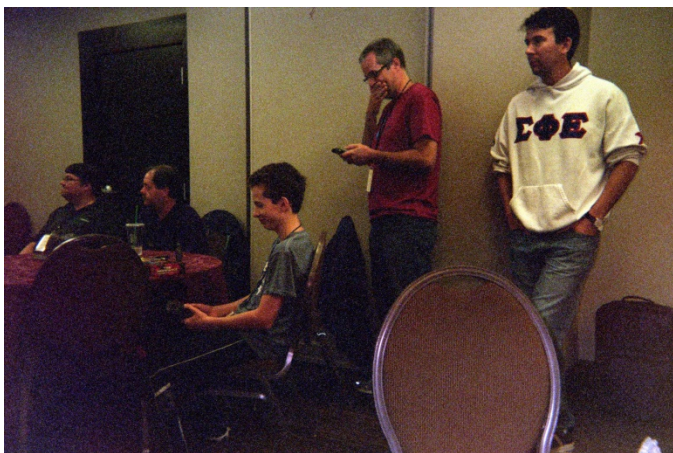
entrance and started playing. We got a few stares from those arriving and a visit from the security people but they decided we were harmless and left. What was surprising to me was how many people stopped by to see what we were doing and many, many of them said things like, "Oh yeah, I used to play that in college. You mean it's still around?" The only mistake I made was is not having any flyers to pass out. Lesson learned: if you're playing in a public space have a greeter to answer questions and flyers to pass out. I fielded several queries at Silver Spring from some of the Vietnam vets who were sharing the hotel; and I suspect we could have recruited a few newbies if we'd put our mind to it.

2) Number and size of DipCon events held: Again, a no-brainer. Just double the number of boards to two, come up with a scoring system, add a few prizes; and post some announcements in DIPLOMACY WORLD and THE DIPLOMATIC POUCH. After all, where else can you get free publicity? And don't forget to use some of the online Dip.org sites and discussion groups. Finally, come up with a catchy name for your event; just make it Dipcentric and friendly sounding. CARNAGE is not a good name for an event promoting a family-friendly, fun loving event! Hmm, almost makes me want to revive PEERICON. I wonder if I did if anybody would come? I can definitely come up with a unique venue: there's a Hooters down the hill and a Roman Catholic Mission just over the hill. ☹

3) Number of publications devoted to the hobby and game: This one is a bit of a reach but here's an idea that will drive Jim Burgess nuts (I sure hope he's not reading this or I'm going to be in deep doo-doo.). This year marks the 30th anniversary of Jim's outstanding zine/sub-zine THE ABYSSINIAN PRINCE. Let's help him celebrate by sending him a sub-sub-zine! Right. Peery's OD'd on fruitcake (Not to digress but I should mention that this year I had fruitcakes from: England, France, Germany, Italy, and the USA. Hmmm, pity I didn't have any stolen, baklava or vzvar> Now that would have been a tasty Dip variant.) and eggnog. I urge you to create a one or two page mini-Dip 'zine and send it to jfburgess@gmail.com It doesn't have to be long or complicated (e.g. No Peeriblah allowed!). Why include an idea for promoting the game and hobby, perhaps a personal favorite Dip encounter with another hobbyist, or a retelling of your most memorable moment at a DipCon event? And if you're really brave put in a sign-up sheet for a FTF, PBM or PBEM Dip game and see who responds? Who knows, you might have so much fun with your one-timer that you get bit by the publishing bug!

Actually, all of the above just occurred to me when I started typing this. My original subject was going to be promoting the game and hobby among young people. That was something I'd been thinking about since Silver Spring when I saw Kevin O'Kelley playing Dip. He was, by far, the youngest Dipper there. It was actually his second Dip event his dad, Jim, told me. Kevin didn't do so well in the scoring but he seemed to have a good time and collected some prizes. Hopefully he'll be back for more. Who knows, he's about the same age as Edi Birsan was when Edi started playing, so perhaps we have the next Edi Birsan germinating among us?

Here are some pix of Jim O'Kelley and his son Kevin.



Speaking of Edi, he's got a different response from his son and grandson toward the game and hobby, but he isn't giving up on recruiting youngsters into the hobby. Edi says that Edi Jr. has only played in a few games,

including his only two in the Italian Milan tournament some nine years ago. Edi Sr. won and Edi Jr. came in last place. Hmmmm, maybe they can do a redux at WDC 2015 when it's held in Milan. However, Edi Jr. didn't do too badly. His consolation prize was getting to go Alpine skiing with David Norman, the British Dipper. Edi reports, with just a bit of a tear in his eye, that Edi Jr. is not a gamer, and views Dip as "Pop's game." Cody, Edi's grandson, has played a few games including at some of the local tournaments, but he's basically not a Dipper.

Here's a pic of Edi giving his best sales pitch to some newbie-want-to-bes.



"So you see kids, you ALWAYS want to support me into Belgium."

So here's an example of two hobby dads trying to recruit their sons and grandsons into the hobby. Why not a daughter or even a mother-in-law? Who knows, your mother-in-law might develop a taste for stabbing you? ☹

Young people in high school, college and even junior school are prime targets for recruitment so it's worth making the effort. Get 'em while they're young as Fred Davis would say.

And speaking of Fred next time I'll be discussing some ideas about how to go to the other extreme and recruit some of The Geritol Set into the hobby. In the meantime, Happy Recruiting!

Remember kids, don't encourage Larry Peery. It just keeps him around.

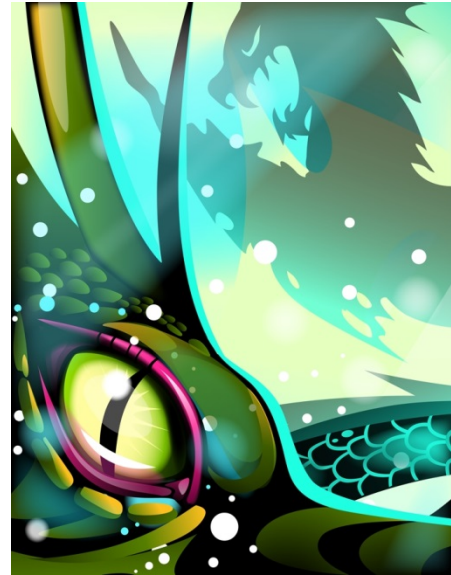
Books for Diplomacy Players: *Playing at the World* by Jon Peterson (Unreason Press. 720 pages)

A Review by Ned Leffingwell

Playing at the World by Jon Peterson is a thorough history of the development of Dungeons and Dragons and the creation of fantasy role playing games. Peterson traces the game from its roots in miniature wargaming up until the release of the first edition of Advanced Dungeons & Dragons. Peterson shows how a variety of games and genres blended together to create the fantasy role playing game. The majority of his book focuses on miniature and board wargaming, but Diplomacy fans will find that Calhamer's game also played a crucial role in the development of D&D.

Playing at the World shows how the peculiarities of Diplomacy's play and the communities that sprung up around it added to the pot of soup that would eventually simmer into the genre of role playing games. Peterson does a notable job of tracing the histories of miniature wargame rules, sci fi fanzine communities, as well as early D&D communities. His research is exhaustive and the reader should be warned that the majority of this book is not about Diplomacy. However Diplomacy is presented as a crucial component in his narrative. He presents clear linear histories as to how these hobbies developed and influenced each other. Peterson shows how Diplomacy, with its "anything goes" negotiation mechanic along with its tendency to encourage players to immerse themselves in character influenced the development of fantasy role playing games.

The high points for Diplomacy fans are the histories of the play-by-mail communities and the descriptions of home-brewed variants. For example, D&D's other co-creator Dave Arneson developed a Napoleonic variant that included an economic component and battles fought with miniatures rules. Peterson's strength is his research of these fan communities; he has read through hundreds of fanzines in order to show the early Diplomacy community in action. *Playing at the World* shows how gamers adapted Diplomacy to a play-by-mail format and then merged this style of playing with fanzines, creating amateur newsletters full of colorful press. Peterson also explores the immersive element of Diplomacy. He shows how many players preferred to write letters and press in character. The reader is treated to letters that Gary Gygax, co-creator of D&D, wrote in his postal games.



Peterson explores the simulation aspect of Diplomacy, arguing that the free-form nature of negotiation encouraged immersion and role playing among its players. Peterson compares this to other shared-world communities, such as group science fiction settings as well as homebrewed wargame campaigns. The ease of which Diplomacy play was adapted to the play-by-mail format allowed it to expand beyond boundaries of geography and imagination, and Peterson traces this path as wargamers and sci-fi fans began to experiment with different ways to "play pretend".

The size and density of this book makes it a commitment to read, as Peterson covers an enormous amount of topics and material. This book will be most enjoyed by Diplomacy gamers whose interests also include role playing games and wargaming. Peterson shows how the creation of D&D worked like a chain of dominoes that toppled over in just the right configuration. Diplomacy was not the most important domino in the chain, but without its influence role playing would be very different or might not have been invented at all. This book is a treat for anyone who wants to see the development of a truly unique genre of game and also to see the role that Diplomacy played in its creation.

The best kind of article for DW: the one that arrived in my inbox completely unexpected!

Revisiting “The Diplomacy World Cup Tournament: Third Time’s the Charm”: Is There Nothing a Diplomacy Player Won’t Do to Reduce “The Level of the Game”™?

By Jim-Bob Burgess

You’ve all seen pundits make predictions and say “Gosh, I’ll bet that’s wrong, and when he’s proven wrong, I’ll bet he won’t admit it, he’ll just keep making wrong predictions!” I’m not saying I’ve never done that, but today I’m not going to do it, I’m going to say I’m wrong. Here’s why I think I was wrong, and here’s what we can learn about THE Game from my error. That’s what we’re going to do today in this article. The original article appeared back in DW #120, but since we know none of you are going to go back to look at that right now, here is the relevant quote:

“Let’s first talk more about the solos. Solos in the first round are required to give you access to the finals. You can have as many players as your team/country/region can recruit playing in the first round to increase your chances at getting players into the finals. You need five solos in the finals to achieve victory, and can only have seven players at a time participating in the finals, if you can get that many people qualified. So, solos are the sole coin of the realm. There are now incentives to make deals ONLY that result in solos, and by definition (sounds silly, but you need to say it) in order to make a deal on a solo you have to be in position to do so and with members of your team in the same games with members of other teams. AND, the games have to be at similar stages (which won’t happen so often in this model) and even more than that the STRONG incentives in this model, as opposed to a model that is C-Diplo center and board topping based is to take the solo on one board and then once achieved, stab and deny it on the other board. I will be shocked if the cross-gaming here is as strong as it was in the earlier incarnations of these types of tournaments, and even if it is attempted it will fail more often than it succeeds. And then once you’re in the finals, where five solos are what are required to win, such trades get ever more and more tricky. Plus, since you do not want the problem of “ranking solos” to be part of the game, solos are ranked by game creation time, which is fairly random and will get more random as the tournament progresses. So, I think we need to expect that people will TRY to manipulate the tournament, but processes within the tournament structure and the game play can work to break those manipulations down.” DW 120 The Diplomacy World Cup Tournament: Third Time’s the Charm, Jim-Bob Burgess

We now are a year into this tournament, and the finals are about to start. Read about that specific progress in

my other article elsewhere in this issue. But what I’m here to say is to ADMIT in public where I was right and where I was wrong about what I said above. I was right that solos are the sole coin of the realm in this tournament, so people are trading and giving solos, at a FAR greater rate than I had expected (where I was wrong), so that nearly all the games are resulting in solos. I also was wrong (though I’m not entirely sure to this day WHY I was wrong, but more on that in a minute) that in order to make deals on solos, you have to be in positions to give such solos. Many deals have been made (both ones I’ve been part of in this tournament, as well as ones I’ve heard about or strongly suspect) where players have no earthly possibility of being able to deliver on trades and promises. In other words, Diplomacy players have been deceiving, can we believe this?? And I thought that the deals would have to come across games at similar stages and with all the staggered game starts that wouldn’t happen very much. Well, I was right that staggered game starts would mean that games would be at all sorts of different stages, but I was totally wrong that this would inhibit solo throwing. AND, I WAS DEAD, DEAD, DEAD WRONG that cross-gaming would be less in this tournament than in the first two Diplomacy World Cups. In fact, since solos are kind of messy to throw, and because they can result in really outlandish play, cross-gaming has been EVEN more prominent and more disruptive to the way most people usually play Diplomacy games. Also, and most disturbingly, most games have not featured wildly shifting alliances (which are the most exciting part of THE Game) and most games have one clear leader very early on. This high level of cross-gaming has bothered many people in the preliminary round. As I say in my other article more about the nuts and bolts of the tournament, I do not think that should stop you from playing, let’s get more people joining, and more people will dilute cross-gaming opportunities, and make for better play. And you still can work through the prelims and get into the finals. And, if like me, you haven’t soloed in a long time, you might get a solo. Me? I don’t have one yet, and I think it may be awhile before I get one. One last point in this part of the argument, one of the tools you have seen used from the Carebear world is the use of coin flips to decide who solos in a game. I think the mechanisms of coin flips, how you negotiate about them, and how you are using them are fascinating, but I can say no more at this time. Expect an update on the use of coin flips in Diplomacy in a later *Diplomacy*

World article. At that time, it will be clear why I'm saying that.



The question is, where solos get you closer to the team victory, and there is ONLY one team victory, will such wild behavior continue in the finals? I could be silly, but I do think that as SOME point you have to just play since you don't want to hand someone a solo that will permit their team to get to victory. Plus, the finals has in it some of the best Diplomacy players in the world who by definition HAVE shown the experience and ability to solo, while the prelims were littered with lots of less experienced players, most of whom have never soloed. Yet, I worry that as a pundit predicting player behavior, I have taken a punch in the nose, so maybe I'm going to qualify that a bit. I DO know that getting to the very end of the tournament it has to be the case that complex stop-the-leader play has to come out. How far in game theoretic "backwards induction" we go in having it happen across the finals, we will have to see, and I think I'm not going to embarrass myself with a firm prediction about cross-gaming. I will make a firm prediction about the quality and the excitement of the play. It will be great, and it will be great to see it get started soon. These are some really great players in there, and I don't think there are any slouches. So even if there is cross-play, it also likely will be more complex and interesting cross-play. And remember that ALL tournaments distort THE Game. It's far harder than most people think to make sense of those changes in the incentives that tournaments engender.

But here's the issue I'd like to end this article on, and that's my trademarked issue of Levels of the Game™! One of the great tensions in THE Game is the desire and reward from adding levels of deception to one's interaction with the other players, but ALSO the desire and reward from breaking those levels of deception down through "real" honesty. If you start a game with everyone, or almost everyone, agreeing which player is going to solo, then there are no deceptions, everyone plays to hand the game to that player, and that player quickly solos. I'm not sure if in the present Diplomacy World Cup that actually has occurred yet, where 3-7 players in the game all work toward one player soloing from the very beginning of the game, but I wouldn't be surprised if it has based on watching how the 21 solos we've had so far have developed. Human emotion surrounding THE Game faces this tension all the time, we make choices and say things that raise the level of the game and the levels of deception. When you do this, and I say this from lots of experience, other players get annoyed with you, especially if you layer those levels on top of each other in more and more complex ways. Usually, when you don't have this "solo only" issue sitting on top of the game, there are multiple ways to raise the level of the game and multiple ways to lower it, and that complexity makes it harder to engineer. Here, the simplicity of the cross-gaming goals, where lots of players are soloing to get into the finals, makes it FAR easier and motivated to reduce the level of the game and that's the way most of the games have gone. This was where I was dead wrong. But interesting, I think this points the way toward where potential DWC IV and other future tournament designers have to think. You want complex multiple ways for people to gain, that makes it harder for people to craft cross-gaming deals – increase the uncertainty, you increase the opportunities for raising the level of the game. I think that new insight for me is an important and deep one. You might disagree; commentary and other articles for *DW* are welcome. One idea that has popped up in the Diplomacy World Cup discussion group that maximizes that uncertainty is the idea that you have human judges who "score" the play. If you make a deal that the judges hate, you might score NO points at all, instead of winning as you expected. This idea has endured laughs, but it really has a lot to be said for it. If the judges were rewarding balance of power play as the Founder of the Feast wanted to promote, then you could have great games with people working harder and harder to raise the level of the game. I would like to see this, but maybe it won't work in a Diplomacy World Cup. We'll see. If you aren't in this tournament already, think about joining up! We need all of you!!

An Interview with Chris Martin

By Heath Gardner

Chris Martin is a specialist. He is, without question, THE best doctor of ballroom dancing who is also a Diplomacy player. It sounds silly, but he makes it work beautifully. Chris's passion for his interests is contagious – while being one of the most fearsome competitors in the game, players – even new players – are often very happy to share a board with him.

Chris, also known as “DQ”, has been a fixture on the face to face circuit for a long, long time. When I was first beginning to dabble in Diplomacy, I unwittingly stumbled my way to WDC in Chapel Hill at age 14 (back in 1998). We both took home awards that year. I claimed the coveted “death with dignity” for showing up, paying my registration fee, and being cannon fodder over 4 games. Chris won the whole thing outright. I still remember him jumping up and down like he'd been selected to be the next contestant on *The Price is Right*.

I planned to sit down with Chris to do this interview at DipCon at Tempest in a Teapot this year, an event that is in Chris's backyard. (Not literally, that wouldn't be fair). But due to medical catastrophe, I have been reduced to talking with him by email. But I'm still determined for it to feel like a conversation, if Chris will humor me.

Anyway. Ladies and Gentlemen, Chris Martin. Sir, thank you for taking a few minutes to talk to *Diplomacy World*.

You are very welcome, Heath. I'm a big fan of *Diplomacy World*, so it is my pleasure.

So, how was Tempest? Sorry I couldn't be there. Was there any particular spot where you could have used my carebearish loyalty?

I can *a/ways* use a good ally, Heath! Good alliance play is the key to my success in the hobby. But to your question – Tempest was great. A really well run event as always.

I saw that you won “Biggest Diva” at Carnage this year. Not exactly winning the national title, but it's better than I've ever done. I'm assuming there's a link between this and your Facebook profile picture (Chris wearing a tiara and a party mask, looking really bummed out).

This was a really special award for me. As you know, I always aspire to the highest standards of play, and to be rewarded in such a way for the passion I bring to the game is so fulfilling. I can't thank Dave Maletsky enough!

So, tell me about your personal love story with Diplomacy. We all have one. How did you discover the

game? How long did it take to get its tenterhooks in you? Where did you cut your teeth – live, postal, online? How long did it take before you realized you had a strong aptitude for it?



Chris Martin in his “Biggest Diva” Costume

All very mundane stuff for me, really. I was introduced to the game in high school, in a summer leadership institute at the University of Nebraska. The idea was to teach conflict resolution, if I remember correctly – mostly what I remember about that summer was all of us belting out “The Devil went down to Georgia” over lunch every day. That was it for diplomacy for a long time – I played a lot of dungeons and dragons, contract bridge, a little chess, but I found that most board games moved too slowly for my tastes. Waiting for other people to decide on their moves was a big barrier for me to get into the axis-and-allies style games.

After I got a computer, I remember looking online for diplomacy, and finding Tim Richardson's site The Old Republic. I played a game there, as well as some other online forums, but I really enjoyed the flavor and personality that Tim brought to the games. In the third game I played there I think we realized that 7 of the 8 of us lived in the DC/Philly/NYC corridor – and we decided

to get together for a face to face game. I believe it was hosted by Mike "Smacko" McMillie, and I was Austria to his Italy – I proposed, and then screwed up a Key Lepanto, so that he ended up staying in Trieste. I don't remember much more than that but I had a blast and was determined to play more f2f.

My first tournament, I think, was AvalonCon, in 1997. I had two eliminations and a one-center survival as Germany, repeatedly ordering "Berlin to Kiel!" at the top of my lungs. Again, I had a blast. I didn't really have any tournament success until WDC in 1998 – probably my third tournament ever.

Let's talk tournaments. I'm assuming, given your yearly schedule, that tournament FTF is your favorite way to play Dip? Or do you just love tournaments for the Dip binge, as I do? (I only figured out the Dixie scoring system like 2 times ago.)

I like house games too – in some ways, more than tournaments, because there is less pressure to maximize the score and you can try crazy things. But yes, for my money – and I realize that some people who I consider reasonable disagree with me on this – face to face is the best way to play diplomacy. Tick tock!

I think a lot of what our readers want are anecdotes or stories about particularly memorable games. Let's start with your WDC win in my stomping grounds, Chapel Hill, NC. How long had you been playing when you won that? You must have been pretty young. As for me, I was 14, but telling everyone I was 15 because I figured that seemed a lot more mature.

My son will be 14 when this is published, I will pass along your strategy for appearing mature. ☺ "Pretty Young." Ouch. I was, lets see, 29 in 1998? So, yeah, pretty young. It isn't really a very good story, I am afraid. I didn't know a lot of people, mostly just the folks I had met at Avaloncon and Prezcon. The scoring system was set up so that, in the four rounds of play, you only had to take two results to be considered – and it was going to take the average of your results, no matter how many rounds you played. In my first two games I got a two-way draw (very good points at Dixie) and a solo victory. So I didn't play the last two games, as it could only have hurt my score!

Well, I remember the field that year, and even coming top 7 would have been a hell of an achievement. I'm still impressed. Was there any game, or any particular moment in any game, that encapsulates your winning mojo at that tournament?

The funniest thing about it is that the games weren't anything special. The two way draw was an R/T with Larry Peery – and Larry and I absolutely crushed out of the gate, I was Turkey at 11 and he was Russia at 12, I

stabbed him to go to 13 – and he stayed at 12. Someone else proposed the draw, and we took it – Larry told me after that he'd've come back and kicked my butt if the draw hadn't passed, and I believe him!

The solo victory was a similar situation – Steve Mauris was Germany, and I was England. We killed France, took St. Pete and Iberia, and I was pressuring Italian holdings. Austria and Turkey and the remnants of Russia put together a line, and told Steve that he needed to turn around and attack me. He said "Sure, as soon as you guys back off a step from my dots." They didn't back off that year and they refused to take a draw. For three game years, in which time I took Tunis, they refused to back off, or to stop pressuring Steve to stab me. Finally, fed up, he said "You know, Chris, if you took all my dots, you'd have 19."

And I did, and that was it. World Champion at my third tournament. I've always been a little suspect about the value of the title as a result. ☺

I guess there's ups and downs to everything. I imagine the "down" to winning the tournament is you can no longer "Be the Little Guy" [link] (an excellent article Chris wrote after WDC suggesting such a strategy for winning tournaments). Everyone knows who you are and what you're capable of. Do you think that's worked against you, or have you used it to your advantage? Any anecdotes?

The title has really done both, in almost equal measure. I'm a target, sure, but people give me way more credit than I deserve for skill, and some folks want to ride coattails, which by the way is a great strategy if you are new to the tournament scene. My favorite part about having the title is on the occasions where someone is attacking (or better, stabbing) me and I see it coming and totally wreck their plans – and this is most satisfying when more than one person is attacking me – is to look up from the table after the orders have been read, look into their eyes, and say "World Champion, BITCH." It warms the cockles of my soul, truly. Which is good, because I am usually eliminated pretty quickly after that.

So, everyone has a "favorite game" story. (I think so, anyway). They usually involve coming back from nothing to win, or improbably stopping a win, or manipulating the framework of the game to cause other player to make errors, etc. Do you have a favorite game in your memory? If not, can you share a few different memories that stand out?

Unfortunately, I have kind of swiss cheese memory when it comes to diplomacy games. My favorite story from last year is kind of mean, so I won't tell it here – ask me over a beer sometime – but there have been lots of games where fighting for my life at two or three centers was a lot more fun than rolling to a big result or a solo

win. Honestly, probably my favorite memories of the game are the drunken gunboat games we played at AvalonCon where a couple people would read the black press – and sing, and dance as needed. Those were good times!

What's your favorite country to play? Why? Least favorite? Why? Does playing live or online make a difference?

Austria, because degree of difficulty. Russia, same reason. Live is the only way to play. Online games are like online sex. Better than nothing, but the lack of actual human contact diminishes the experience.

How would you describe your play style? I am often maligned as a carebear, though there's nothing I like more than the satisfaction of a game winning stab (not that I've had all that many). It seems to me that carebearism, oddly, flourishes more in the FTF/tourney setting than online. Perhaps that is because it's good to have a reputation as someone that will safely drive to a 3-way draw every time. Does your play style change dramatically depending on your country/neighbors?

My play style has changed a lot over the years. I was pretty cutthroat when I was driven by the need to prove that I deserved the title. Since I've gotten over that, I play a pretty steady game – I won't stab an ally for less than 3 dots, or 2 dots and position, or the win. That's about where I think most folks should draw the line, but it depends on what you mean by "ally." The key to my success in tournaments has been finding good people to work with, and working well with them. Doing better than they do over the weekend is what makes a good tournament score – get three good results and you will usually finish in the top seven.

Do I change my play style based on my neighbors? Rarely.

You have a great family. Your son seems to be following in your footsteps as a gamer, though perhaps not in Diplomacy. Your son and gaming was responsible for one of the coolest things I've seen on Facebook in a while. Could you try to recreate a little bit of his birthday party for our readers?

Thank you! J does like gaming, he's been playing D&D himself for a few years. Much healthier emotionally than diplomacy. ☺ I'm running another D&D game for him for his birthday this year – Vengeance on the Ice. The idea is the same as last year – I have generated some characters, his friends will come over, and I will GM a dungeon crawl for them. It was good fun last year, I hope it will be again this year!

Dixiecon was pretty kid-heavy this year. I have an interest in that, seeing as it's how I started playing the

game. I've noticed some people get annoyed when a significant neighbor on the board with them is a preteen. Do you think this unbalances games or is it good for the game? I'll add that while I was probably the most terrible player at the WDC you won, if I hadn't been allowed to play that year, I probably never would have been bitten by the Dip bug in such a terminal way.

For me, it is about the community. Yes, obviously teenage players unbalance the game – but does it unbalance it more than having ME sit down next to you? If we want to keep playing diplomacy we need to keep recruiting new players.

But, and this is a pretty big but, kids and diplomacy are a volatile combination, especially at tournaments. People want to win. It is difficult to balance that desire against the desire to protect the kid from the emotional damage that can be done when seeking victory. Diplomacy is a game that invites passion, and most kids lack the necessary emotional maturity to handle that level of intensity. Where does your responsibility lie? Be a ruthless SoB and stab the kid, and damn the tears, or be a decent human being and nurture them, at the cost of a pretty sweet trophy? I know where my priorities are, but I recognize that other folks want a different experience.

What's your favorite con? You don't get to say Tempest, but you can say some good things about it.

Tempest is good – the level of play is exceptionally high, which I like. My favorite tournament hands down is DixieCon – a great event where the level of play is also very high, and the camaraderie and hospitality are unmatched. It is inexpensive, too, which was a big reason it was on my list to attend for many years as a starving artist and then graduate student. Plus, I win there a lot. What's not to like?

You live in a hothouse of Diplomacy talent – the Washington, DC area, where dozens of great Dip players live (and, for our readers, this is where Tempest in a Teapot is hosted). Do you play a lot of "off season" games? Are there big differences between playing tournaments with the best and playing casual games with the best players? A lot of the PTKS guys, I can't see them not taking it seriously just because it's not a tournament. I guess only Chicago has a scene close to as active as yours. Do you think playing with such talented players in non-tournament settings makes you stronger for the tournament games? It seems an obvious yes, but it's striking what a huge locus of talent there is in DC.

I guess, after all, this was Kennedy's and Kissinger's game.

Casual games in DC tend to fall into one of two camps – ruthless knife fights, and fun silly games. There is very

little middle ground. For a long time, three or four years, we'd only play until 1904 or so, when it was clear someone was going to be killed out, and then we'd start another game. Earlier than that, we had a Chicago-style scoring system, with awards and what not, but as you've noted we don't really need a prod to drive us towards competitiveness.

And yes, I think one of the reasons that Tempest is so competitive is that the field is very, very deep. Anyone you are likely to have as your neighbor has spent four or five years at least – sometimes twenty years – playing against four or five people who travel to tournaments and expect to have a chance to win. You don't play against that caliber of player for that long and not learn something!

What does PTKS stand for? How long has it been around? How can people in the DC area get involved?

The Potomac Tea and Knife Society predates me in the hobby by a few years – check us out at PTKS.org, and on meetup.com – we have a house game or two pretty much every month!

How about other games? What are your favorite board and card games aside from Dip?

I have come to enjoy Twilight Struggle a fair bit. I try to like Here I Stand, and for the most part succeed. I'm a pretty bad cribbage and pinochle player, but I enjoy them. I'd like to get back to playing contract bridge – Buffalo and I joke that if we ever decide to retire from Diplomacy we're going to play Bridge on the tournament circuit.

Does David Hood have a vendetta against me? He always gives me the worst board draws at Dixie. I always end up playing Italy and Russia, my two weakest powers. Last time: I was Italy, Nathan Barnes was France, Adam Sigal was Austria, and Eric Grinnell was Turkey. Is there a name for that kind of cruelty? What's the most "stacked" (talent, personal history with one another) board draw you've ever seen? How about the silliest?

Yes. The name for that kind of board draw is "Justice for Past Crimes."

As for stacked/silly boards, the kind that everyone goes "ooooooooohhh!" when they are called, I think most every board at the NADF Invitational is like that – when you have three or four boards where everyone who is there qualified by finishing in the top seven at an NADF Grand Prix event, you get some pretty good play.

So, let's do some word association. I'll throw out a word, you throw me back a word, phrase or couple of sentences. Ready?

I just watched Skyfall, so sure, I'm ready.

Misorder.

Andy Marshall

Tuscany.

Convoy.

Calhamer.

Simultaneous Moves.

Convoy.

Bounce.

Neutral.

Mine.

Buffalo.

Friend, off the board.

World Dip Con.

Travelers.

PTKS.

Would I lie to you, honey?

OK, that's enough of those. How about some other random things people might not know about you. Favorite movie?

For a long time, it was hands down The Music Man. But man, The Fifth Element is just so good.

Favorite band?

I don't really have one.

Favorite book?

I can read the Chronicles of Amber once a year pretty reliably. I also like Glen Cook's stuff, and Jim Butcher. But if forced into a choice for favorite? I don't know.

Your brother wrote an amazing memoir about your dad. Want to say anything to plug that book, which I believe is still featured at Barnes and Noble 'n' stuff?

Stories for Boys – it is his second book, actually, Mountain City was his first. If you want to know the

secrets to really playing top-notch diplomacy, you should read those books.

Best live show you've been to of any sort?

Again, the swiss-cheese memory doesn't help me here, and I almost always had more fun ON stage than in the audience. I saw some great theater in NYC when I was living there, but probably the best was when I performed as a featured dancer at Wyclef Jean's Eclectic record release party – Earth Wind and Fire performed, and Savion Glover – that was pretty damn sexy.

Favorite TV show?

Currently, I'm enjoying Almost Human. I really enjoyed Burn Notice, especially the final season. When younger, I liked most everything Donald Bellisario was involved in. Can't watch NCIS, though.

When you were in high school, were you voted a senior superlative? I can imagine about four different things you could be voted for.

Nope – I didn't much get on with my high school classmates. I was a square peg that did not want to be shaved down into a tidy round hole, and I didn't make any friends protesting loudly that the whole thing was a sham. In my senior year I got into theatre, which helped a lot.

And let's end it on a Dip question. I've been asking a lot of people this. Do you think stalemate lines were an intentional part of the design of Diplomacy? Do you think they help or hurt the game? Some people get Sooooo angry at the fact that a game could be "unwinnable". Can you offer tips to up and coming players who might be seizing a lot of dots sometime soon? What's the best way to keep the board from uniting against you?

Absolutely. They don't help or hurt the game, they ARE the game. The game is unwinnable unless you persuade other people to work with you – if you've been stopped at the stalemate lines, you lost the game a long time ago.

Tips? Three things for face to face play.

- 1) Always write down your unit locations, and have an idea what you want to do with them, before you get up from the table to negotiate. Don't let anyone bully you about this – if you don't know what you want to do, someone else will give you a GREAT plan. Great for them, anyway.
- 2) Check your orders before you put them in the box. Then, if you have time, take them out and check them again. Read them out loud to yourself. You'll still make mis-orders anyway, but a lot less.
- 3) If you are a new player, don't be afraid to stab, or let anyone bully you about a stab being "bad." Make them PROVE it by taking the dots back. Go big or go home! Make mistakes, learn from them!

And one thing for BEFORE going to a tournament – do a little reading on common opening theory, so at least you know the jargon. If you are Germany, and France comes up to you and asks if you want to do a Sea Lion, and you look at them blankly, you can bet that you are no longer their first choice of ally.

The best way to keep the board from uniting against you is to pick me for your ally – you can be sure that everyone else will be focused on me! (Note: This strategy might not work if your name is Andy Bartalone)

I've been asking a lot about winning and drawing, but sometimes just a survival feels like a win. Do you have any anecdotes along that line?

Not so much anecdotes as agreement – fighting to affect the course of the game as a janissary can be a lot of fun.

Chris, thanks so much for sparing some of your time to talk with me. I know you're a busy man, and our readers certainly appreciate hearing from you, as do I. See you at WDC, assuming I don't break any extra limbs between now and then.

Heath, it was a lot of fun to sit down with you and chat like this. I look forward to seeing you in Dixie!

Beefy is the New Beefcake

By Jim O'Kelley

When he was a younger man doing sketch comedy in Cleveland, a local arts critic never failed to describe him as beefy, to the point where he became known to friends as Beefy Nate Cockerill. I wonder how she feels about him now that he's the North American Diplomacy Champion.

I hope Beefy will share his thoughts on the weekend. What follows are mine.



Bears Game...Good seats!

Meghan and I went to the Bears game Thursday night. I didn't get to bed until around 12:30. Our scheduled departure time for the long road trip to Silver Spring, Maryland, for the North American Diplomacy Championship at Tempest in a Teapot was 2 a.m., so I set my alarm for 1:30.

Around 1:45, showered but a little shell-shocked, I headed downstairs to wake Kevin and was shocked to find him still up playing video games. Both of us were going to start this trip exhausted. We loaded the car and headed out front to wait for Nate.

Within seconds, Nate pulled up with Mike Morrison. Mike lives in Hyde Park on Chicago's south side, but he happened to be up north that night, so he dropped in on the Red Lion in hopes of finding Nate there. He did. So, Nate didn't get any sleep either.

Despite not having a bag and having plans for the weekend, Mike briefly toyed with the idea of joining us but thought better of it, so right on schedule, Nate, Kevin and I hit the road at 2 a.m. By 2:03, we were on the highway, and by 2:15, Kevin was fast asleep in the backseat.

Nate held out till 3:15, and thus began what I'm calling The Lonely Road Trip.



At the convict crew stop.....

I stopped three times in the first five hours. At the second stop near Toledo, an armored car pulled up and emptied a crew of convicts on garbage duty. I stopped, looked at them, then back at the car, and thought, "This could go horribly wrong." But the bathroom beckoned.

In short order, we were back on the road. We had breakfast east of Cleveland. From that point on, Kevin was up, but he spent the rest of the ride on his Gameboy and was of little use to me. Nate, meanwhile, went back to sleep. He'd wake up every couple of hours to ask if I was all right and then would quickly fall back to sleep.

The rain started near Pittsburgh and was a constant companion the rest of the way. The drive was not easy, but we reached the Silver Spring Sheraton, home of the con, at 2:15 local time.

We checked in, got our badges, and then took the hotel shuttle a few blocks to an outdoor mall with a ton of dining options. We chose Noodles & Company.

I got an hour nap in before the first round, and at about 6:30 p.m., the 2013 DipCon kicked off with four boards.

I drew the one that elicited the loudest reaction from the room. I was Italy. Three of my neighbors played in the world championship game last year: Robert Rousse was Austria, Peter Yeargin was France, and Doc Binder was Turkey. Graham Woodring was England, and the Russia was Edi Birsan. The only unknown on the board was poor Steve Wilcox in Germany.

I couldn't get any traction in the game. I committed to an A/I, but Robert never fully trusted me. I lucked into Munich in 1902 for my fifth center and built F Naples. I wanted to go after France, who built F Marseilles. In the East, Austria had been vacillating and was now working more with Turkey than Russia. Nevertheless, he wanted me to hit Turkey and pledged to join in.



Chris Martin teaches Kevin a game as Melinda Holley looks on

Two factors pushed me east. The first was England's strong position. I figured an attack on France would hand him the board-top. The sedon was Peter himself. He came to me right before the deadline and said he's send his fleets after England if I'd agree to move against Turkey. I agreed, and we both moved as promised.

By 1904, I was in position to take Constantinople with Austria's help. However, Austria's skittishness had caused him to cover Trieste and now Venice was in jeopardy. To hold Con, one of us would have to back fill the Aegean. We each wanted the other to do it. He refused to vacate Greece, and I didn't want to leave the Ionian, so neither of us back-filled.

I was more worried about an Austrian stab than the two Russian units on Munich. Just two turns earlier, Edi had told me and Graham that we were the only players who hadn't lied to him. I thought that would mean something to Edi, so I opted to send my two armies to Ven and Tyo. Austria didn't stab and Russia did.

I took Con but couldn't hold it. Turkey reclaimed it in the Fall, and that same turn, France moved on Tunis. I disbanded and spent the rest of the game trying to ensure that Peter got no more than Tunis.

The game ended in Spring 1907. I finished in sixth with three centers. In the rank-based Carnage system, that result gave me 2,003 points. Graham topped and earned 7,009. The key result was Edi's. He split fourth and fifth place with Doc; they each earned 3,504 points.

Kevin drew Turkey on the first board and got jumped on by all three neighbors. He was eliminated in 1903 to finish seventh and get the 1,000 "thanks for playing" points.

Despite his 10 hours of sleep on the Lonely Road trip, Nate didn't fare much better as Germany on Kevin's board. He finished in fifth place with three centers. His three was worth 3,003 points.

Kevin went to bed around 11 and slept soundly. After our games, Nate and I joined Peter, Graham, Doc and Dave Maletsky outside for cigars and kitbitizing. I was in bed by about 2.

Saturday's round started at 10 a.m., and with a coffee (there was a Starbuck's at the hotel) and a muffin in hand, I was ready to go. Kevin, on the other hand, was demoralized. He wanted no part of the second round and didn't surface downstairs until around noon.

This round was the team round, but the tournament handled team selection a little differently, and I think I like the change. Instead of asking for teams before seeding the boards, which throws a wrench into the natural randomization of the boards, they seeded the boards and then gave us time to form teams. Canadian Mike Hall and I quickly formed a team, and we pulled in Nate Cockerill. Mike dubbed us Two Weasels and a Canuck, and Nate reported the team to the officials.

For this round, I drew Russia, a country I enjoy playing outside of Chicago, and although my tactics weren't sharp, I had a good game. Working with Rick Desper in Austria, I got out to 10 centers by 1904. At that point, I tried my usual tactic in the Carnage system of trying to pass an early draw.

Diplomacy players are a pessimistic lot and often will take the result in hand. But at least one player thought he could do better, so the game continued. I was knocked back to nine the next year. In Fall 1906, I was sitting in two new dots and had a shot at catching Jason Mastbaum's France for the board top, but Kevin really wanted to hang out with me, so I was pushing for a draw. Another one had failed in the Spring, but when it was repropose that Fall, it passed, so I finished on nine and in second. During the post-game discussion, we learned that the Turk, the same Steve Wilcox from my first-round game, had misunderstood the instructions and had cast the wrong vote.

So, after the game, a group of us walked down to the mall and had a nice lunch at McGinty's Pub.

When we got back to the hotel, Kevin and I saw Nate sitting with a group in the bar, so we walked up and asked how he he did.

"I soloed," he said.

"Against us," said Graham and Christian Pedone.

My tactics may have been poor on the board, but when it comes to picking teammates, they're impeccable. Nate's was the only solo of the round, so despite Mike's last-place finish, we were team champions. Last year at World's, I was also carried to the team title by a partner who soloed (Matt Shields).

I didn't catch the other two results of the round, so I was hoping that my second-place Russia was in contention for Best Russia.

Saturday night was open. Kevin and I headed to Baltimore to visit our cousins. Jane (my cousin) and John McCall have three kids: Kristina, who's a sophomore in high school; Jack, in eighth grade and six months older than Kevin; and Sophia, who is 8 and has been battling leukemia for the past year and a half. Fortunately, she's winning the fight, and during most of our visit, she was actually at a birthday party next door. A great sign.



Cousins!

Jane's sister Carrie was in California on business, but her husband, Chris Sapienza, and their two boys, Christopher and Nicholas, joined us at the McCalls' for dinner. Kevin had a great time playing with the boys, and the adults and Kristina laughed around the dinner table for at least an hour after the table had been cleared.

After the Sapienzas left, we played Telestrations, a fun party game that's a cross between Pictionary and telephone tag. It was a great visit and a nice break from Diplomacy.

Kevin and I had a nice chat on the drive home, which was another treacherous trek through the rain. (And thanks, by the way, to Andy "Buffalo" Bartalone, who

happens to live about 15 minutes from the McCalls and gave us great directions to their place.) After a quick start to his Diplomacy career, Kevin has taken his lumps recently, and this latest defeat really discouraged him.

"Dad," he said, "I really want to like Diplomacy. I really do. But it's no fun getting pounded."

"Well, do you want to take a chance that tomorrow will be a better day, or would you prefer to do something else?" I asked.

"I'd rather just hang out with you," he said.

Sunday was my birthday, I was due either England or France, and I really, really wanted to work in some Smeagol references.

"Give me Belgium."

"But I found Belgium. It's mine."

"It's my birthday, and I want it."

But this road trip and the one to DixieCon over Memorial Day weekend were about bonding with my boy, not playing Diplomacy. At least that's what I had been saying. And now I had to back that up. Plus, we were staring at a long drive home after the awards ceremony, so I said, "All right, let's sleep in and then play other games."

When we got back to the hotel, we found a group to play Resistance, which Kevin had gotten from his mother for his birthday (Oct. 17). It's a fun game that uses the Mafia/Werewolf mechanic. We played three games of it, and despite the long odds (27 in 512), I drew the spy role in all three games. We managed only one victory.

Before falling asleep at around 2, Nate and I talked about his solo, and he gave the kind of frank, open analysis that Diplomacy players too infrequently share. I hope he'll write about that game here.

I slept until 10:45 and Kevin and I checked in on the games. There were four more, and Edi Birsan's huge Germany appeared to be the only challenge to Nate's victory. In the Carnage system, a solo wins the tournament against any combination of results that don't include a solo. I also noted that Graham had the only large Russia. He stole Best France from me in the final round at Dixie and looked like he might do it again here. (As it turns out, Chris Martin had topped with 10 centers in the second round, one of the two results I hadn't seen, so I wasn't in the running for Best Russia.)

Kevin and I walked to the mall for lunch. By the time we returned, Edi's board had conceded the solo to him in 1904. He was at 11 centers.

Or at least that's what everyone thought. But while at the scoring table, I happened to catch a glimpse of the score sheet, and he was being credited with an 11-center board top.

Eventually we learned that the tournament rules did not permit conceded solos. That hadn't been made clear to the players on Edi's board, nor did the tournament official understand that the players were trying to concede a solo, not just end the game.

This confusion caused some anxious moments for Edi and Nate as they awaited a ruling. As it turns out, even with the solo, Edi would have fallen short of Nate. Nate was eliminated in his final game but still got the 1,000 seventh-place points. So, in addition to his solo score, he recorded 4,003 points for the tournament. Edi scored those 3,504 points on my board in Round 1, but he was on Nate's solo board in Round 2 and, in fact, was on Team Cockerill at the end of that game. In a solo game, all the other players score 0 points.

So the Concession Controversy was really a controversy over second place, not first. The officials ruled against the concession, and Edi finished out of the money but had a Best Germany for his troubles.

After the awards ceremony, we said our goodbyes and hit the road. On the way back, Nate and Kevin were much better companions, and consequently, we made three stops instead of five.

The best stop was the first one in Pennsylvania. While in line at a Burger King, a man noted Nate's cap, and said, "That's a cool hat. Are you of Irish heritage."

"No," Nate said. "But I am the North American Diplomacy Champion."

The man was quite impressed by that, and when Nate walked away, he turned to his girlfriend and said, "Did you hear that? That guy is the North American Champion for Diplomacy."

"That would be great if I knew what it meant," his girlfriend said.

Nate would later comment that he thought the guy was hitting on him.

"I thought so, too," I said.

Nate better get used to it.

We made it home in 10 hours and 30 minutes. I did all the driving. Nate got all the glory. And he deserves it.

Kevin, meanwhile, is a pretty resilient kid. On Sunday at the awards ceremony, he turned to me and said, "So, are we going to drive to WAC?"

He'll be back for more at the Royale.

Jim is a bigwig with the Windy City Weasels (that's Chicago for you uninformed folks) and a former Club and Tournament Editor with Diplomacy World. Probably one of the best we ever had, as a matter of fact.

Selected Upcoming Conventions

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

TempleCon 2014 - Friday February 7th - Sunday February 9th - Providence, RI, United States - Contact: Jim-Bob Burgess (jfburgess "of" gmail.com) - Website: <http://www.templecon.org/14/>

2014 CODCon Open - Saturday April 5th - Sunday April 6th - Glen Ellyn, Ill., United States - Contact: Jim O'Kelley (jimthegrey1013 "of" yahoo.com) - Website: <http://windycityweasels.org/codcon8>

Yorkshire Dipcon 2014 - Friday June 20th - Sunday June 22nd - The Lawns Centre, The University of Hull, Northgate, Cottingham, HU16 5SQ, UK - Website: <http://www.ukf2fdip.org>

Carnage - Friday November 7th - Sunday November 9th - Killington Grand Hotel, Killington Vt., United States - Contact: Robert Rousse - Website: <http://www.carnagecon.com>

I still do not understand why people aren't posting their conventions to the diplom.org site. Unlike last issue, this issue there are no NON-US conventions listed.

A Tale of Two Cities: Paris (City of Lights) and Seattle (A Poor Man's Paris); Which is Better?

By Larry Peery

With WDC in Paris just over and DipCon in Seattle just ahead I thought I would compare the two cities (not the Diplomacy) in the hopes of persuading some of you who didn't make it to Paris to come to Seattle.

Interestingly, perhaps, Edi and I who were both at Paris and Silver Spring are going to Seattle. Doc Binder, who was at Paris and Silver Spring, will not be in Seattle because for once real life diplomacy is going to take precedence over Diplomacy!

As I mentioned last time, I think, I've been in Paris six times over the last 25 years. I've been in Seattle probably about the same number of times over the last 50 years. I love both cities and that's the common bond that keeps me going back to both. When I first thought of doing this piece I assumed, without hesitation, that Paris would come out ahead in any comparison of the two cities. See how right I was for yourself. As I noted, this is a comparison of the two cities written from a tourist's peerispective, not a Diplomacy player's. 9

I picked five areas: airfare, hotel costs, meal costs, ground transportation, and tourist attractions to compare. For the first four areas my comments are pretty general, but you'll get the point. For the last area, tourist attractions I picked five types of attractions and one of each in each of the cities to compare.

So, let's get on with our visits to these two wonderful cities and see how they match up:

AIRFARE

Cheapest available airfare to Paris on United Airlines flying from Carlsbad, CA to Los Angeles to Chicago to Paris to Houston to Los Angeles to Carlsbad was USD1800+. Cheapest available airfare from Carlsbad, CA to Los Angeles to Seattle to Los Angeles to Carlsbad was USD270. When you consider that the distance flown for the Paris trip was six times the distance flown for the Seattle trip the fares pretty much equal out on a cost per mile basis. However, in terms of total time the Paris trip was only three times as long as the Seattle trip.

ADVANTAGE: TIE

HOTEL COSTS

Because of Xavier Blanchot's generosity hotel costs in Paris were about half of what they would have been normally. If price is no object, however, you may be willing to pay USD1800 a night for a *****Palace room (not a suite!) in Paris, but bear in mind that the most expensive room I saw online in Seattle was less than USD600. Keeping in mind that hotel prices in Paris drop

substantially during August, the difference in quality of the two hotels, and the location of the two hotels; Paris won on price, Seattle wins on quality (based on what I've heard and read online), and the two tie on location.

ADVANTAGE: TIE

MEAL COSTS

If you read my culinary review of the Paris you probably noticed how disappointed I was in the state of Paris's food scene across the board: food quality, price, service and atmosphere are all down a lot from what they were ten or twenty years ago. This is no secret to tourists, but even the French and Parisians are starting to complain. Ignoring the most expensive restaurants; which can easily charge USD500 per person (not including wine!) for a seven course; in Paris I thought about some of the brasseries and cafes I visited in August; and I picked the Macrina Bakery in Seattle for comparison. I haven't been there yet, but USA Today named Macrina as one of the top ten bakeries in the USA, so I assume it's good. Price wise, I picked one signature item to compare: French Toast! In Paris it was USD25. In Seattle it was USD11.25, including a sausage. For another one-on-one comparison see my comments under The Tour vs. The Seattle. **ADVANTAGE: SEATTLE**

GROUND TRANSPORT

Seattle has a confusing system of trains, light rail, buses, taxi and even a monorail which can take getting used to. It's also pricey and schedules aren't always convenient. Even relying on sole power isn't always a good option because of the steep hills in some sections of the city. Anyone who has used a big city metro should have no problems in Paris, except for the lack of elevators and escalators. Taxis are reasonably priced, easy to find in the tourist areas, and every taxi driver is a frustrated Grand Prix driver; but I've never seen a Paris taxi involved in an accident. **ADVANTAGE: PARIS**

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

Both cities have a lot to offer and keep adding more, with both cities now having over a hundred attractions worth visiting. I've seen all of Paris's save one, and I've seen all but five of Seattle's top 25; and I plan to see those next month. I arbitrarily picked a tourist icon attraction, an industrial tour, a public garden, a theater, and a specialized museum for a head-to-head competition. Note: The E (euro) is currently worth about USD1.37.

THE EIFFEL TOUR VS. THE SPACE NEEDLE

Eiffel Tour, 2 hours, 40E (normally 60E), tour; 14E admission only, barebones; dinner, E76 at 58 Tour Eiffel

Restaurant; E210 at Jules Verne (Alain Ducasse), 3 hours, 4 stars, on first level of Tour.

Space Needle: 2 hours, USD20; barebones dinner USD65, high-end dinner USD 112 (both plus beverage), both in Skyview Restaurant, 2 hours, 4 stars, at top of Needle, and restaurant revolves so you get a 360 degree view of the area.

Note there is a McDonald's a block from the Space Needle, as there is in Paris, but in Paris it's a much longer block. Tour Eiffel is higher but that also puts you above the smog that frequently surrounds Paris.

ADVANTAGE: SEATTLE

PLANT TOURS: AIRBUS VS. BOEING

Airbus: 380 Tour in Toulouse, France, 3 hours, E0 (for kids) to E22 (full tariff adults). Obviously this plant is located in Toulouse, France and you would either have to take the TGV train or a plane (Probably an Airbus) to Toulouse to see it, but Toulouse is a lovely city for a side-trip from Paris.

Boeing: 747, 767, 777 & 787 lines, north of Seattle; 1.5 hours, USD9 (for youths, no little kids allowed) to USD20 (full tariff adults) includes Future of Flight Museum, plant and museum is 25 miles north of Seattle, a bus tour from Seattle hotels including admission costs USD70.

Museum of Flight is located south of Seattle at Boeing Field, and is more a traditional aviation museum. USD0 (kids allowed) to USD18, The Trolley goes there, as do various tour companies. This one is better for families with kids, the Boeing plant tour is better for plane buffs and frequent flyers. **ADVANTAGE; SEATTLE**

GARDENS: BATTLE OF THE BONSAIS

Guimet Museum (the Asian Arts Museum of Paris) also features a Japanese style garden a short walk away. ; 2 hours, E9.50 includes a self-guided audio tour and admission to the main museum, the separate Buddha collection, and the Japanese garden.

Seattle is blessed to have two Japanese style gardens: I've visited the first in Washington Arboretum Park which is a 3 acre traditional formal garden 2 hours, USD0 (for kids) to USD6 for adults. Seattle's climate and a group of dedicated volunteers make this a world-class garden. The Kubota Garden is located south of Seattle and would involve a taxi, light rail or bus trip from Pioneer Square. Allow 4-5 hours including travel time, FREE admission. This 20 acre park was a gift to the community from the Kubota family and uses Japanese gardening techniques and northwest plants to create something

that I really want to see. Anybody want to join me?

ADVANTAGE: SEATTLE

THEATER: PHANTOM OF THE OPERA VS. GYPSY ROSE LEE

The Palais Garnier (of Phantom of the Opera fame) has been beautifully restored and is a 5-star attraction in Paris; 1.5 hours, USD19 for basic tour of public areas up to USD300 for best seats for a performance.

Seattle's Fifth Avenue Theater is an old restored movie palace located right next to the DipCon site. It looks lovely from the web site photos. FREE Admission, if you can get in. It doesn't offer tours but I bet if you asked the WAC people to call they'd let you in for a look.

ADVANTAGE: PARIS

GLASS AS ART: SAINT CHAPELLE VS. CHIHULY GARDEN GLASS MUSEUM

Saint Chapelle is not as well-known as Notre Dame although it sits on the same island. It's a Gothic Chapel with 15 of the most beautiful stained glass windows in the world. 85% of the exterior surface of the chapel consists of these windows, all of which were recently cleaned and restored to their original beauty. 1 hour minimum, 2 hours if you're really into churches or stained glass. E8.5, Chapel dates from 1256 and concerts are offered.

Originally from Tacoma, Washington and now in his 70s Dale Chihuly is one of the great artists of his time, and I suspect in a few centuries he will be considered to be the "Michelangelo of stained glass." Yes, he's that good. His museum is right at the bottom of the Space Needle so you can combine a visit to both and enjoy a great time. 2 hours. USD0 (kids) to USD26 (full adult tariff), combined tickets with Space Needle for up to USD33. Dilemma: How do you compare the work of artists nearly nine hundred years old with the work of an artist who is still living? **ADVANTAGE: SEATTLE**

To my surprise Seattle won, 4-1, the tourist attractions contest. All the attractions I mentioned have web sites and are just a Wiki or Goggle search away. Enjoy.

Obviously you can't go wrong either way but since WDC Paris is history and DipCon Seattle is just days away the choice is obvious. GO SEATTLE! On the other hand, if you do decide to go to Paris let me help. I've got a fistful of Paris Metro tickets looking for a free ride home.

Larry has probably been more places in the last two years than I have been in my life.

Team Rounds in Tournaments

By Will J. Abbott

At tournaments I have attended there have been "team rounds", where a few people (say, three) team up (perhaps in an impromptu manner) and their scores that round are added together to put together an aggregate score for the team. This practice has always struck me as odd: individual players are paired with the only concession to teams being that members of the same team are on different boards.



This integration of team rounds into a regular individual tournament is likely the cause of the particular manner in which these team rounds are held. Nonetheless, the format of these rounds has always struck me as odd for several reasons:

- . The games might be affected by both team and individual metagame concerns, but the individual concerns can cut across the team ones. Imagine if the tournament individual leader, or someone else you want to perform badly, were on your board, along with a different player who is on a team competing with yours. Which would you ally with against the other, if the situation demanded it?
- .
- . Does a team whose members play, say, Italy/Austria/England, have an equal chance as a team whose members play, say, France/Russia/Turkey?
- .
- . How does the team round relate to the wider tournament? Is the team round any more significant to the wider tournament than, say, a round where everyone is encouraged to wear a hat?

Nonetheless, the idea of a team game of Diplomacy still has merit, and happens on occasion in online play. Therefore, I would propose a face-to-face team tournament set up in this way:

The competitors in the tournament are clubs, or possibly groups of clubs, as teams. These clubs pick from among their members seven players. These players are assigned the powers they play. For example, a club's designated Austria player would only play Austria throughout the tournament.

The scores for the teams' players are added together to get the teams' scores. No individual tallies are kept. At most, best country awards might be awarded to an individual. But the winner of the tournament as a whole is a team.

With seven game scores going into the team's score, there is no need for more than one round. This option might be exercised to piggy back a team tournament on an individual tournament (though the scores from each would be irrelevant to the other). Alternately more rounds could happen.

Each board would have at most one player from a club. Thus a minimum of seven clubs would be needed.

Any scoring system can be used. Individual game scores may be dropped like a drop round if such is desired. Each individual player's score(s) are treated as rounds in an individual tournament.

Such a tournament would not only crown a club as champion, but would encourage the development of local hobbies, by encouraging competition for spots on the squads going to a tournament, and by encouraging individual face-to-face players in areas without clubs to form clubs.

Is such a tournament feasible? Currently in the US we have, to my knowledge, active groups of the hobby in DC, Chicago, New England, Seattle, and San Francisco, with former hobbies in Denver and New York City. Other cities could easily be added to the list, including Canadian and Mexican cities. In Europe participating clubs could be organized by cities, regions, or countries, or even on different levels in different places. A tournament could be hosted by a club, or at a neutral site.

All that is needed is a local player or club to step up to host such a tournament, and others to find people willing to play. Any takers?

Will is the new Diplomacy World Club and Tournament Editor.

The Anschluss Opening

By Tim Haffey

Reading over Richard Sharp's book "The Game of Diplomacy", published back in 1978, I read over the chapter on Germany, which just happens to be my most favorite nation to play, and discovered that it is, or was, his most favorite nation to play also. (Mr. Sharp died in 2003.) I never met the man but I think I played in a game with him once in a Boardman postal game back in the 80's.

I had forgotten about the so-called Anschluss opening. I am sure I read about it before when I bought the book, I forgot about it I guess. I cannot recall anyone trying to use it against me when I was Russia or Italy. I can rightly say, I never used it in any game I play Germany. Can't say why; it seems to be a great idea. The theory behind it is the longer you can keep Austria in the game the better it is for Germany, so it is in Germany's best interest to support Austria anyway he can. Below is Sharp's description of the opening taken from his book. This is better than me trying to try and repeat it myself.

"The Anschluss is to my mind by far the best approach for Germany in a strong game. I would go so far as to say that it is obligatory. The key move (or rather non-move) is the leaving of an army in Munich until autumn 1901, and often much later. This can be done in various ways: the unit can stand, or can participate in a pre-arranged stand-off in any of several places, most commonly Burgundy. The same effect can even be achieved by moving A(Ber)—Mun while A(Mun) goes to Ruhr. If we count all these as being essentially part of the same opening, the total frequency is probably between five per cent and ten per cent."

"Historically, the Anschluss was the annexation of Austria by Germany on 11 March 1938; as such, it may seem an odd name for a pro-Austrian opening! However, the German word doesn't necessarily (or even usually) imply rape the union may be voluntary on both sides, and in this context will be. The essence of the idea is that Germany and Austria play as a single country during the period of their initial vulnerability; and, more specifically, Germany will come to Austria's assistance if the latter is attacked by Italy and/or Russia."

"I think I can claim to have discovered the Anschluss, or at least to have been the first to formulate the idea clearly. What first put it into

my mind was a random check on the many disasters that have overtaken Austria in Diplomacy: clearly, if Italy and Russia decide to take Austria apart, with or without Turkish assistance, only Germany can do anything to prevent it. Austria's record is horrific : in the first 230 completed British postal games, Austria failed forty-three times to achieve the modest performance of surviving until 1904! What is revealing is Germany's performance in those games: one win, four draws, one second, two equal seconds, seven thirds, one equal third, eight fourths, one equal fourth, six fifths, four equal fifths, seven sixths, and one magnificent seventh, when Germany managed to go out in 1902, a year before Austria. So in the forty-three Austrian disaster games, Germany won 2.3 per cent and drew 9.3 per cent; in the other 187 games Germany won 14.4 per cent and drew 12.3 per cent. To put it more simply, in games where Austria fails, Germany has the worst record of any country; where Austria lasts until 1904 or later, Germany has the best record. Yes, I know the dangers of drawing conclusions from small samples, but I cannot believe that this is all coincidence."

"If you accept that it is desirable for Germany to take Austria under his wing, threatening Italy with reprisals if he moves east, how effective is the idea in averting disaster? This is more difficult to demonstrate, but I am personally convinced of the results. I have used the idea — or the threat of it, which is almost as good — against Italy in every game I have played as Germany. I don't keep records of most of the face-to-face ones, but I am certain that Austria has never been knocked out before 1905 in any game in which I have played Germany. "

If you are interested in reading the entire book yourself you can go to this link and read it online for free.

<http://www.diplomacy-archive.com/god.htm>

I find this opening interesting and for the life of me I can't figure out why I never used it. I think I will get into some games and try to get Germany and see if I can make it work. Sounds like fun. As anyone else ever tried this opening? If so, what kind of results did you get? Let us know.



TempleCon 2014: February 7-9, 2014 -
Providence RI

4 Round Tournament (Friday evening 6PM,
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First Tournament in 4 Tournament Nor'Easter!

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Contact Tournament Director Jim-Bob Burgess at
jfburgess@gmail.com for more information
<http://templecon.org/14/> has more details

TEMPEST / NORTH AMERICAN DIPCON 2013

(October 11-13, 2013 Silver Spring, MD)

“Sorry...I’m writing an article for DIPLOMACY WORLD and it wouldn’t be interesting unless I stabbed you.”

By Larry Peery

(Originally I intended this report to consist of three parts to be published in three different publications. However, to make it easier on my editors, myself and you, gentle readers, here it is --- complete!)

The trip to Paris for WORLD DIPCON 2013 in August had proved to my satisfaction that after six hospital visits in the last four years and medical bills over the two million dollar mark I could travel, and my performance at WDC had proven that not only could I still play Diplomacy but I could play it better than ever! The question was: could I replicate that performance in Silver Spring?

Although in many ways I was the oldest and most experienced Dipper at the 2013 DipCon in some ways I was also the newest newbie. After all, I hadn’t played a FTF tournament in the USA in some ten years. I hadn’t been to Silver Spring since Nixon was president. I didn’t have a clue what or who the PTKSers were, TEMPEST meant nothing to me, and I barely recognized most of the names and faces on the attendees list. Still it was a chance to see some old Dip friends and, perhaps, make a few new ones. And looming over it all was the thought, “If I don’t go now I might not get another chance.”



Houston: We Have a Convoy!

The Con staff: Joe Wheeler, Jeff Ladd and Lori Wheeler had gone out of their way to be helpful and doing the DipCon sign-up on line was a breeze. Dealing with the United Airlines online reservations system seemed far more difficult for this trip than it had for making my Paris trip arrangements. The technological advances online in the past ten years had been impressive but I missed talking to a real reservations agent (Perhaps because

ten years ago I still remembered how SABRE worked and what a hand-written airline ticket looked like and what all those numbers meant.). The airports I used (Carlsbad, Los Angeles, Chicago, Baltimore and Houston) hadn’t changed much and my string of bad luck at Houston continued unbroken, although this time I can’t blame it directly on Houston’s airport, but more on that later. The planes, on the other hand, had aged, some of them badly, (The Embracer United uses on the Carlsbad to Los Angeles 84 mile flight is older than most of the passengers and all the crew.), and so had the crews. What I noticed most of all in the air was the absence of any “friendliness” in United’s skies; not that I blame the crews for that. The passengers, for the most part, seemed like a herd of mooring cattle on steroids just waiting to stampede. The real problems came with the Sheraton/Starwood Reservations System. Let me correct that to the SIX different Hotel/Sheraton/Starwood telephone and online Reservations Systems because during the process I dealt with all six. Based on what Jeff had told me about rooms, nights and rates (And keep in mind that I worked in the hospitality business and hotels for years ---I know how the system is supposed to work.) I went ahead and made a reservation online for four nights for two (Edi Birsan and I were going to share a room for some nights, but not all.). Hotels normally honor discounted room rates for 1-3 nights prior to or after a convention. It’s a given. But when I checked my checking account the next day I discovered I had been charged the full tariff for all four nights. I tried to find out what was going on online, but I didn’t get far, so I called Sheraton and got the run around from them. Next up, I called the hotel in Silver Spring directly and was basically told that yes, they would have honored the convention rate for all four nights but since I had gone through Starwood/Sheraton online there was nothing they could do about, or more accurately there was nothing they were willing to do for me. So, by now I was a tad upset. I poured myself a glass of wine, collected all the documentation I had, and called Sheraton customer service. The first person I spoke with was less than helpful. It wasn’t that she didn’t want to be helpful; she didn’t know how to be helpful. So I suggested she let me talk to her supervisor. A bit of improvement here, and the supervisor admitted that their system did not have the same information on rates and conventions as the hotel’s. Surprise! OK, she said, let me talk to my supervisor and find out what we can do. Fifteen minutes later (and well into my second glass of wine) her supervisor came on the phone. He was with Starwood’s (Starwood is the parent entity that owns

Sheraton and many other hotel chains, and apparently at the highest levels they have an inter-locking reservations system.) central reservations office and had been reviewing the reservations, transaction, emails and phone logs. He didn't mince words and told me bluntly that they had "XXXXXX-ed up." And he would correct things. By the time I got off the phone with him I had three computer-generated emails changing from rack rates for the four nights to the discounted convention rate and, as he warned me it would take a while, a week later I had my refund in my account. After he apologized and asked if there was anything else I needed I asked to speak to his supervisor (Tip: At this point I was talking to the supervisor's supervisor. Had I had to escalate further I would have gotten out of the customer service chain and gone directly to corporate management where I've found the best person to contact is the personal secretary to the CEO or Chairman of the Board. They can get action in a hurry.). You could hear his voice drop when he asked me to stand-by. After listening to him sweat blood for a minute, I told him I wanted to compliment him to his supervisor for his efforts on my behalf. The first thing I told the supervisor, who turned out to be an AVP of Starwood, was that I wasn't calling to complain but to give praise where praise was due.

You could hear the air escaping as she said, "Thank you. You just made my day."

Day One, Thursday, October 10, Raining

For some strange reason I had more of a challenge packing for this shorter, both in time and distance, trip than I did for Paris. What a difference one flight bag can make. For God only knows what reason I had decided to take a "red-eye" flight to Baltimore. Oh, I know why. It was a hundred bucks cheaper (You think about that when you're paying for the trip and you're retired. My days of free flights in first class were over, I guess. I also wanted to see how my body would handle the demands of a "red-eye" flight.). Taking a "red-eye" meant I would have a short flight to Los Angeles from Carlsbad, then a two hour plus lay-over in Los Angeles, then a three hour flight to Chicago, then less than an hour to get to my connecting flight to Baltimore, and then a two hour flight to Baltimore for a rush hour morning arrival time.

Day Two, Thursday, October 10, Raining and Showers

Well, it all went well until I got off the plane in Baltimore just as it started to pour (Pour is a relative term when you live in Southern California ---one drop per square yard per minute is considered a major rainstorm here.). Joe Wheeler, bless his heart, had offered to pick me up at the airport, so I headed out to the passenger pick-up area in front of the terminal. Joe had said he would be driving a red pick-up and, sure enough, as I came through the door I saw a pick-up go by. But because the overhead lighting was so bad in that area I couldn't tell

what color it was. A few minutes later this mammoth pick-up with lights on the roof, etc. etc. pulled up and Joe hopped out. I still couldn't tell if it was red or not but I recognized Joe's hat from pictures. What should have been a 20-30 minute drive to Silver Spring took a lot longer because of the rain, of course, and all it takes back there is one wreck to bring the interstates (or what passes for an interstate in MD) to a crawl.

On the drive in to Silver Spring I noticed that things hadn't changed much, at least when seen from the ground, but when seen from the air flying into BWI you could tell there had been a lot of changes in that part of MD and the DC. Silver Spring had also changed in the past thirty years or so, although not as much as I expected. But more on that later.

We arrived at the Sheraton around 1100 or so and I had hopes of an early check-in but that was not to be, although Joe did try to pull it off. So, since it was still pouring (I mean really pouring.) outside I did a quick walkabout of the hotel and settled into a comfortable chair in the lobby. As a hotel and meeting site inspector and travel writer I learned years ago that you could learn more by sitting in a hotel lobby and looking and listening to the people coming and going than you could ever learn from inspection reports, travel magazines or guidebooks. It's still true. There seemed to be a group checking out, mostly businessmen, and a group of conventioners checking in. I noticed that a big percentage of those checking out were all complaining about the same things: poor hot water pressure in the showers and fickle toilets. I could tell, just from what I'd seen and read at the hotel's online website, that the hotel had recently changed brands from an IHG Crowne Plaza to a Starwood Sheraton. For a customer that usually means three things: 1) Different management and key staff; 2) Cosmetic facelift; and 3) Higher rates.

All three proved to be true in this case. The hotel had obviously undergone a cosmetic facelift to conform to Sheraton's standards but, as usual, no serious deferred repairs had been done to the plumbing or electrical systems, or areas like the kitchen or pool; and it was showing. The desk clerk (there was only one most of the time) was doing her best, as was the housekeeper who was in damage control mode trying to get the maintenance people (there was one) to take care of all the plumbing issues so rooms could be released to arriving guests. It was slow going. I ended up waiting three and a half hours for my room, but I did get a free breakfast out of it, or so I thought until I discovered that whoever was slipping the comp breakfast tickets under the room doors made a mistake in giving me one. 9

The first thing I did when I got my room was ---you guessed it---check out the plumbing and water temperature and pressure in the shower/tub. So far so good. All the mechanical and electronic stuff seemed to

be working. OK. No Gideon Bible in the nightstand drawer. Hmm, had somebody actually stolen it? The reviewers on Trip Advisor were right: the bathroom was small and the towels were not much bigger. I had a king-sized bed with one of those super-soft-to-the-extreme mattresses that are all the rage now and a comforter/duvet on top of that pillow-top. When I lay down on the bed I practically disappeared. Sitting up in bed was impossible. And getting out of bed involved rolling over to the side, hanging one leg over the edge, and throwing myself at the chair next to the bed so I'd have somewhere to land in an emergency. This all sounds funny, and it was to watch, but when I dropped something on the floor picking it up took me twenty minutes by the time I moved a chair, a coffee table and a bench into position so I could support myself getting back up. Go ahead and laugh. You'll have similar problems when you're 66! What I did observe, although it took a while to sink in, was the "new" Sheraton earthtones color scheme that seems to be the Sheraton chain-wide signature deco mode these days. The furniture is dark, the walls and carpets are almost as dark, and the artwork tends to be earthtones and silhouettes of gum trees in the Australian outback. A cloudy, rainy day outside, and a dark room with a small window made for a very dark DipCave that would be my home for the next five days.

A brief nap put the jet lag to bed for a while and I saw the rain had changed to a drizzle, so I stepped outside to get a bite to eat. The only place I could see from the hotel was an ethnic deli across the street but when I walked in the guy behind the counter looked at me like I was a gum shoe and I looked at him like he was a terrorist, so I beat a hasty retreat back to the hotel. By then the bar was filled with Vietnam War era vets, the arriving convention group. As I listened briefly to them telling war stories I wondered how many of them were real combat veterans or were part of the 80% non-combatant tail that kept McNamara's War going. On the other hand, they probably wondered how anybody so young could be wearing WWI and WWII commemorative pins. Anyway, not seeing any Dippers I knew I beat a further retreat to the dining room and had the first of several utterly unmemorable meals in the hotel. Although it was only 1700 California time I decided to call it a day and took a dive into that big pillow bed. Zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz.

Day Two, Friday, October 11, Some Rain and Showers

Since my time outside the hotel would be limited; the next morning I decided to make the most of it. Leaving the room I noted three trays sitting on the hall floor on the way to the elevator. Two were breakfast trays and one was clearly from the night before. Bad sign. On the other hand they all appeared to have all their silverware and salt and pepper shakers. Good sign. All three trays were still there when I returned that afternoon, and they

were still in the same places the next morning. By that evening they had migrated to the service elevator hall where they still sat the next morning. After my mentioning them to the hotel food and beverage director that afternoon they finally vanished. Stepping outside the lobby under the portico I faced my first challenge --- which direction to go in? I started to head to the right thinking that would take me into the center of Silver Spring, but I saw the hotel van sitting there doing nothing so I went back inside and found the driver. He wasn't doing anything so I asked him if he could give me a brief tour and show me Silver Spring's downtown and the Sarbanes Transit Center. At first he looked baffled but then he realized what I was talking about and he said sure. So I climbed into the van and he took off going in the opposite direction that I had planned to use. We chatted a bit and it turned out to be one of the most memorable moments of the whole trip for me. In fifteen minutes or so he told me his whole life story and I took him back to the days of his father's youth. But for more on that you'll have to see the piece I've written for Jim Burgess's ABYSSINIAN PRINCE. I got my look at the Sarbanes Transit Center ---a ten year and counting government boondoggle that has cost millions and millions of taxpayers' dollars which was supposed to provide a single transit hub linking the Metro, light-rail, buses, taxis, etc. into one efficient and convenient location. Unfortunately, apparently, the contractor cut some corners (literally) and finally bailed out leaving the center incomplete and unusable. The escalators were installed and the pigeons seemed to love them. The window glass for the exterior windows wasn't installed; hence the pigeons. The only ones happy about this, of course were the pigeons and the lawyers who were making a fortune off the whole legal mess.



Lori Wheeler listens to Edi Birsan spout Peeriblah

Silver Spring is an interesting place, but you really have to dig to find the interesting parts. It helps if you're an urban traveler as well, although if you're not the Discovery Channel headquarters has some interesting displays. The Discovery Channel moving in was the best thing to happen to Silver Spring since the Metro arrived back in the 1970s. Although it is an ugly building that

dominates the downtown area it did bring 1,600 good jobs to fill it and Silver Spring has enjoyed a mini-boom because of it. The elephant in the room is, of course, what happens if Discovery moves elsewhere? Silver Spring is the largest non-incorporated metro area in the USA according to the Census people. That means it's a city but it's not a City. It's an urban area but it doesn't have a city government. It's all run by the county. It's an urban cluster with quite a few 16-18 story buildings located on the last stop of the DC Metro line running north into Maryland. There really seem to be two different populations in Silver Spring: first, the white, upper middle-class part that works for the various governments and government related organizations in the area; and, second, the minorities (often based on refugee groups of different ethnic make-up) lower middle and lower class part that works in the service industries.

Jim Yerkey pointed this out to me graphically, but I had already seen it in "downtown" Silver Spring. Downtown Silver Spring consists of about 10 square blocks of formerly blighted area that have been restored and converted into one big food court with about 100 different food and booze establishments, a couple of multiplex theaters, and the occasional shop or two. The amazing thing is the variety of food establishments. It's hard to think of an ethnic food source that isn't represented with a heavy emphasis on NE African, Central American and SE Asian flavors. I wandered into a place called Moby Dick and discovered it served Persian kabobs. What the connection was between the name and food I have no idea. Quite tasty by the way.

By now it was pouring (really pouring) again so I started back to the hotel which was, it turned out, only two blocks away. After a half-block I was soaked, so I stepped into an office building and sat in the lobby and watched the rain fall, the building staff come and go (18 out of 22 people going out to put mail in the mail boxes outside tried to go out the in door, and these people work there --- and yes, travel writers do notice things like that.), the drivers whiz by soaking the pedestrians, and fantasized about the building across the street at 8670 George Avenue (You can find it on Google maps if you want) which, by the time I left where I was, had morphed from a dreary, 1950s telephone switching center into the secret headquarters of the Diplomatae Illuminati complete with sealed front door, a giant radio tower on the roof, and a hidden entrance on the backside of the building. I wondered how many times Eric Snowden had used that building to access the secret Metro red line that linked Silver Spring and Ft. Meade? (That's what being so close to Ft. Meade and the NSA will do to you.) With that mystery solved I floated down the street back to the hotel, dried off and went downstairs to see what was happening. The first time I passed by the Persimmon Room, wondering to myself how many Dippers had ever even eaten a persimmon; it had a sign on the closed door saying DipCon and not much more.

The second time the door was open but the room was empty. Third time there was a computer or two and miscellaneous boxes in one corner, but still no people. Finally, on the fourth try, I saw one very bored looking Jeff Ladd sitting there playing with his cell phone or ipod. Although I didn't see her at first Lori Wheeler was already busy at work on her computer doing whatever records keepers do before there are any records to keep at these events. Gradually people started drifting in. As usual the ones who had come the farthest had arrived first and the locals straggled in at the last minute sputtering about parking. The regulars sat in the back and along the sides of the room looking over the first-timers and newbies huddled in the center of the room and close to the TD table like so much Manager's Specials in the meat section at Wal-Mart.

Although attendance didn't reach the advertised prediction of 40, there were enough people in the room that it didn't seem empty or, as sometimes happens, too many people in too small a space. The first thing I noticed was how much older the average age was this year than in previous DipCons I'd attended, but I reminded myself that that was ten years ago so of course everybody else had aged (But not me, of course ♫.) I saw faces I remembered, heard some names I recognized, and a few people of whom I didn't have a clue. It was obviously a lococentric event with most of the players being from the area or a day's drive away. If I remember correctly Jeff told me that only five or so people had actually flow in for the event. Still, for what we lacked in quantity and diversity, we made up for in experience and skill. Well, some of us made up in those areas more than others.



Brian Lee and Bill LaFosse

Round One

My first game was one of two of the three that I played wherein I went the distance and it actually went until 1908 (about the same as the games at WDC). The players were: Austria: Chris Martin; England: David Maletsky; France: Steve Emmert; Germany: Larry Peery;

[illegible]

I decided to use my “free” breakfast ticket on Saturday so I went down early expecting to see the dining room packed, but it wasn’t. Apparently the teachers’ group was still sleeping it off from the night before. The dining room was perhaps a quarter full, not good on a Saturday morning. There was a breakfast buffet offered as the “freebie,” so that’s what I headed for. Pretty much standard breakfast buffet fare but I noticed the fresh fruit was almost all green (the cantaloupe was impossible to cut, even with a knife), the scrambled eggs were obviously out of a carton and, horror of horrors, the bacon hot dish was empty and I got the last two sausages! I checked again when I left a half-hour later and the two meat chaffing dishes were both STILL empty. That’s not acceptable. Period. On the plus side the muffins, while not up to the Starbucks offerings in the lobby, were warm and tasty. If I was paying I would have complained. Since I wasn’t, I snagged a couple of muffins and went on my way.

I know how to pick a winner even if I can't be one, Edi and I decided at one point that Nate Cockerill should win the game, and set out to make it happen at any cost, even our own survival. It was another case of "I told you this was going to happen!" for Edi, and another classic peeryhic victory for me. I started off the first year with one build, for Rumania, because Germany kept me out of Sweden. And from then on things went from bad to worse. I had to remove two in 1902 so I gambled big time and wrote off Scandinavia and the north as a lost cause and focused on the south, where I had managed to form a nice puppet relation with Turkey. It felt a little strange using my Fleet Sevastopol to support a Turkish Army Constantinople to Rumania, but what the hell! By 1906 things were looking a bit better as I managed to move out of Warsaw into Prussia and then into Berlin; thus avenging the German stab in 1901. So there I was with armies in Berlin, Prussia and Livonia. By that point Edi and I had decided three things: 1) X and Y should not be contenders; 2) England should not win the game; and 3) Cockerill, who had played well, if not brilliantly, and honorably, deserved the win. Edi and I began throwing centers to Turkey, much to the displeasure of some of the other players, but we had our reasons for doing so ---as only Old Farts do. So, by 1908 Turkey, Nate Cockerill had earned his win ---handed to him on a silver platter. Nate was happy. Edi and I were happy, although we both ended up eliminated, and the other survivors were mucho pissed.



One footnote to this game came in a post-game tet a tet when Nate reminded me that he and I had played in his first Con game 13 years earlier and I had helped him win that game and the event. He remembered. I didn't. Sigh. The hobby meeting was abruptly terminated when somebody suggested the absence of a quorum (One wag said it was because there was no more room on the tables or trays for empty glasses and bottles.). There was some discussion of the state of the hobby in general and the lack of potential host sites and qualified bids for the next year's DipCon. It appeared the only serious bid was from WACCon in Seattle and it was planning on

yet) ♀ By then he was making mincemeat of poor Carl and Marseilles was wide open to my unit in Piedmont, so I took it. Heh, heh, knowing full well it would cost me dearly later. But, I figured it was the only way to stop his steamroller. I felt like a one-armed cripple punching a crocodile in the nose as he goes under for the first time. Naturally Edi came at me with everything he could, plus he got everybody else around me to attack me. "We've got to show him a lesson!" was his battle cry. And it worked. He even got my good ally Austria to attack me, even though Bill apologized and asked if it was OK if he helped himself to one of my centers since everybody else was attacking me. Even Turkey went on the offensive and came after me. Sigh. Now I know what Joan of Arc felt like. My last hurrah was annihilating his (Germany's) army in Tuscany as we went down for the last time. By 1905 I was reduced to armies in Tuscany and Rome and a fleet in Bulgaria. Yes, after all that I was still hanging on to Jim's center in Bulgaria, even with Austria and Turkey attacking me.

It was at this point that the game morphed from being a game to being high drama. It was obvious that nothing could stop Edi's advance and the win was his for the taking, at least according to his flim-flam movement of the pieces on the board showing how a 12, 16, 18 progression was inevitable and unstoppable. By unanimous agreement and a vote by a mesmerized board of wimps, Edi was declared the winner of the game. He was happy with the win, and I was happy because: 1) I had taken a center from him, 2) I had annihilated one of his units, and 3) I had survived to write about it.

While Lori, Jeff and Jim were sorting out the results of the tournament the adjourned hobby meeting resumed with a discussion of the upcoming 2014 World DipCon to be held in Chapel Hill (I took some issue with Chris Martin's comments at the meeting, but an exchange of emails cleared up my misunderstanding and resolved that.). There were two bids presented for the 2014 DipCon including the aforementioned bid from Seattle and one from an event I knew nothing about called Carnage; which proposed a site in Vermont in wintertime. No, way, Jose. Again, it was obvious that WACCon was the preferred venue among those present.

By now there was a buzz in the room and it was obvious that Edi was unhappy about something; and when Edi is unhappy everyone knows it. What follows is my interpretation of what happened based on what Edi and Jeff told me later. If I misunderstood anything the responsibility for that is mine alone. Edi believed, based on his understanding of the event rules, that his victory by concession was equal in point values (in the scoring system) to the outright win that Nate had achieved in the second round. It should be noted that Edi had played at prior TEMPEST events, so he was experienced with their scoring system. However, the complete event

tournament rules had not been published on the event website or posted at the event. It was assumed that everyone playing knew and understood the rules. After reviewing the situation the tournament staff (Jeff and Lori, and perhaps Joe) said the results would stand and that Edi would not receive the same points for his conceded win as Nate's solo earned win. The decision made a big difference in Edi's final standing. Not mine, of course. I was back there where I belonged, at the bottom of the pack and my good results in Paris were but a footnote in the annals of Peeriblah.

True to promise almost everybody in attendance won a prize for something.

First place, two weevils and a canuck went to Nate Cockerill. I'm not sure what that means but that's what I wrote down.

Best countries were: Austria: Joe Wheeler, 12 centers; England; Graham Woodring, 8 centers; France: Mike Hall, 12 centers; Germany: Edi Birsan, 11 centers; Italy: Steve Cooley, 9 centers; Russia; Chris Martin: 10 centers; and Turkey: Nate Cockerill, 18 centers.

For the record Nate ended up with 32036 points, Steve Emmert had 18528 points, Chris Martin had 18028 points, ...(skipping ahead)...Edi Birsan had 10515 points, Larry Peery had 5003 points, and Jim Yerkey had 4004!

Nate Cockerill, Jim O'Kelley and Mike Hall won the best team event. Lori Wheeler won the Iron Man of Gaming Award; and Steve Emmert won the Best Stab Award for taking five dots from Andy Bartalone with five units (one foreign).

What I noticed here was that even though two of the rounds were played without time limits the games tended to run short and there was a corresponding lack of earned solo wins.

Finally, I should mention here, although I'll have more to say about this in another article, Kevin O'Kelley's performance. This was Kevin's second Diplomacy Convention and although his numbers weren't great he shows promise as a player and a way forward for the hobby. We need more of him, and we need more hobbyists like Jim O'Kelley who brought him into the hobby.

Even I won a prize for having travelled the farthest to attend the event. The prize was a nice tote bag from Doug Kent, and the motto on the bag is the title of this article. I used to laugh at the young Asian ladies who would come into the Coach outlet store down the street and drop hundreds, even thousands, of dollars on Coach bags until I realized I spent well over a thousand dollars to attend the 2013 DipCon and all I had to show for it

was a tote bag and a lot of good memories.

It was Sunday mid-afternoon and the bar was closed (Nobody showed up to open it I was told.). I had already managed to deplete the lobby's supply of diet Coke, diet this and diet that, so I headed across the street to the little deli I mentioned earlier. This time the owner was working and it was far different from my first visit. Mr. Park was from Korea and we had a long chat about his youth there, his life thus far in America and the current state of affairs in Korea, Asia, and the world in general. It was a fascinating half hour and also one of the more fascinating experiences of my trip. I left, happy, with a bag full of snaps, a few diet sodas, and a bottle of one of France's hottest selling wines in America – FAT BASTARD! Back in the Persimmon Room Melina and I held court as the crowd slowly said its goodbyes and made their departures. As the snacks and Fat Bastard supply disappeared my opinion of the event rose. ♪

While we watched the clock tick down I had a chance to chat with: Chris Martin, who had finally given up his dreams of being the second Fred Astaire; Melinda, who swapped family tree stories with me to seven steps removed in the succession; Rick Desper, who really doesn't seem to age much as he grows older; Steve Cooley, who as he ages looks more and more like a Biblical figure out of one of Michelangelo's sculptures! and Bill LaFosse, who would be a really nice guy if he'd get over the hang-up of being Canadian. ♪

Done. Over. Another one for the history books. My thirty-third DipCon and World DipCon event was finished. By 1600 the place was empty, the locals were headed for home, the travelers were on their way to the airport, and I was left to turn out the lights and count the silverware. Fortunately, I had my only good meal at the hotel that night in the bar since the dining room was closed. It was a pannini sandwich. Anywhere else it would have been average, but for that Sheraton in that town on that night it was a foodie's delight and divine. I hate to end on a sour note but my conscience as a travel writer, etc. demands it. Keep in mind that I have no ax to grind here. I wasn't paid to go to the DipCon. I paid my own way, so the opinions here are mine. They may seem harsh but they are intended to help the hotel bring itself up to what is or should be the Sheraton standard of excellence and, for that matter, to help future DipCons be all they can be. First, the hotel. I was surprised to see how many 4 and 5 star ratings the hotel got, but when I looked at Trip Advisor's ranking (9th out of 12 hotels in Silver Springs) I found a more believable rating. The property should have been a solid 3 star but it wasn't. In fact, I couldn't even justify a 3 star rating. Being generous I would rate it at about 2.8. That's not acceptable for a Sheraton. Period. The property condition was good. Some of the staff was good, but in some areas (restaurant service, bar service, housekeeping, maintenance, etc. it was poor and unacceptable. Having to ask for water or

utensils in a restaurant, having to get up and go to the bar after waiting at a table for fifteen minutes, dishes on the hall floors for two and a half days, failure to replenish supplies, lack of knowledge about available services and products, etc. are not acceptable.

Second, DipCon. Most of the flaws I found were not the fault of the event organizers. To be blunt they were the fault of the hobby members. Sure there were some snafus but every DipCon has those. What is not acceptable is having a regional or national DipCon event that can only produce 30 or so players and that thanks to the organizers stepping up to the boards. In my long-held opinion a DipCon event worthy of the name must have a minimum of 49 players (e.g. seven players at seven boards for a majority of rounds). This one didn't come close. We need to raise attendance levels at our DipCon events and increase the number of those events. To do either or both we need to increase the number of active players in the hobby, as I pointed out at the hobby meeting. Everyone, I think, applauded that idea but I didn't see many volunteers stepping up to make it happen. Instead everyone sat back and lamented the fact that there was only one viable bid for next year's DipCon and that from an event on the way out. But what to do? That seems to be the question? Well, it's easy for me to point out the problem we all know exists, and since I've publicly made myself the point man on this issue I need to step up to the plate and I intend to do just that starting with a sister article in this issue of DIPLOMACY WORLD. You'll probably get tired of hearing me harp on this in the coming year but it's up to us, to you, to do something to shut me up. Believe me, there are other things I'd rather be writing about, but somebody has to do it. If, in another ten years I'm afraid we're going to be in the same boat as the survivors of Pearl Harbor. And I, for one, refuse to go down with the Arizona. So, the ball's in your court.

Enough preaching. Lots of lauds and grats to go around to the organizers, to all those who did attend, to the winners and those who might have had the dots fallen differently. It might not have been the greatest DipCon ever but it was a memorable one.

Day Five, Monday, October 14, Clearing and Sunny

True to his word Jim Yerkey showed up bright and early to take me to BWI airport and we had a nice chat on the way. Jim's mellowed a lot over the years and I think he's finally learned, as I have, that the real joy of Diplomacy isn't in the winning but in the friendships made and the memories collected over the years. Every airport has its quirks and the one that hit me most at BWI was that in spite of what the TSA and the airlines web sites say, TSA at the airport won't take anything but a real boarding pass. None of those home printed or ipod generated passes with the funny square pictographs. There were lots of pissed people in that TSA line that morning. Fortunately my counter-clerk (And when was

the last time you had a First Class Only counter clerk wave you over from the Cattle Class line?) tipped me off to this and printed out what I needed.

Going all my flights were full. Coming home they were all about one-third empty; which almost makes flying a pleasure. Things were fine from Baltimore to Houston; and then things got bad. I didn't know and would not know for the next day or so what was happening. It was probably just as well. When I got off the plane in Houston the sign said my Houston to Los Angeles flight was delayed one hour. By the time I got to the original gate it was a one and a half hour delay with a gate change. I started to walk it until I realized how big Houston's airport was, so I caught a ride with a shuttle. By the time I got to the second gate there was yet another delay and another gate change posted. By this point there were a dozen or so of us old folks standing there and not too happy. The counter clerk said she'd called a shuttle for us, and I asked her if she thought one shuttle would do for twelve people. Eventually a shuttle showed up, but we refused to go until a second and then a third arrived. (Photos of this are somewhere in here.) And then we had a convoy! We zoomed through the airport with lights flashing, bells gonging and "Cart please, clear the way!" booming while pedestrians just looked at us with hatred or envy in their eyes. At first we were told there was an equipment problem and our replacement plane was coming in from San Antonio (They didn't tell us that first it had to drop its passengers in Denver, and then fly to Houston to collect us.). Then we heard problems from an "incident" at Los Angeles International Airport were delaying traffic. So, 3 delays, 3 gate changes, and three and a half hours later I was on my way. Finally I could relax.

Not. I'm not a big fan of pay TV – be it on the ground or in a plane, and I particularly don't like DirectTV, but when the first officer announced TV would be free on the flight because of the delays (What? No free booze?) I thought I'd give it a go (Besides, I couldn't figure out how to turn the thing off.). Then I noticed the Chargers were playing the Bolts on the Monday night game and everybody was watching it, so I gave it a listen. I was sitting in an aisle seat on the right hand side of the plane. One row ahead of me in the aisle seat on the left side of the plane was a big (And I mean big!) black dude dressed in full Kansas City regalia including enough gold jewelry to balance the US budget for the next year. He had the red jersey, red sweat pants, and even red Nike KCC shoes. He was doing a running, play by play commentary on the game filled with lots of disparaging comments about the Chargers. Those kinds of comments aren't unusual during Charger games but we don't need to hear them from a KCC player or fan on a Monday night, and obviously this guy was a KCC player

or big time fan. What I did notice was his choice in beverages. First off he ordered three Courvoisier's and three cans of Coke. Gulp. They're gone. Then two more of each. By then he's gotten louder and more explicit in his comments. The lady sitting next to him was obviously unhappy. We didn't see a cabin attendant the rest of the mercifully short flight into Los Angeles. Amazingly, the guy never once got up to use the toilet. We arrived in Los Angeles at 2130 instead of 1700 as scheduled.

There was still no word on what had caused all the delays. (I learned the next day that someone had set off a dry ice bomb in an LAX terminal on Sunday and another on Monday.). I checked the flight board and it showed the next three flights to Carlsbad were on time so I toddled over to the usual gate and checked with the lady at the counter. Because of the delays, she said, the three remaining flights were all full. She gave me a choice of taking a hotel room for the night and coming back to the airport at 0600 for the first flight out in the morning to Carlsbad, or I could wait around until the 2230 flight which, although tagged sold out, usually had some no shows. I decided to wait and sure enough the last flight of the day had three empty seats. Bingo! But the fun wasn't over yet. The flight attendant managed to bump my arm and I poured a glass of ice water all over myself. And when I got my luggage at the Carlsbad terminal carousel somebody had snagged the cab I had asked to wait for me, so I had to go inside the terminal and have them call me one. But the twenty minute wait for the taxi turned out to be worth it. All the way home the cabbie serenaded me with his harmonica playing which was very good. I was so happy to be home I tipped him ten bucks on top of the fare for a seven mile ride.

For the record and comparison purposes the trip cost me \$530 for airfare, \$524 for the hotel, \$250 for eats and drink, \$50 for registration, \$30 for the taxi, \$20 for two phone calls, and \$25 for photos; something over \$1400 total. By comparison the trip to WDC in Paris cost me about \$3600, of which \$1800 was airfare I think.

It's tempting to compare the 2013 World DipCon and North American DipCon and I fully intended to do so. However, I have come to realize that it would not be fair to either to do so, just as it would be unfair to compare the fruits I found in a Carrefour's market in Paris with those from a supermarket in southern California. Better, I think, to keep them as separate memories, each appreciated for what they were. After ten years, it was good to be back. 'nuff said.

Sometimes a paragraph from Larry is longer than a full article from someone else.

College of Cardinals: The Evolution of a Variant

Part 1: Genesis

by Timothy Hayward and Baron Powell

On 18 July 2013, the first playtest of a new variant, **College of Cardinals**, concluded. That playtest, labeled "Wayne's Game" in honor of Diplomacy friend Wayne Bailey who died far too young, ended in a four-way draw between the Kingdom of Castile (Robert Stein), the Eastern Roman Empire (Dirk Knemeyer), the Holy Roman Empire (Lynn Mercer), and the Kingdom of Hungary (Mike Norton). This event was significant to us because it represented the culmination of well over three years of almost constant incremental effort to turn a concept into a playable game.

- the difficulties we encountered trying to make specific rules work like we wanted them to,
- how our efforts to refine the map impacted on the parameters of the variant, and
- the changes to both the map and the rules that came about because of lessons we learned during Wayne's Game and the feedback we received from the players during and after the playtest.

As the name of this particular article suggests, we will start by looking at **College of Cardinals's** origin.

The genesis of **College of Cardinals** can be found in Tim's lifelong fascination with the European Middle Ages. This interest took root during Tim's childhood and continued unabated through his university studies. A huge fan of standard **Diplomacy** and its myriad progeny, Tim figured that there had to be a variant available that would allow him to indulge his passion for medieval history while enjoying the give and take of a **Diplomacy** game. Unfortunately, the results of his searches in the Variant Bank and Dipwiki were disappointing. Though Tim discovered a number of variants that used medieval Europe as a backdrop, he did not find any of them particularly appealing. Most were simple map variants that lacked anything that would suggest to players that medieval Europe was in any way different from pre-Great War Europe, ancient China, Barsoom, Middle Earth, or any of the other countless battlefields that have caught the fancy of variant designers over the years. Tim's favorite part of **Diplomacy** had always been the idea of altering a very flexible and changeable history. In his opinion, few time periods presented the opportunity to revise history more than the European Middle Ages. The High Middle Ages were captivatingly rife with uncertainty, unpredictability, and conflict. What Tim wanted was a variant that addressed the intricate social and political realities of medieval Europe, yet remained true to **Diplomacy's** elegant simplicity.

Tim's search for a suitable medieval variant coincided with his writing of a dissertation on the First Crusade of 1097. As Tim studied the events that led to the First Crusade, he became intimately familiar with the Investiture Controversy. The Investiture Controversy was basically a power struggle between the leadership of the Catholic Church and the standing European Monarchs over who would have the power to appoint (or "invest") bishops and other clergyman into positions of responsibility within the Church. Knowledge of the Investiture Controversy led directly to the formulation of



This article is the first in a series we intend to write to provide readers with a general overview of how **College of Cardinals** evolved from a vague idea to a playable variant. Future articles will examine:

- how we transformed general concepts into working rules,

a concept that would be central to an emerging variant: players would periodically vote for a leader from amongst themselves. Tim imagined the possibilities for sneaky and clever play. He also saw the value of such a dynamic in presenting weaker players, whose positions in standard **Diplomacy** might be considered untenable, with possibilities to advance.

In early 2009, Tim began design work on a medieval Europe variant in earnest. He spent as much time as his job and his studies would allow tinkering with various possibilities. Though many ideas would come and go, the College of Cardinals, a conclave of Bishops that would gather after the death or resignation of a Pope to elect a new Pope would remain a key feature of the rules. Tim, in fact, considered the College of Cardinals so critical to his emerging variant that he decided very early on in the design process to name his creation after this institution.

As the months passed by, Tim's vision of **College of Cardinals** began to take shape.

He thought a good starting point for the variant would be in the year 1160, which was approximately midway between the failed Second Crusade and the upcoming Third Crusade. At this time:

- The Crusader realms of *Outremer* were well established, but increasingly feeling the pressure from their Islamic neighbors. In fact, one of the Crusader realms, the County of Edessa, had fallen in 1148.
- The tension between England and France was steadily mounting. Through conquest and marriage, the English King, Henry II, had acquired huge domains in France. Though this technically made him a vassal of the Frankish King, Louis VII, the truth was that the ambitious Henry was the more powerful of the two monarchs and he had no problem rubbing this reality in Louis's face.
- The *Reconquista* in Iberia was at a stalemate, as invasion by a new and dynamic Islamic realm, the Almohad Caliphate, had infused the Muslims of *Al-Andalus* with renewed vigor.
- The Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium) was arguably in the midst of a golden age during the Crusader Era. It was a major player in *Outremer*, the Balkans, and even southern Italy. Though the Eastern Roman Empire would maintain a façade of strength for

another twenty years, it was to embark on a steady glide path into decline after the 1160s.

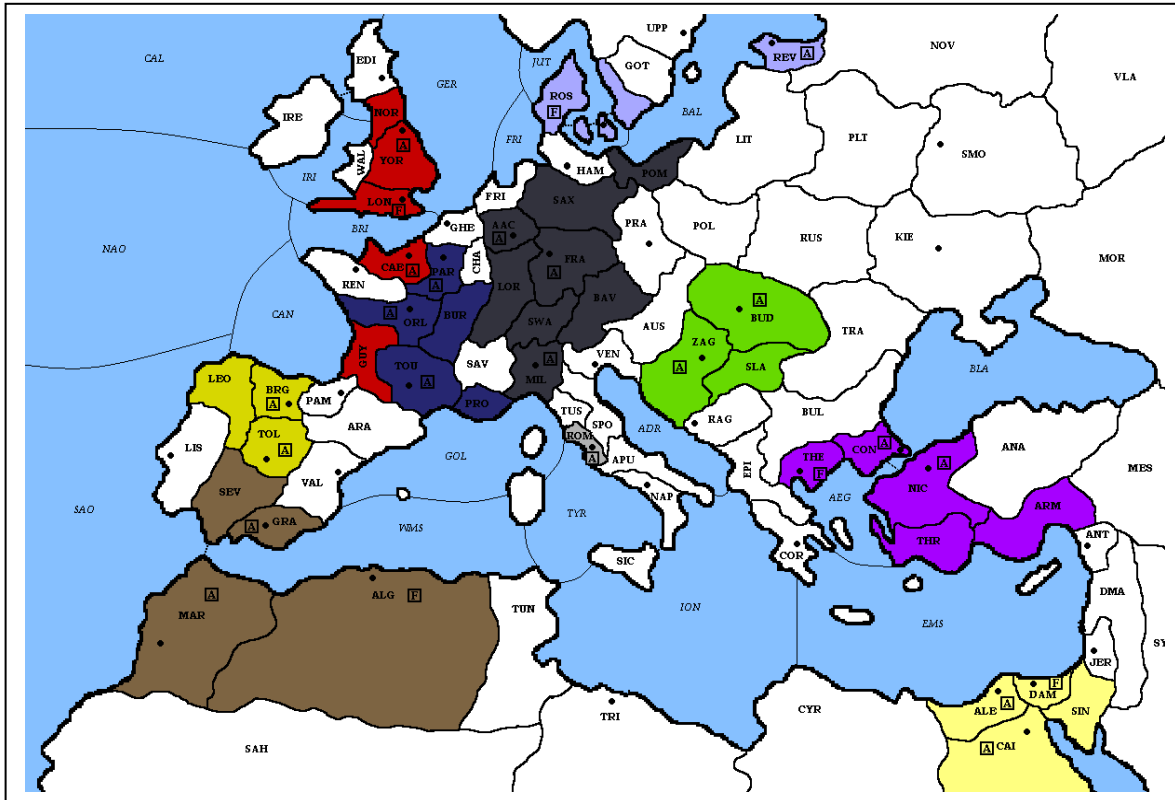
- The Holy Roman Empire, after years of stagnation, was under the leadership of the renowned Frederick Barbarossa. Frederick was determined to crush the rebelliousness of his Italian subjects and reassert Imperial authority over the Papacy, a fate the Pope was equally determined to avoid.

Given a time period laden with natural rivalries and intrigue, Tim now had to choose which realms players would control, which would be neutral supply centers (SCs), and which would be buffer spaces. He wanted to limit the number of players to seven or as few over that number as possible. Europe and those portions of the Islamic world that would appear on the map were sprinkled with realms of various sizes and strength, but Tim wanted to avoid a map filled with small powers that would likely have little chance of success. In the end he settled on the following played positions: the Almohad Caliphate, the Kingdom of Castile, the Kingdom of Denmark, the Kingdom of England, the Eastern Roman Empire, Fatimid Egypt, the Kingdom of France, the Holy Roman Empire, and the Kingdom of Hungary.

Some potential played positions Tim decided to leave out included:

- Poland. Poland lost its place in the variant because its king had recently divided his kingdom into five realms that were shared between his five sons. These sons would spend the the rest of their lives warring with each other.
- The Seljuk Turks of Rum. Turkish Rum was in an early draft of the game, but Tim decided against it because the Third Crusade was a fair way from the start of the game and Rum did not really begin its rise to prominence until after that crusade had concluded. He also believed the inclusion of Rum made the bottom right corner of the map too crowded.
- Kievan Rus'. Tim felt that the heyday of Kievan Rus' had long passed. What remained of Kievan Rus' at the time the game started was a number of squabbling petty kingdoms that lacked any kind of central authority to unite them.

A copy of one of the first draft maps is shown on the next page.



Early Draft of College of Cardinals Map

At the same time that Tim was determining which realms would be played positions, he also worked on the special rules that would be specific to **College of Cardinals**.

One of the first orders of business was to flesh out the College of Cardinals mechanism that was to be the centerpiece of the variant. After giving the matter some thought, Tim decided that every player in charge of a Catholic Power (i.e., Castile, Denmark, England, France, Holy Roman Empire, and Hungary) would represent both the Monarch who ruled that realm and a Cardinal from that realm who is a member of the College of Cardinals. Each player, in his role as that realm's Cardinal, would campaign to become Pope during every winter turn. A player could vote for his own Cardinal (i.e., himself) to become Pope or for another Cardinal. The Cardinal with the most votes would become the Pope for the next game year. In the case of a tie, the Papacy would go to the Cardinal from the realm that controlled the most Catholic SCs.

Tim liked the idea of recreating the lack of knowledge the Monarchs of the day had for events happening far from their realms. Towards this end, he envisioned the GM passing out a "darkened map" to each player as part of the adjudication. The darkened map would allow players to see only one space away from the spaces they controlled or their units occupied. Players would

have to rely on their allies to feed them reliable information about the goings-on in distant places.

To facilitate the gathering of information, Tim created a new unit: the spy. Like armies and fleets, a spy would allow the player controlling it to see into spaces adjacent to the space the spy occupied. Unlike armies and fleets, however, a particular spy's position on the map would be invisible to everyone except the GM and the controlling Monarch. Spies could also occupy spaces that had armies or fleets in them, regardless of whether those units were friendly or hostile. The only limitation to a spy's movement would be that they could not enter a space that had another spy in it.

The limited visibility that the players would have to deal with would also hamper their ability to communicate with each other.

- Basically, a player could only communicate directly with a neighbor he could "see" (i.e., the player controlled spaces adjacent to that neighbor's realm, the player had units in spaces adjacent to the neighbor's realm, or the player had spies in the neighbor's realm).

- Players could only communicate with other players they could not "see" by asking a neighbor to pass a message to another player the neighbor claimed he could see or by going through the Pope.

- All Catholic realms and the Eastern Roman Empire could pass messages to each other via the Pope. This ability to serve as a communications conduit between the Christian Monarchs gave the Pope tremendous power because he could choose to pass the messages he received as they were written, alter messages so that they suited his purposes, send fake messages supposedly from other players, or not send the messages he deemed inappropriate.

- The two Islamic realms, the Almohad Caliphate and Fatimid Egypt, could not communicate with the Pope (or vice-versa), but they could communicate directly with each other even if they could not “see” each other.



Arguably the biggest change from standard **Diplomacy** would be the inclusion of currency. Tim classified all land spaces as city spaces (i.e., those spaces with SCs in them) or county spaces. During the summer and winter turns, each city would give the controlling player 400 silver pieces (pcs) and each county would give the controlling player 50 silver pcs. Players would use silver to buy new units (450 silver pcs), maintain existing units (350 silver pcs), recruit spies (200 silver pcs), offer

bribes (varying prices ranging from 500 silver pcs to 1,200 silver pcs based on the unit the player was bribing), and buy information (negotiated). Players controlling Catholic realms would also have to pay a 10% tithe to the Papacy each game year. The Papacy would have its own treasury. This treasury would be separate from the treasury of the Catholic realm the player who was acting as Pope controlled.

Instead of SC control determining victory per se, a player's income would be the deciding factor. A Monarch could claim victory if he boasted an income of 7,500 silver pcs or more on any one turn. Of course, with income tied to land ownership and cities (i.e., SCs) being worth eight times as much as counties, the quickest path to victory by far would involve the conquest of SCs. Inversely, a player would not be eliminated from play if he lost all his SCs. As long that player still owned counties and thereby still had an income, he could continue to play. If the player without any SCs was responsible for a Catholic realm, however, he would lose his right to vote in the College of Cardinals and become Pope.

By the summer of 2010, Tim had been working on **College of Cardinals** for about eighteen months. He had produced a map and had written draft rules, though a finished product was still far off. He felt it was time to get some feedback from people in his immediate circle of **Diplomacy** acquaintances. One of the people he reached out to was Baron. Baron was the designer of both the popular **1900** variant and, in coordination with Jeff Kase, the less well known, but generally well acclaimed **Ambition & Empire** variant. Tim and Baron had engaged in some casual conversations about variant design in the past and Tim was eager for Baron's insights on **College of Cardinals**. Insights he received...and then some.

Over the next eighteen months, we would engage in regular discussions that would see nothing less than the transformation of **College of Cardinals** from an assemblage of clever, but somewhat jumbled ideas to a playable variant that a group of excellent players put through its paces during Wayne's Game.

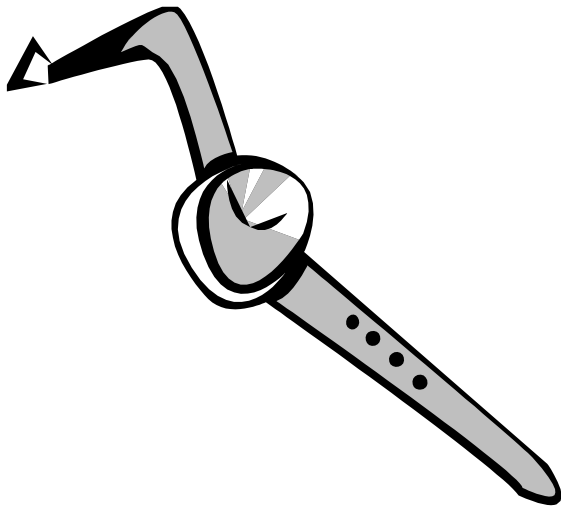
The gist of our collaborative effort over that eighteen month period will be the focus of Part 2 of this series of articles on the evolution of **College of Cardinals**.

Keep an eye out for Part 2 of this series, perhaps in the next issue of Diplomacy World?

Diplomacy World Cup III – Takin’ a Lickin’, Keepin’ on Tickin’

By Jim-Bob Burgess

This is the latest incarnation of this team based tournament. I am helping to lead the Nor'Easter team for people in the Northeast part of the United States. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/123795024327261/> is the Facebook page for the event. Now some of you may have played in earlier games and then stepped away. I want to encourage you to come back. We're about to start the Finals, but there still is lots of room for qualifier players to join and get into the Finals too.



We have 19 players qualified for the Finals as of this writing. Among the notable hobby luminaries include Chris Brand, Andy Bartalone, Brian Frew, Conor Kostick, Fearghal O'Donnchu, Allen Schweinsberg, Eric Hunter, Brendan Hickey, and Harry Parker. Within the next month we will start up the finals, and there may be some slight adjustments in the rules to enable the tournament to likely finish up in the next year or two. I remain on the Diplomacy World Cup Council that oversees this tournament series according to a charter. Under that charter, we also are beginning the process of selecting a team of people interested in setting up the development of Diplomacy World Cup IV. So, if for whatever reason you haven't been participating in this Tournament but had interest in figuring out the way to do this in the future, please contact me at jfburgess@gmail.com and

we'd love to have your input. 25 games have been completed, and 4/5 of them ending in solos (actually a 20th game finished in a solo, but since it was a shared solo, those two players have not yet advanced to the finals. Five games are still on-going, including one of my games, and we have enough players to have fifteen more games almost ready to start if a few of you would join up.

And you can sign up for the DWC III Tournament at: <http://aqmn.asciiking.com/> and see the rules and other information. Other US regional teams are the ones in the Pacific, Dixie, and Chicago. If you're from the US, think about joining one of these four regional teams, contact me or Tournament Director Chris Babcock if you want to make sure you get into one of these regional teams. You will start games sooner and have a faster route to the Finals that way. The unique aspect of DWC III, that is proving to be distorting but in interesting ways, is its "solo only" feature (see more on that in another article by me elsewhere in this issue). You advance from the preliminaries to the finals only by soloing, and then need solos in the finals against the other soloists. Though this started last January, it probably will be going on for at least two years, and there is PLENTY of time to jump in.

As usual, for those who know me well, I screwed up my first game and allowed a solo to someone from team US. I still don't have a solo in over three decades, but maybe I can do it in my current game. Yes, in C-Diplo, you can easily throw games, and in this format you can do it too. I wonder why people like to drop the levels of the game in this way. It fascinates me. But in the finals of this tournament, it shouldn't happen, should it?

So, really, come join, it is being operated on a web-assisted Judge platform that is really pretty easy to use. Ask me if you have any questions. There is about to be a huge uptick in games starting as January approaches in a few days. Lots of games are waiting for more players to start, won't you come join me???

The Game is Diplomacy!

By Tim Haffey

I really enjoyed the article by Marc Seguin. I really like reading articles like that but, I think that trying to determine what are the best moves for any piece for any nation based on what you think is the best move tactically is not very useful. Making moves and then waiting to see what the other players around you will do or how they will respond is not a good idea in my book. You know, that book I haven't written yet. Maybe I should get Larry to help me. That would fun. anyway, the whole point of this short piece is that the most important part of the game and where, as Marc puts it, "lines are drawn, alliances made, and backstabs prepared" is Pre-Spring 01.

I have said it before and I will say I again. The most important part of the game is pre 1901 Spring move negotiations. communications, diplomacy, or whatever you want to call it. This where you don't even consider your opening moves until you talk to everyone in the game and try to find out what the others are thinking about or are considering. You don't simple say hello what's up as some emails I have received in the past from players. Try to get him to say something back to you that is useful.

For example, one thing I have done, many times, as Germany. I write to England and after the usual greetings and stuff I suggest that England move his fleet Lon-EC and Germany Blitz at the same time and we can attack France as a team. By the way, most people like to be greeted in a nice way when you send them an email. It helps tune them into what you are saying because you are perceived as a nice guy.

To a newbie or perhaps someone who really does not yet understand the nature of the game, this may sound like a good idea. However, anyone who has played the game for a while, especially as England, will know that it is not. This, in my view, is a weak move for England in spring 01 because it does two things right of the bat that could hurt him. First, he weakens his attack on Norway because if Russia moves A Mos-StP and then Russia moves into Norway he will prevent England from getting a build. (Hmm, I wonder who might make such a suggestion to Russia. :) Secondly, he will have France mad as hell at him and he is not likely to get any support into Bul from France. And if Germany does Blitz France, he will take Bul or support France into Bul in exchange for an alliance against England. And England ends up odd man out. Well, that is the theory anyway.

So, depending on how England responds to such an offer may indicate to you what kind of a player he is, newbie or experienced. Then he may come back with an offer of his own which might indicate to you that he is

friendly toward Germany or not. Probably not.

However Marc is correct on what he calls the fixed unit or, what I call the freebie moves. Several nations do have moves they can make that gain them a center that no one can stop as a rule. Although things can happen.

Austria has a Bud-Ser as a freebie move. No one can stop it. Likewise, Turkey has A Con-Bul as a freebie move. Russia has F Sev-Rum and in the Fall 01 gets Sweden as a freebie. Italy has no freebie in the spring but can take Tun in the fall as a freebie. France, properly played, can take Spa in the Spring and Por in the fall both as freebies. England, again properly played, can take Norway in the fall. Germany can take Holland in the spring. Denmark is not assured as a freebie because England can get crazy and attack Denmark keeping Germany out.

Now, is there any time when a player should pass up a freebie or let someone else take it? That all depends on what kind of diplomacy occurred before the moves were even decided by the players. I have seen Austria allow Turkey or, even Italy, take Greece in exchange for an alliance.

Let's take Austria as an example. Austria conducts his Diplomacy and gets the feeling that he has a hostile Italy on his western border and a hostile Russian on his eastern border. He is afraid that Italy will try to take Tri and Russia will move to Gal. So, he makes a deal with Turkey. He will allow Turkey to take Greece if Turkey will allow him to take Ser in the Fall. Turkey agrees, well he might, and Austria makes the following moves.

Spring 01

A Bud S a Vie-Gal;

A Vie-Gal;

F Tri H or, perhaps F Tri-Ven just in case Italy moves A Ven-Tyro and A Rom-Ven. He will bounce A Rom and still be in Tri.

In the Fall

A Bud-Ser;

A Gal- kinda depends on what Russia did. Austria should discuss it with Russia. He may become more friendly or, maybe not;

F Tri H or Tri - Ven. If Italy moved to Tyro, Gal can cover Vie.

In this case Austria only gets one build, but that is better than none. And, hopefully, he has a Five center Turkey as an ally which will probably take Russia/s and even Italy's attention away from you and towards Turkey. I have actually seen this move a couple of times but, the alliance between A/T never lasted long if at all. But,

Austria did get Ser. But, let's face it, nobody likes Austria. He should take his freebie while he can.

Of course, position drives tactics but, diplomacy drives strategy. Especially for Spring 01.

Keep dipping my friends.

A TURKEY'S TAKE ON THANKSGIVING

“Not an easy read, but lots of food for thought”

By Larry Peery

My story may not rank up there with Art Buchwald's classic 1952 column in The New York Herald Tribune, written while he was a correspondent based in Paris, seeking to explain Thanksgiving to the French; or Mark Bittman's (He's the Food Editor/Columnist for the NY Times) almost a classic "Everyone Eats There," a story about the California Central Valley ---our greatest food resource, that appeared in last year's NY Times, or Elaine Sciolino's might be a classic someday "Thanksgiving Day, a la Francaise," that appeared in last week's NY Times; but you may want to consider setting this article aside and enjoying it after you've had your T-Day Feast! This is a story about a typical Dipper's Thanksgiving told from a turkey's peerispective by a Turk, or something like that.

The Setting: Gathered together at Chateau Peericelli.

Located in beautiful Livingston, California, where the scenic Highway 99, the not-so-polluted Merced River, and the Southern Pacific Railroad all meet 130 feet above sea level.

Located in the middle of California's Central Valley (aka "Food Bowl to America,") which is divided into two parts, the northern Sacramento Valley (north of the Sacramento River delta), and the southern San Joaquin Valley (from Bakersfield north to Sacramento). Livingston, down the road from Merced (Gateway to Yosemite), Atwater (The Heart of Bombers' Row) and just across the valley from Crows Landing (formerly an alternative landing strip with an 8,000 foot runway for the USN and NASA) is known for cheap poultry and cheap wine (e.g. rotgut).

Livingston and Merced County are a center of California's agriculture industry, which produces some 13% of the nation's food (and half of that comes from the Central Valley). Livingston's largest businesses are agriculture-related. Among these are the largest poultry producer in the western United States (Foster Farms), and a dairy, Joseph Gallo (Yes, The Gallos of "rotgut fame".), which owns the largest dairy herd in the United States. Just down the way The Chandlers of LA Times and Chinatown fame own the world's largest almond groves, 10,000 acres worth). Ninety percent of the sweet

potatoes grown west of the Rockies are grown and packed in and around Livingston. The sweet potatoes benefit from the sandy soil caused by the Merced River farmers say. Grapes are also widely farmed near Livingston for wines (Although Modesto is the center of the Gallo wine making empire most of the better grapes used in their wines are trucked in from Napa and Sonoma.), raisins, and table grapes. E & J Gallo Winery does operate a major grape-processing facility just outside the city (Most of the cheaper Gallo wines include a big percentage of doctored Thompson seedless grapes, the same grapes used for raisins and table grapes). Almond orchards are a common sight and family legend has it that old man Chandler when torn between selling his newspapers or his almond groves decided to keep the almond groves because, as he said "People don't have to read newspapers, but they'll always eat almonds." Other crops are farmed in smaller quantities, including alfalfa, corn, soybeans, peaches, melons, and berries. Oh, and did I mention the turkeys? The Central Valley is home to Foster Farms and Zacky, both family owned operations, and the west's largest poultry farmers.

The Guest List

Gathered together at Chateau Peericelli is a typical, just slightly dysfunctional Diplomacy family: seated at the head of the table on his dais is our host, Edi Birsan. Seated at the food of the table on her bias is our hostess, Melinda Holley. At Edi's right is our guest of honor, affectionately known as "Whining Pig" Doug Kent. Gathered around the table are the players from "Sweet Spot:" Paul Milewski, Harold Zarr, Jack McHugh, and Chris Babcock; and from "Reasonland:" Andrew Leavy, Tim Haffey, Graham Wilson, Andy Bate, Brad Wilson, Professor Doctor Walter Buchanan, Nathan Deily, and "Ernie" Hakey III. Noticeably absent from the table are Heath Gardner, who is sitting at the childrens' table dressed in full Indian costume, and Larry Peery (which explain the loud crashing sounds coming from the kitchen).

Pre-Dinner Conversation

Melinda: Well, what shall we talk about this year?

Edi: Since it's Thanksgiving, let's talk about turkey!

Doug: (whining) Why can't we talk about pigs? I want to talk about pigs.

Edi: Pigs and pork are so last year. Remember the election? No, this year we'll talk about turkey.

Ernie: Edi, don't you mean Turkey?

Edi: NO! I mean turkey, as in what we're going to be eating. OK, who wants to give us a run down on the latest turkey stats?



Brad: Oh, I can do that. No problem. The price of a typical T-Day dinner is down about 50 cents this year and that's driven by the lower price of turkey. Here's the run down on the turkey trot:

Albertsons' (a major chain in the west): Honeysuckle White (47 cents a lb.), 12-22 lbs., frozen, Foster Farms (from California) (\$1.27 a lb.), 12-22 lbs., fresh.

Ralph's (a major chain in the west, part of Kroger): Jennie-O or Kroger (59 cents a lb.), 12-24 lbs, frozen; Jennie-O or Foster Farms (\$1.39 a lb.), 12-22 lbs., fresh;

Fresh Simple Truth Natural Turkey (\$1.99 a lb.), no weight given, fresh.

Stater Brothers (a major regional chain in Southern California): Californian or Jennie-O (57 cents a lb.), 14-20 lbs., frozen, Butterball Premium (87 cents lb.), 12-20 lbs., frozen; Jennie-O (\$1.39 a lb.), fresh; Zacky Farms (from California) (\$1.69 lb.), 12-22 lbs., fresh.

Trader Joe's (upscale national chain): Joe's Brined, Fresh, Young (??), All Natural Turkeys (\$1.99 lb.), 12-22 lbs., fresh (from CA, MN, or PA); add 50 cents a pound if you want the Rabbi's blessing on it.

Andrew: Mazel tov!

Sprout's (mid-level, pseudo-upper class regional chain in Southern California with farmers' markets pretensions): All Natural Turkey (\$1.49 lb.), 10-24 lbs., fresh.

Williams Sonoma (upper class foodie national chain): Willie Bird Fresh Pre-Brined Turkey (\$6.42-\$7.11 lb., plus shipping plus \$15 delivery charge), 12-26 lbs., shipped partially frozen to arrive chilled, fresh. Williams Sonoma reports pre-selling 65,000 (that's enough to fill five semis) which will ship by UPS beginning the Monday before Thanksgiving).

Edi: Thanks, Brad. Good job of cooking the numbers. Now, who wants to sum it all up?

Andy: That's \$805 million worth of turkey this year, of which 35% will be wasted. The Big Four poultry farmers produce more than half the turkeys sold each year. Tyson Foods, by the way, make \$778 million profit last year. 254 million turkeys were produced last year.

Americans eat about 15 pounds of turkey each per year, Canadians a bit less, and the French, the number three consumers of turkey, only eat about 4.5 pounds a year.

Ernie: Or to put it another way, that's almost a THOUSAND dollars worth of turkey a year for every member of the Turkish Armed Forces! Wow!

Edi: OK, you can tell who did their homework. Catherine Rampell's article in the NY Times, "Why Is Turkey Cheaper When Demand Is Higher?" was very good. And the big story this year was about the shortage of fresh turkeys from Butterball, and why they're having problems fattening up their birds. Any thoughts?

Harold: I did a search on Google on "fresh Butterball turkeys in short supply" and came up with 95,600 hits.

Jack: Oh, I can beat that. I did a search on "butterball fat farms" and came up with 32,120,000 hits!!

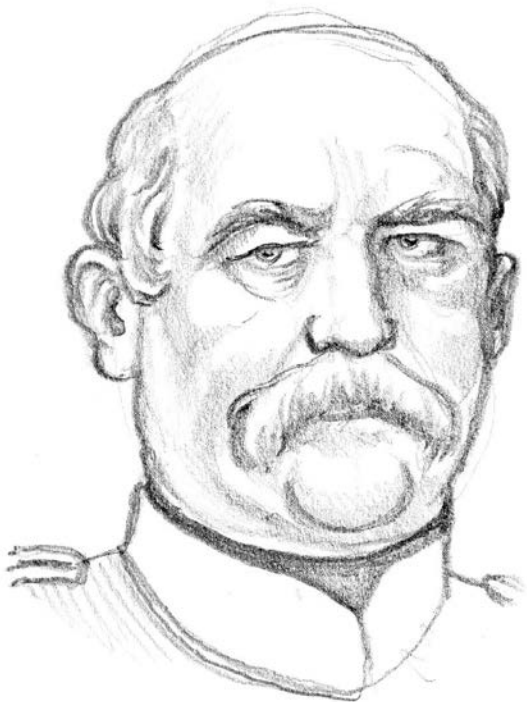
Paul: Well, apparently Butterball didn't have any

problems with the turkeys they raised, slaughtered and then froze earlier in the year losing weight. It was only those they raised in the last few month and were planning to sell fresh that didn't gain weight. Somebody's suggested they changed their diet mix formula and that put the turkeys off their feed. So to speak.

Edi: Alright. Thanks everybody. Now that we've digested that, does anybody have an alternative to the traditional turkey dinner for us?

Professor Doctor Walter Buchanan: I do. Pulling a pocket flask out of his jacket pocket he sits it carefully on the table. I propose a liquid T-Day menu consisting of a bottle of Wild Turkey 101 proof per guest. At \$19.99 a bottle its cheaper. Besides, there's no cooking, no serving, and no dishes to wash! And for the non-alcohol drinkers serve them cranprune juice instead.

Edi: Very good. And here we are to celebrate another Thanksgiving or, as we call it here in Livingston...(looking out the window) Wait a minute! What's that seagull doing sitting out on the fence?



Melinda: Why that's Jonathan Livingston Seagull. I thought you invited him.

Edi: Oh, right. As I was saying....in Livingston we call it DipDotTaking Day. We have so much to be thankful for: A Great WDC, A Great DipCon, and an even Greater ObamaCareCon!

Melinda: Hush, no politics. Remember, you promised.

Edi: Yes, dear. OK, time for a toast. Standing, pouring from a Nebuchadnezzar of Peericelli's Sparking Cypher Juice. I propose "To all Dippers: past, present and future: May all your dots be mine!"

All: Here, here!

Edi: OK, Melinda: what's for dinner?

Melinda: Looking from right to left and back again. Well, since so many of us are on a diet this year Chef Lorenzo and I decided a small-scale Thanksgiving dinner was in order. We'll be having turkey cutlets with a Marsala sauce, risotto with mushrooms, wilted lettuce and a hint of fennel. To accompany the protein and starch, brussel sprouts roasted in olive oil, coarse salt and black pepper, and a flash of chili across the top.

Graham: What, no crackers?

Nathan: Does anybody know why Brussel sprouts cost more in Bruxelles than Brussels?

Silence.

Melinda: And for dessert, a lovely cranberry mouse.

Edi: Dear, don't you mean a cranberry mousse?

Melinda: No, I mean a cranberry mouse! You take a very fresh mouse, place it in a Champagne flute, smother it with raspberries, and drown it in Champagne. It's lovely. Hmmm, that reminds me, Heath, did you, Foster and Zach catch enough mice this morning.

Heath: Looking up from the game of Three Blind Mice being played at the kids' table, yes, ma'am.

Melinda: For those who aren't worried about calories but still looking for something healthy, Chef Lorenzo has prepared his signature dish, Turkey Roulades Byzantine. which consists of a thin slice of turkey breast topped with a thin slice of cheese (Swiss, Mozzarella, or English white cheddar work well), topped with three pieces of steamed asparagus or a quarter of a broccoli stalk.

Whining Doug: But where's the pork?

Melinda: Oh, yes, sprinkle a few bits of crisp bacon on top. And then roll it all up. Use a circular ribbon cut from a red and or green pepper to hold it all in place. For extra oomph serve on a crepe and drizzle with a béchamel sauce. Wild rice on the side or a whole-grain stuffing with apples, sausage and pecans completes the plate. Dessert is a pumpkin ice cream with ginger snaps.
Melinda: Dig in, everybody!

Chomp, chomp, slurp, slurp, munch, munch....

Edi: Hmmmmmmmm, dear, the turkey tastes a bit different this year. Did you do anything differently in prepping it?

Melinda: Well, I did butter the balls after I dressed it instead of before as I did last year.

Edi: But Melinda, I've told you at least a dozen times turkeys don't have balls --- at least not where you can butter them. They're inside the abdomen near the spinal column.

Melinda: Oh, well. Did you notice how good the basting liquid turned out? I used Mary Jane's recipe of Absinthe and Hashish, with just a pinch of Maui Powie.

Harold: And what about the burqa? Do you think it worked better than a foil wrap or a paper bag?

Melinda: Definitely.

Tim: Lovely china. Is it Wedgwood?

Melinda: No, actually it's Chinet.

Ernie: Did you all hear about the shortage of housing in Turkey? There's a shortage of cottages for large and small Kurdish families in the southeast of Turkey.

Loud groans from around the table.

At that moment there was a loud crash as the kitchen door flew open and banged against the wall, sending a Norman Rockwell original, "My First Thanksgiving," crashing to the floor.

Who stole the Wish Bone? Screamed a short, fat man dressed in a chef's uniform as he waved a large chef's knife menacingly.

Melinda: Calm down, Chef Lorenzo. I'm sure the wishbone is here somewhere in somebody's roulade.

Chef Lorenzo: No, not the wishbone, The Wish Bone! I need it for the dressing. I ordered a case of it and I can't find any of it. You? You?? You??? YOU!!!! Glaring at Heath, trying to hide behind the kid's table. You took it, didn't you?

Heath: Yes, Chef. We needed something for bait for the mouse traps and the Wish Bone French Dressing worked just fine when we smeared it on a slice of apple.

Brad: Rising and yelling at the top of his lungs, You used French and not Italian Dressing? Sacre bleu!

Edi: Calm down everyone. I suggest we adjourn to the Hall of Stabs for a post-dinner coffee.

Ernie: Turkish coffee, I hope?

Edi: OK, but don't you think you're wired enough?

Taking Melinda by the arm, Edi leads the procession to the Hall of Stabs.

Edi: Now that everybody is seated. Since it is Thanksgiving and since we've already talked about turkey let's continue on that leg and talk about Turkey

Ernie: But I don't have anything left to say.

Nathan: Thank God.

Professor Doctor Walter Buchanan: Well, did you all know Akita is famous for rice farming and its sake breweries. It is well known for having the highest consumption of sake in Japan, as he pulls another flask out of his pocket. Akita is Livingston's sister city in Japan, known for its rice farming and the highest rate of sake consumption in Japan.

Tim: Yes, and they drink sake out of china cups.

Andy: How can they be china cups if they're Japanese?

Edi: Well, there have definitely been some changes in Turkey since last Thanksgiving. A year ago everyone was talking about Turkey as the new Great Power in the Eastern Mediterranean with influence everywhere: Syria, Iraq, and even Iran and Egypt were all listening to Turkey's cackle. This year not so much.

Chris: Yeah, Egypt just tossed out the Turkish ambassador because the Turkish PM keeps dabbling in Egyptian internal politics.

Melinda: Imagine, a Turkey being persona non grata at Thanksgiving. How sad. Dabbling at her eyes.

Paul: Well, even the news from Tarsus is bad. Erdogan is feuding in public with Fethullah Gulen a leader of the Hizmet movement which is using its "prep" schools to train members to take over the country, at least according to Erdogan.

Harold: Yeah, Erdogan's dream of a new Sunni axis of power ---with Turkey as an anchor, is going up in smoke. He's even making nice to the two Shite powers, Iraq and Iran. The bottom line is "Arabs don't want to be bossed around again by the Turks." They had enough of that under the Ottomans.

Edi: Quite true.

Jack: And the Turks just punched NATO in the nose when it announced it was going to buy a Chinese made missile defense system. Strange for a country seeking to lock in long-term security to be pivoting away from its two year old pivot toward the United States.

Chris: Yeah, all those pivots are starting to look like whirling dervishes

Andrew: What I want to know is, "In Turkey, can Islam and democracy coexist?"

Tim: Sure, fanaticism, radicalism, western-style democracy and military intervention can all co exist. The Americans have done it for years.

Edi: Ahem.

Graham: But don't the Kemalists see their secularist legacy under threat?

Andy: Erdogan is playing the Great Game, "He's giving a little more economic freedom; and taking away a lot more religious and political freedom; and hoping nobody will notice --- or say anything if they do." Give 'em a shopping center on one hand, take away a park on the other. Build thousands of new mosques. Stop building schools. It's a brilliant plan, as long as it works.

Brad: Isn't the whole area a tinderbox? It's just waiting to explode.

Nathan: Yeah, first the Turks invite NATO to send batteries of Patriot missiles to their southern border to protect them against missiles coming from Syria or Iraq. Then they announce they're going to buy a Chinese SAM system. Then they find out the Chinese system won't inter-face with the NATO system, so they decide to extend the bidding process. Oh, and they invite NATO to keep its missiles in Turkey for another year. In the meantime Meanwhile, the largest NATO-USA-Turkey war games in years has been going on off the Syrian coastline with not a bit of western media coverage.

Ernie: I read that Israel has moved one of its nuclear armed Dolphin missile subs out of the Mediterranean to the Red Sea/Persian Gulf/Arabian Sea area; and Iran has moved a sub escorted fleet to India and Sri Lanka on a "friendly" visit. Friendly to who, I wonder?

Paul: Remember those 900 Abrams tanks the USA gave Turkey when they pulled out of Germany? Well, they're getting old. Turkey needs new tanks, but they want to build them themselves. Of course they don't have the high-tech skills to build them but they plan to beg,

borrow, steal or buy (as a last resort) needed technologies from other Powers and assemble them all into a domestic tank called the Altay. The only catch is the president of the lead contractor is currently having a very public feud with Erdogan. That's the same Erdogan who just cancelled a contract with another company he's feuding with. And there goes Turkey's new navy corvette down the drain.

Melinda: Well, at least some things in Turkey aren't changing. The Turks and Australians are in a row over the number of Australian tourists that will be allowed to attend next year's centenary of the Gallipoli landing ceremonies. This all came about because an Australian politician called on the Government to reaffirm a 1997 motion condemning the genocide against the Armenians by the Ottomans from 1915-1922. The Turks got mad and cut the number of tourists (for safety reasons) that would be allowed into Turkey for ANZAC Day celebrations next year.

Jack: But there is a bit of good news. The Marmaray project is on its way. The first major part of the project, a \$4.5 billion, 8.5 mile rail tunnel 200 feet below the Bosphorus is open, amid debate over safety issues, but open just the same. It took ten years, but they gone it done. Next up, a new major airport to rival the one Dubai is building; and a canal that will divert traffic between the Aegean and Black Sea behind Istanbul, entirely bypassing the city.

Melinda: Since it is Thanksgiving; did anybody hear anything about The Butterballs Affair in Turkey? Rush Limbaugh was talking about it the other day but every time it got interesting my car radio would go into its static mode on me.

Deathly silence.

Heath: I know, I know! The Turkish armed forces don't need a big conscripted army any more so they are cutting the time draftees serve. Apparently young men in Turkey who regard the military as an easy career are upset, and in protest dozens of them have committed acts of self-castration. That's why they call it The Butterballs Affair.

Melinda: Oh. Well, look at the bright side of it. If they can't make it in the military they can always become castrati singers.

Edi: And on that happy, high note we'll bring this special Thanksgiving report from Chateau Peericelli in beautiful Livingston, California to an end. Happy Thanksgiving!

All: GOOBLE, GOBBLE!

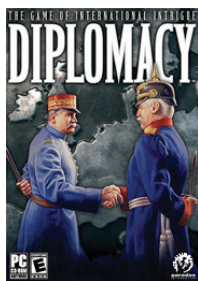
(Re)visiting Diplomacy for PC

Joshua Danker-Dake

There have been, to the best of my knowledge, three mainstream releases of a *Diplomacy* computer game. The most recent was 2005's *Diplomacy: The Game of International Intrigue* by Atari and Paradox Interactive. The former needs no introduction; the latter is perhaps best known for the comedy action game *Magicka*.

This game's release in October 2005 went unheralded in the pages of *Diplomacy World* (at least according to the several minutes I spent perusing the archive), which is understandable given that *Diplomacy World* was on hiatus in 2006.

I've had the game for a couple of years but hadn't played it much, but, seeing as how the game still runs on my computer (Windows 7) and since you can pick up a copy online for about ten bucks, I thought it might be worth a real look.



Nothing is ever going to replace the seven-player *Diplomacy* experience, of course, but if there were a viable one-player option—if six AIs could create an experience that was remotely in the ballpark—wouldn't that be worth something?

The game got middling reviews when it came out: a 51 on GameSpot, a 50 on IGN, an aggregate 58 on Metacritic, and an aggregate 64.26 on GameRankings. That's not promising. But GamingTrend gave it a 90, and PC Gamer said, "Buy Diplomacy for its excellent single-player mode." So let's not be too hasty.

The game does a few things well. First, the board looks good. Everything is clearly marked, the game will tint the spaces the color of the last power to occupy them, and there's a nice little rippling water effect. The arrows that show movement and support orders are also clear (although the support-to-hold orders are a little confusing, as they look like movement orders). The only visual hitch is that it can be hard to make out the black-on-black German units in German territories. The background music fits the game well, although it's the same music, all the time. The game also includes the fleet-in-Rome variant, plus the option to set up whatever scenario you want on the board.

You can get through a single-player game in 60–90 minutes. Even then, you're slowed only by the game's plodding adjudication, which can't be accelerated or condensed in any way. It can get wearisome, but it's generally tolerable.

Most of the criticism of the game centers on the poor multiplayer design, the sound effects, the confusing interface, and the tactical limitations of the AI as concerns alliances. We'll look at each of these complaints.

I don't want to spend much time on the multiplayer because with no voice chat support and no play-by-email support, this game is thoroughly obsolete. You can manage a seven-player local game (in the "sandbox" mode), but that's about it. This is 2014; if you're looking for PC-based multiplayer *Diplomacy*, there are countless better options, and if you just *have* to have a real-time online experience, if nothing else, you and your friends can always get yourselves an adjudicator program and Skype.



The sound effects are astoundingly bad. During the move reveal, there are various effects that indicate an attack, a support, etc.—these are fine, if not particularly intuitive. It's the responses of the other powers that are hilariously terrible. When moves are revealed, the other powers' avatars indicate their feelings via a mindboggling sequence of grunting and throat clearing. You can turn the sound off with no great loss of experience, or you can turn the avatars off entirely.

The interface is unintuitive and more complicated than it needs to be. Anyone of reasonable intelligence can learn it quickly enough, although that doesn't excuse it by any means. There's not, alas, the option to type in orders; you have to click and drag your pieces, whereupon the game will provide you with a list of legal orders for them (you can't issue illegal orders).

Yet all of these flaws are forgivable—at least in my book—if the AI will give us a decent game. To be fair, let's evaluate the AI's performance at the two main aspects of the game, diplomacy and tactics, as separately as we can.

First, diplomacy and negotiations. You would expect that this would be where the game would fall short, and to some extent, it does. Obviously, you can't discuss long-range plans with an AI in any degree of detail, but the negotiation system covers the basics. You can propose non-aggression pacts and alliances, including offensive alliances against specific countries. You have the option to propose "permanent" pacts and alliances on top of these, although there doesn't seem to be any real difference in the AI's propensity to stab you (which is quite high—on any difficulty, the AI tends to be mighty quick to turn on you). There are various personality types programmed for the AI, too, which you can select when you start a game, but there doesn't seem to be much practical difference between them. In short, this aspect of the AI is problematic, but it's not a deal-breaker on its own.

Now then: tactics. Given the obscenely high levels at which machines can play chess and other strategy games these days, you'd expect the game's tactical AI to be pretty solid, right? That even if the game didn't have a good system for negotiation and the computer players were short-sighted about keeping their deals, they'd make up for it to some extent through their ordering—maneuvering, positioning, giving and cutting support, and so forth. You'd expect this to be the game's strong point, right?

You certainly wouldn't expect an AI power to cycle its units around its home centers like they were doing training exercises. You wouldn't expect AI powers to not make diligent efforts to retake their captured home centers or to regularly vacate enemy supply centers in the fall that they otherwise would have captured. You wouldn't expect to see four or five powers lose home centers in 1901 in the same game. And you certainly wouldn't expect to see Turkey in St. Petersburg in 1902.

But you get all of this—and more—on the game's hardest difficulty. It's not unlike watching six blind squirrels looking for nuts. Here's the bottom line: any reasonably competent Diplomacy player ought to be able to, ten out of ten times on the game's hardest difficulty with any power, *win a solo victory without ever communicating with any of the other players*. Countries that by nature rely on negotiations to make it in the world, countries that traditionally have a lot of enemies—Germany, Austria, Italy, Russia—it doesn't matter. Finding ways to lose will be your greatest challenge.



Imagine the caliber of opponent you'd have to play against to win ten out of ten gunboat games. This game is worse, because even if you don't talk to anybody, they're still talking to each other. Not that they leave you alone; typically, all your neighbors will be hostile. No, they're just so brutally, mind-bogglingly incompetent that they just can't do any better. If you could teach six brain-damaged monkeys all of the rules to Diplomacy, you might have a similar playing experience: move all your pieces, and if they just happen to end up in somebody else's supply center in a fall turn, swell. You'll see the same futile orders input over and over and over. You'll see units move in the spring, then move back to where they started in the fall. You'll see powers vacate newly acquired centers with enemies adjacent. It's not only that there's no sense of tactics; there doesn't seem to be any sense of objectives, either. Frankly, it's kind of embarrassing.

Whether they're good, bad, or middling, you won't see this point on the tactical AI in many of the reviews that came out when this game was released, which suggests that first, most computer game reviewers aren't serious *Diplomacy* players, and second, probably this game's developers weren't either.

In short, the tactical AI is a game-breaking, catastrophic failure. It renders every other flaw and criticism of this game irrelevant, because we're not really talking about *Diplomacy* anymore, are we? One of the core elements of the *Diplomacy* game, and one that makes it so enduringly fascinating, is that it's designed so that you cannot win on your own. Get rid of that, and what have you got? A *Diplomacy*-flavored joke that you can't really even use as a teaching tool.

So then, on a scale of one to ten, Paradox's broken *Diplomacy* game is pretty much the worst thing ever. I played it so you don't have to (you're welcome). Thank God for the DAIDE project.

On a non-Diplomacy note, If you'd like to read about Joshua's new book "The Spare Room and Other Stories" you can see it on Amazon [here](#) or just do a search at your favorite retailer.

Fog of War "Radio Tower" Variant

by David St John

I accidentally re-invented The Fog of War Diplomacy (rd22) variant published by Phil Reynolds in 1989 (which can be found here:

<http://www.variantbank.org/results/rules/f/fogofwar.htm>).

I would like to share my slightly different take on the variant with the community, and openly solicit signups for a postal game.

The basic concept behind Fog of War is that foreign troops and their movements should be hidden unless the foreign troops are 'visible' to your units or supply centers. My interest in this idea was piqued by my anticipation of how the changes might affect negotiation, strategy, and tactics. I would expect a huge increase in reliance on information sharing among players to determine the state of affairs on other parts of the board. With this I see much wider possibilities for cooperation, deception, and backstabbing - everyone's favorite part of the Diplomacy game!



I wrote my set of rules and an example game mostly from scratch and posted them [here](http://tinyurl.com/n3y1k9b): <http://tinyurl.com/n3y1k9b>. I tried to make the setup as

accurate as possible to simulate the presence of surveillance equipment in any supply center you own or any province occupied by one of your units whose range is limited to the adjacent provinces. Hence the name I would like to use, 'Radio Tower'. Even though it is just a slight variant on the Fog of War variant, I think the distinct name is warranted.

The most salient differences between Radio Tower and the posted Fog of War rules are:

- Fleets can see provinces to which they could not move, including landlocked provinces, and likewise armies can see fleets in adjacent sea spaces, since their 'radio towers' are active within the province regardless of potential movement.
- Supply centers you own also count as 'Radio Towers', i.e. the same original rules that apply to your units also apply to the supply centers you own even when they're vacant. Try not to think about what happens to the poor defenseless radio tower operators when their supply center is captured and transmissions end.
- Orders given to visible foreign units are partially revealed, the extent to which depending on whether or not the destination provinces their orders affect are visible. Standoffs and related support actions are partially revealed in provinces that are adjacent to your units or supply centers, the extent to which similarly depending on if the related source province(s) are visible.

The long and short is that this should be an amazing fun time to the greatest extent writing letters and receiving results every six weeks can possibly be, and I am both willing and able to run the game. Signups, questions, comments, complaints, or anything else can be directed to:

David St John (or "Radio Tower")
P.O. Box 47661
Chicago, IL 60647
arthurdent6@gmail.com

In my crazed imagination, Radio Tower is going to go down in Diplomacy history as one of the radest variant zines that ever zined. This assumes people will actually sign up for it, the soundness of which assumption will soon be tested I suppose.

Diplomacy World Demo Game

“Thanks for the Roses” – 2013B

The Players:

Austria: Christopher Martin
England: Frank Sudlow
France: Gregory Alexopoulos
Germany: Michael Sims
Italy: Timothy Crosby
Russia: Peter Yeargin
Turkey: Jonathan Powles

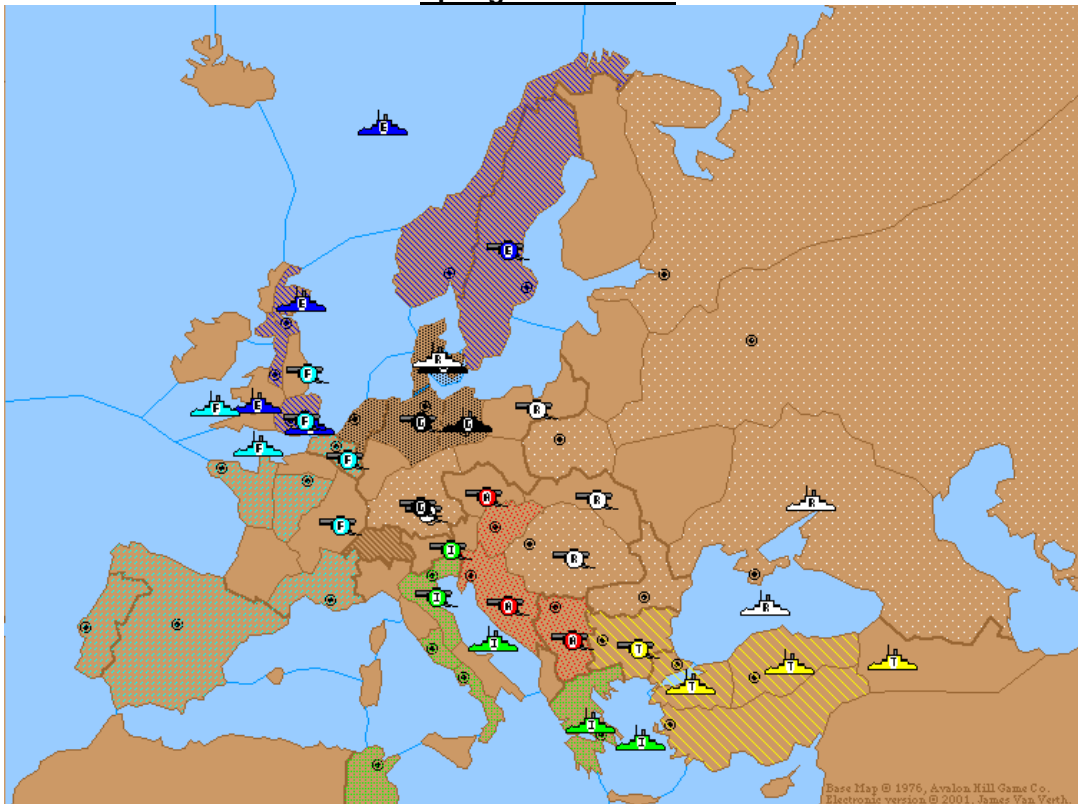
The Commentators:

Jim Burgess (**BOLD**)
 Rick Desper (Normal Font)
 Jack McHugh (Comic Sans MS)

The GM:

Douglas Kent

Spring 1905 Results



A lot of action...must be Act II.

Austria: A Bohemia - Vienna (*Bounce*), A Serbia - Budapest (*Fails*), A Trieste Supports A Serbia - Budapest (*Cut*).

England: F Liverpool – Wales, ~~F London – Yorkshire~~ (*Dislodged*, retreat to North Sea or OTB),
 F North Sea – Edinburgh, F Norway - Norwegian Sea, A Sweden Supports F Skagerrak - Denmark.

France: A Belgium Supports A Burgundy, A Burgundy Supports A Ruhr – Munich,
 F English Channel Supports A Wales – London, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - Irish Sea, A Wales – London,
 A Yorkshire Supports A Wales - London.

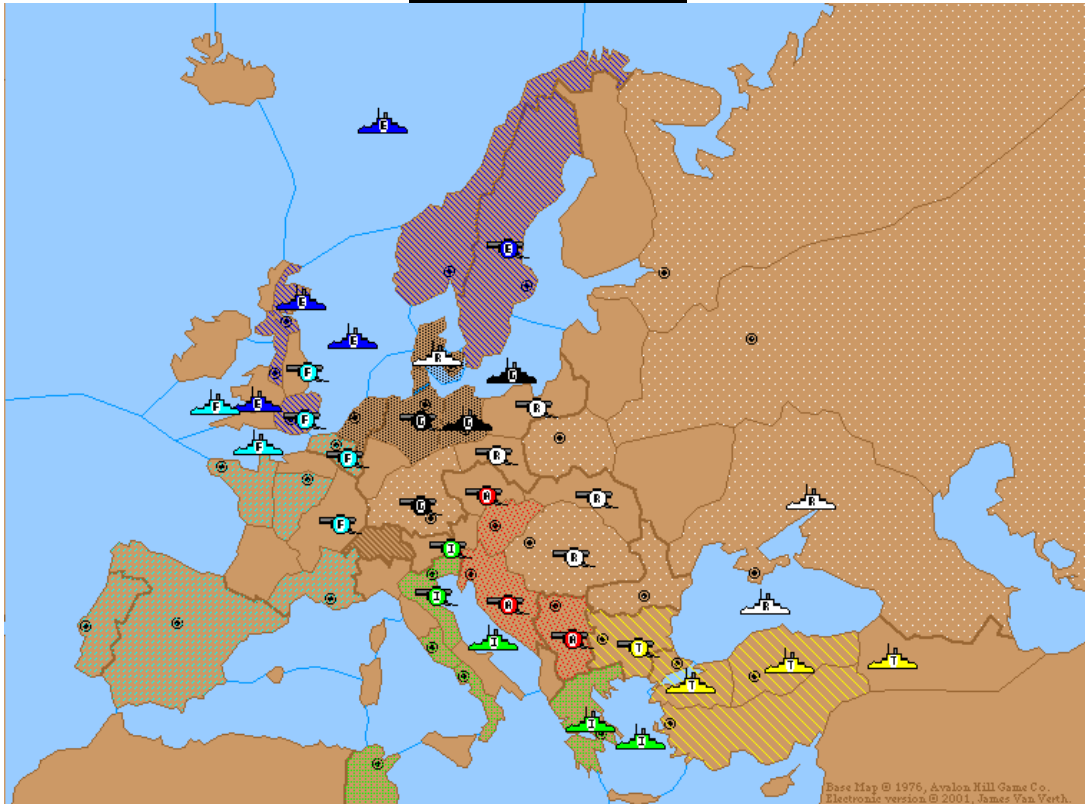
Germany: F Berlin Hold, ~~F Denmark Hold~~ (*Dislodged*, retreat to Baltic Sea or North Sea or Helgoland Bight or OTB),
 A Kiel Supports F Berlin, A Ruhr - Munich.

Italy: F Aegean Sea Convoys A Constantinople – Bulgaria, F Greece Supports A Constantinople – Bulgaria,
 F Ionian Sea - Adriatic Sea, A Tyrolia - Bohemia (*Fails*), A Venice - Trieste (*Fails*).

Russia: F Black Sea Supports F Bulgaria(sc) (*Ordered to Move*), A Budapest - Vienna (*Bounce*),
~~A Munich Supports A Prussia – Berlin~~ (*Dislodged*, retreat to Silesia), A Prussia - Berlin (*Fails*), A Rumania – Galicia,
 F Sevastopol Supports F Black Sea, F Skagerrak - Denmark.

Turkey: F Ankara Supports F Armenia, F Armenia Hold, F Bulgaria(sc) – Constantinople,
 A Constantinople – Bulgaria (via convoy).

Summer 1905 Results



I think three retreats is the most we'd had so far.

Austria: Has A Bohemia, A Serbia, A Trieste.

England: Retreat F London - North Sea.. Has F Edinburgh, F North Sea, F Norwegian Sea, A Sweden, F Wales.

France: Has A Belgium, A Burgundy, F English Channel, F Irish Sea, A London, A Yorkshire.

Germany: Retreat F Denmark - Baltic Sea.. Has F Baltic Sea, F Berlin, A Kiel, A Munich.

Italy: Has F Adriatic Sea, F Aegean Sea, F Greece, A Tyrolia, A Venice.

Russia: Retreat A Munich - Silesia.. Has F Black Sea, A Budapest, F Denmark, A Galicia, A Prussia, F Sevastopol, A Silesia.

Turkey: Has F Ankara, F Armenia, A Bulgaria, F Constantinople.

Spring and Summer 1905 Commentary:

Jim Burgess (**BOLD**)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Jack McHugh (Comic Sans MS)

Jumping right in..

Austria did about as well as he could hope to with that Spring move. He didn't lose any SCs and he didn't have any units popped. I doubt he'll fare as well in the Fall. Having said that, there's a chance he could retake Budapest if he puts his mind to it.

Italy had a very good move (for a change). But there is still much to be done here. He's in position to take Trieste unless somehow Russia and Austria cooperate (it could happen, but this Spring moves don't signal anything like that). And the cooperation with Turkey bodes well. Of course the issue raised here is how he can sell the convoy to Russia. That move might just make it much easier for A & R to patch things up.

Turkey has managed to get a third fleet on the Black Sea. And with the Russian moves, he doesn't have to worry about any counter-attack on Bulgaria (at least, not from Russia). If Italy is content to leave him alone for the time being, Turkey will retake the Black Sea on the coming move. Of course, such a move would leave both Bulgaria and Smyrna under-defended.

The Russian position is in grave danger of collapsing. He has traded Munich for Denmark, but his English ally is falling apart. And it's unclear if he has any friends in the South. It'll be hard enough for him to hold onto Budapest and Rumania.

England, as I said, is collapsing. He had to pick the perfect defense to hold onto London (cutting the supports of Eng and Yor). He's fortunate that the German allowed him to retreat to the North Sea. But he's lost London and he's about to lose Liverpool.

Germany trades Denmark for Munich, which is a good deal for him. Now if only he could somehow mend the fences with Russia. I don't know what has transpired behind the scenes, but this war is going to kill both of them in the near-to mid-term if they keep it up.

France, naturally, is doing the best here. He'll get two builds this year and nobody can stop that. Supporting the German against Russia is the right move. He'll probably want to build two fleets. England might be able to hold onto Edinburgh for another year, but this is a win for France.

First the retreats: meh, they were mostly as expected. England continues his relocation to Scandinavia, Germany continues his shift to the north and east and Russia plugs the hole in his line to keep the pressure on Germany.

I agree, nothing very exciting in the retreats, just as expected.

As for the moves, in the west, I agree with most of Rick said as it continues to be "Springtime for France" and winter for England and Germany. England is moving England back to the continent in Nwy/Swe and Germany is lagging around Kie/Den/Hol.

I think Germany has the better prospects since he is on the stalemate line but England is kind of off the beaten track once he loses his Lvp/Lon.

Generally, as soon as you remove yourself from your home country, you become marginalized, a playmaker rather than a player. This can still be a VERY important part of a game, but it is quite rare to be able to mount retaking one's country and starting to get builds again once lost. France, as I've said all along, is one of the most relentlessly difficult tacticians I've ever seen. He is amazing me yet again.

In the east, I strongly disagree with what Rick said about Russia being in danger of collapse. Yes he's under attack on both flanks but the northern attack is led by a collapsing England--England may be able to take Scandinavia but at the cost of his home centers.

I think there are options, it is not yet clear what happens to Russia, and that is usually the case for Russia, until the collapse happens. I see both points of view, slightly more likely that events around the board save Russia from that collapse.

The southern attack is being led by the Turkish Navy, which means once Turkey takes Sev he can't go any farther north. I only see Russia at risk for losing Rum in addition to Sev.

I agree with this too, Turkey is not going to be the big gainer, should Russia collapse.

In fact a Turkish naval occupation of Sev can be the basis of a beautiful Russo-Turkish alliance. Russia can scuttle the Black Sea fleet and rebuild it where it needs an extra unit elsewhere and both sides are no longer troubled by possible stabs from the other.

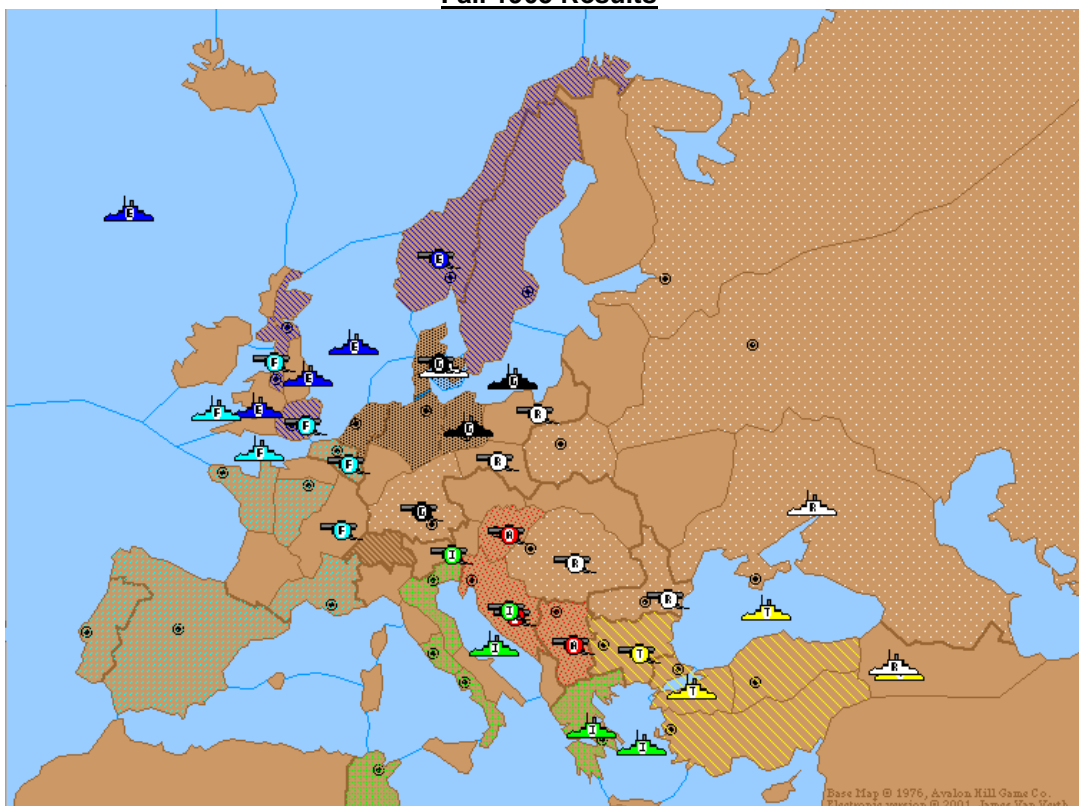
This doesn't mean Russia's in the clear but he's far from collapsing. What this does mean is Russia's growth in central Europe will be offset by his losses on his flanks. What Russia needs to do is establish some spheres of influence with other powers like Germany/France or Turkey to limit his losses and free up his units to pick up dots instead of having to shore up his current holdings.

I think that this Russian position could go in a lot of directions, but he's going to need to scramble to survive. So much at this point depends on his diplomacy. If he could actually patch things up with Turkey that would be terrific, even if it means the loss of Sev. But my current read is that we have I/T and also F/G. If that's the case and it lasts, Russia's in trouble. His ally, England, is in deep trouble. But of course alliances can change quickly.

I agree, we've seen fluid alliances so far, and I expect to continue to see them. Germany will not turn out well to keep working with France and Italy will not fare well with Turkey, so I don't expect those arrangements to last very long.

Turkey and Italy are both doing better but neither is growing fast enough given the fact that France is not being bothered by anyone. Italy and Turkey need to get some fleets deployed on the western side of the Ionian before France closes the stalemate line.

Fall 1905 Results



Three MORE retreats!

Austria: A Bohemia – Vienna, A Serbia Supports A Trieste (*Cut*), A Trieste Supports A Bohemia – Vienna (*Dislodged*, retreat to Albania or OTB).

England: F Edinburgh – Yorkshire, F North Sea Supports F Edinburgh – Yorkshire, F Norwegian Sea - North Atlantic Ocean, A Sweden – Norway, F Wales - Liverpool (*Fails*).

France: A Belgium Hold, A Burgundy Supports A Munich, F English Channel Supports A London, F Irish Sea Supports A Yorkshire – Liverpool, A London Hold, A Yorkshire - Liverpool.

Germany: F Baltic Sea Supports A Kiel – Denmark, F Berlin Supports A Munich (*Fails*), A Kiel – Denmark, A Munich Supports F Berlin.

Italy: F Adriatic Sea Supports A Venice – Trieste, F Aegean Sea Supports F Greece, F Greece Supports A Bulgaria (*Ordered to Move*), A Tyrolia Supports A Venice – Trieste, A Venice - Trieste.

Russia: F Black Sea – Armenia, A Budapest Supports A Trieste, F Denmark – Kiel (*Dislodged*, retreat to Skagerrak or Sweden or Helgoland Bight or OTB), A Galicia – Rumania, A Prussia - Berlin (*Fails*), F Sevastopol Supports F Black Sea – Armenia, A Silesia Supports A Prussia - Berlin.

Turkey: F Ankara - Black Sea, F Armenia Supports F Ankara – Black Sea (*Dislodged*, retreat to Ankara or OTB), A Bulgaria - Serbia (*Fails*), F Constantinople Supports F Ankara - Black Sea.

Autumn 1905 Results

Austria: Retreat A Trieste - Albania.. Has A Albania, A Serbia, A Vienna.

England: Has F North Atlantic Ocean, F North Sea, A Norway, F Wales, F Yorkshire.

France: Has A Belgium, A Burgundy, F English Channel, F Irish Sea, A Liverpool, A London.

Germany: Has F Baltic Sea, F Berlin, A Denmark, A Munich.

Italy: Has F Adriatic Sea, F Aegean Sea, F Greece, A Trieste, A Tyrolia.

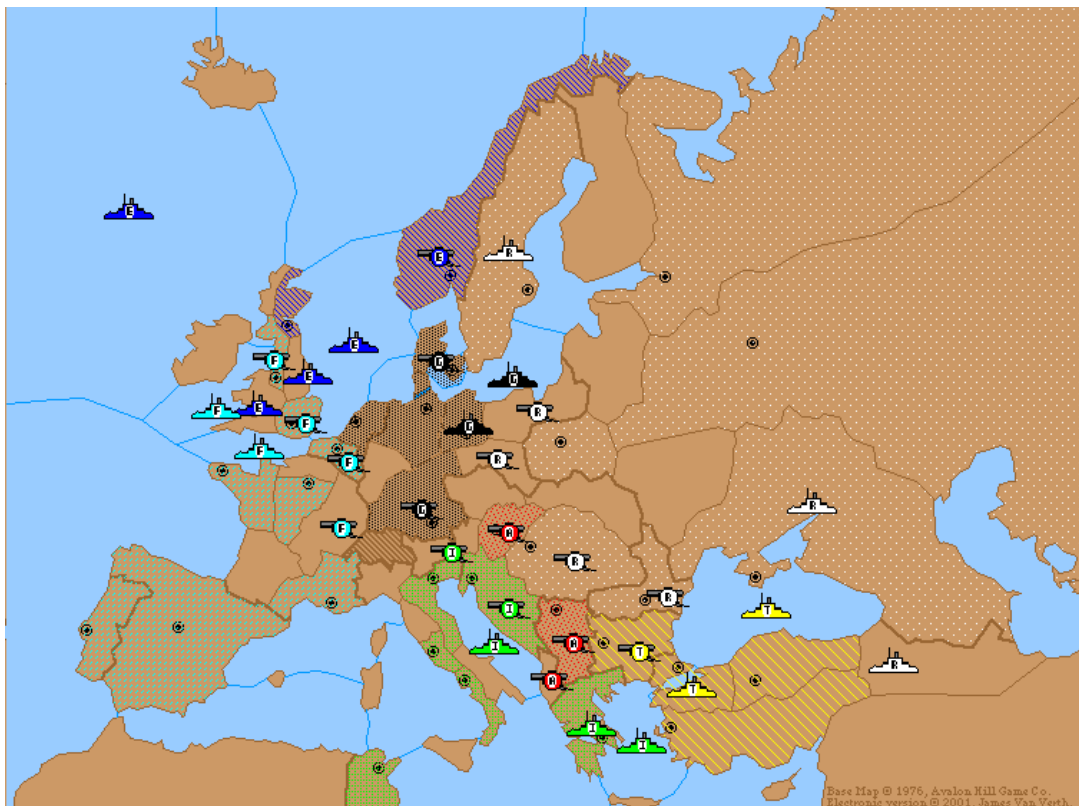
Russia: Retreat F Denmark - Sweden.. Has F Armenia, A Budapest, A Prussia, A Rumania, F Sevastopol, A Silesia, F Sweden.

Turkey: Disband F Armenia.. Has Has F Black Sea, A Bulgaria, F Constantinople.

Supply Center Chart

Austria: Serbia, Vienna=2, Remove 1

England: Edinburgh, Norway=2, Remove 3
 France: Belgium, Brest, Liverpool, London, Marseilles, Paris, Portugal, Spain=8, Build 2
 Germany: Berlin, Denmark, Holland, Kiel, Munich=5, Build 1
 Italy: Greece, Naples, Rome, Trieste, Tunis, Venice=6, Build 1
 Russia: Budapest, Moscow, Rumania, Sevastopol, St Petersburg, Sweden, Warsaw=7, Even
 Turkey: Ankara, Bulgaria, Constantinople, Smyrna=4, Build 1



Fall and Autumn 1905 Commentary:

Jim Burgess (**BOLD**)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Jack McHugh (Comic Sans MS)

OK, things look grim for two of our players.

While this is very true, Austria's difficulties have been playing out for some seasons now, with some relentlessness. Chris' issue has been about being a very good player who is surrounded by people who are very good players and fear Chris more than they fear each other. Russia has seemed most emphatic about this, possibly to his future detriment. I'll come back to this in a minute, but Chris should have quite a lot to say about what happens next between Italy/Turkey/Russia, none of whom really were working together except to take Chris down.

England's downfall, on the other hand, was the hammer from France that came with the incredible tactical skill that is Gregory's hallmark. This Fall was the natural outcome of what came before, but it was much more of a surprise. Frank needed to pull back that single critical season before he did.

In the East, Italy finally takes Trieste. Austria is down to two SCs, and they don't border each other. Italy is still in the Aegean, and that's weird. Makes it hard to argue that he's interested in working with Turkey very much.

Right, it seems at the moment now that IRT will bang heads over Chris' corpse.

Russia also doesn't look that interested in working with Turkey. Those two are still bickering over the Black Sea. Meanwhile, Russia loses Denmark. But he retreats to Sweden to keep his force level even. Sorry, England.

It is worth noting, as Russia has no friends, that England can walk into the Russian heartland as revenge for that if he keeps the Norway army. If it were me, I'd probably do that. Keeping North Sea and Norway creates his most interesting choices, and also should make EVERYONE worried about France.

England's outgunned, that's true, but the tactics here are not thrilling. A supported move to Yorkshire? Well, he has set up a counter-attack on London. But he's losing three forces. France will mop this up quickly.

Correct, that's why I think the abandonment strategy is the right one, since Russia wasn't willing to take the hit for him.

France is definitely in the best position for the midgame. He's getting two builds, England is essentially dead, Italy is very friendly, and Russia and Germany aren't cooperating.

And you forgot to add that IRT are going to bicker for quite some time now.

One would think that some kind of counter-alliance would rise in the East sometime soon.

Or, one would think not.....

crickets

Let's do some summaries on the choices for the Winter Adjustments and where each country has options and where they might go.

Austria: Chris loses one as we've been noting. And Rick emphasizes that the two remaining centers are separated. But it also is true that IRT are not friendly with each other. I think we can cross Russia off Chris' list, but alliances with Italy or Turkey are possible. I think allying with Turkey is most likely and a good option. The tactical choices are complex and interesting for which units Austria keeps and which one Turkey builds if they coordinate. If it were me, I'd propose keeping the two southern units and perhaps Chris could even keep Vienna for one more year as Russia and Italy vie for it unsuccessfully.

My problem with keeping A Alb is that neither Greece nor Trieste is particularly vulnerable to a recapture. But Budapest might be, esp. if Chris works with the Turk. I would keep the armies on the dot and go after Budapest.

Of course if he does have some deal with the Turk in place, he could keep the two Southern armies and take Greece.

England: As stated before, I'd keep the two eastern units now. And I might even get a deal from France to keep Edinburgh for a bit. This puts Mike Sims and Germany in great danger. The other option, especially if somehow Russia and Germany make up to try to stop France, is to work with them, in which case Germany badly needs two of your fleets.

England can stay in the game for a LONG time as a minor power and needs to ramp up the Diplomacy.

I would do the same, but this might depend on who has annoyed England the most. Tactically the home dots are lost and better forgotten.

France: As noted, Gregory is in great position going to the midgame. As long as the situation remains as it is in the East, why not turn full force on Germany now? Mike is not in good positions and France probably can pick up two more centers in the next game year, making Gregory the first player to double-digit centers. I would probably build an army and a fleet and leave Marseilles open, but surely there are choices. Keep the eye on Gregory's tactical choices.

Yes. The peaceful front with Italy is great for France. Build A Par and F Bre and go after Germany next.

Germany: Some aggressive and delicate Diplomacy is called for now. Germany's one build likely needs to be an army to oppose France, but he's still in trouble. Is there some remote chance of holding France off, maybe even getting Gregory to attack Italy instead? Possibly.

It's probably too late for Germany. Anything other than an immediate cease fire + active alliance with Russia means that he's doomed.

Italy: You were all thinking F Naples is obvious, right? Admit it. DEAD wrong, if Italy wants strength into the midgame it HAS to be Army Venice. Italy wins with Armies and loses with Fleets, this is the time to ramp up the ratio toward armies. Does this mean that attacking Turkey is not going to happen right now? Yes, but that is a dead end for Italy. I keep wondering if Edi Birsan regrets making the Lepanto so popular, it really is not the way to Italian success.

Moreover, right now, with the way the board is going, is a perfect time to agree to A Venice with Jonathan, while Turkey ALSO builds an army. If Italy and Turkey also get the two Austrians on board, well... there is going to be some hitting on Russia.

I like the army build. Italy needs to go after Vie, Bud, and perhaps Serbia and get them quickly. Either that or start working openly with Russia to kill Austria, contain Turkey, and prevent the French solo. Yeah, right.

Russia: No builds, no choices for Russia, but Russia REALLY cares what everyone else does, with the possible exception of the exact allocation for France. Russia could have his only friend in France, so being careful is paramount. We won't learn

anything about Russia in Winter except possibly who is going to be attacking.

I have no clue what Peter is up to here.

Turkey: Jonathan has maneuvered himself back into this game. This build partly will choose the next direction. Working with Italy is possible, butting heads is still possible, but Turkey must be very, very pleased with his options. Yet, France must be stopped. By whom? Well, that's part of the challenge for Turkey, how to stop France from the rear. Part of that must be not relying on beating Italy before France decided to descend into the Mediterranean.

I'm guessing he'll build A Ank and try to work with Italy. Or Russia. In either A Ank is the force he needs. F Smy is pretty much useless.

Fascinating Build season that we will want to comment on next....

This game is rapidly becoming an overwhelming French victory.

Three of the four German units are deployed against Russia who has zero builds and none against France who has two builds.

Italy still has all of his units committed against Austria and, possibly Turkey, although I suspect this won't happen as Turkey simply doesn't have enough dots to be a good enough target. Italy needs to swing back west ASAP before he finds French armies advancing down the boot of Italy and French fleets anchored off his home centers.

England is about to be reduced to one army and one fleet—probably the F Nwg, as it is closest to Edi and can also move on Russia's open centers, as Rick and Jim have pointed out. I don't see England being able to do much damage to Russia unless he gets that A Nwy-StP but then he'll be forced to move F Nwg-Nwy to try and keep Russia out of Nwy. Russia's best hope is to convince England to keep F Nth rather than F Nwg and offer to support Eng into Den while trying to talk England into not taking StP since England cannot build a unit anyway since he will lack an open home center next Winter.

I don't agree that Russia is truly friendless; France is, for all intents and purposes right now, a Russian ally. France's next move is likely to be into the open German centers in the west: Hol and Kie. This will result in the removal of German units which will facilitate Russian movement either to the North to wipe out the remnant of England or to the south to try and pick up some more dots in the Balkans or from Turkey.

I have no idea what Turkey is trying to accomplish but he and Italy need to get their act together as their little party is about to crashed by the French fleet.

As for the builds....its fleets all around and I disagree with Jim-Bob—Italy needs fleets since you know France will build at least one F Mar and, if I were France, F Bre as well. Turkey needs to build fleets to break out of its Eastern Med prison as well as support Italy against France (or take Italian dots while Italy fends off France.)

Winter 1905 Results

Austria: Remove A Albania..Has A Serbia, A Vienna.

England: Remove A Norway, F Wales, F Yorkshire..Has F North Atlantic Ocean, F North Sea.

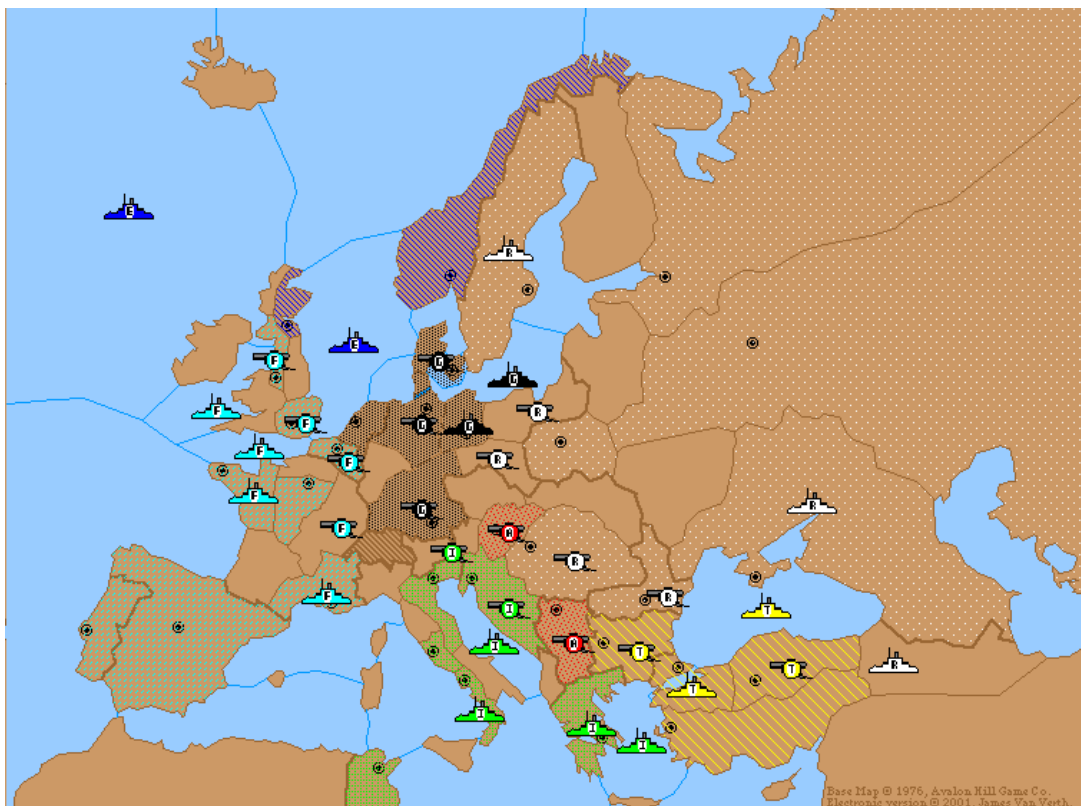
France: Build F Marseilles, F Brest..Has A Belgium, F Brest, A Burgundy, F English Channel, F Irish Sea, A Liverpool, A London, F Marseilles.

Germany: Build A Kiel..Has F Baltic Sea, F Berlin, A Denmark, A Kiel, A Munich.

Italy: Build F Naples..Has F Adriatic Sea, F Aegean Sea, F Greece, F Naples, A Trieste, A Tyrolia.

Russia: Has F Armenia, A Budapest, A Prussia, A Rumania, F Sevastopol, A Silesia, F Sweden.

Turkey: Build A Ankara..Has A Ankara, F Black Sea, A Bulgaria, F Constantinople.



Winter 1905 Commentary:

Jim Burgess (**BOLD**)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Jack McHugh (Comic Sans MS)

Some surprises here....first, that wind you felt was Russia's sigh of relief over England's removal of A Nwy, apparently England still entertains hopes of getting back into the UK. England still might, although ever turn makes that look increasing farfetched, if Italy and Germany decide to work against France someday. At least England is continuing to work against France, now if only had an ally...

The question though about Russia is still whether Russia and France are allied. They "should" be allied, and in particular be working to fend off an IGE alliance against Russia. But that's what's good for France, Russia can agree to facilitate and encourage that IGE, and if that happens, perhaps France can encounter a speed bump or three.

I read the English removals as a decision to keep fighting France, even though it means his death. Germany is clearly more interested in fighting Russia than keeping France in check.

Turkey builds an A Ank to continue its increasing pointless war with Russia...both R/T fiddle as Paris and Rome don't burn...

While I agree about the pointless part, there COULD be Turkey joining that IGE, making it a GET IT alliance (Turkey counts twice for opposing the French ally in Russia and freeing Italy to go the other way). Italy doesn't need a Turkish fleet moving out, Italy has enough fleets, especially since he built the one I suggested he not build...

Like I said just a few minutes ago, the army build in Ankara is flexible in the following sense. It's certainly more useful than F Ank, I think we can all grant that. F Smy would have little hope of accomplishing anything useful, and an army in Ank is more useful than an army in Smy.

If Turkey and Russia want peace (and they should), they should arrange to sink the Russian fleet in Armenia to lower the tension level. Then there could at least be some hope for Turkey to turn around. I think, though, that it's more likely that Turkey feels that Russia is going to be the next target, and that Italy will never have the

freedom to move in force into the corner. The French builds have made that plain.

Italy and France's builds were fairly standard. France needs to finish off England and get ready for its inevitable move to the Med. Italy needs to shore up his western flank.

We'll see if GET IT storms over the parapets this game year or not.

I was behind the idea that neither build a fleet in the Med. Apparently there's less trust here than we thought. With only two armies, Italy is not going inland anytime soon. That is, unless he can stop bickering with Russia

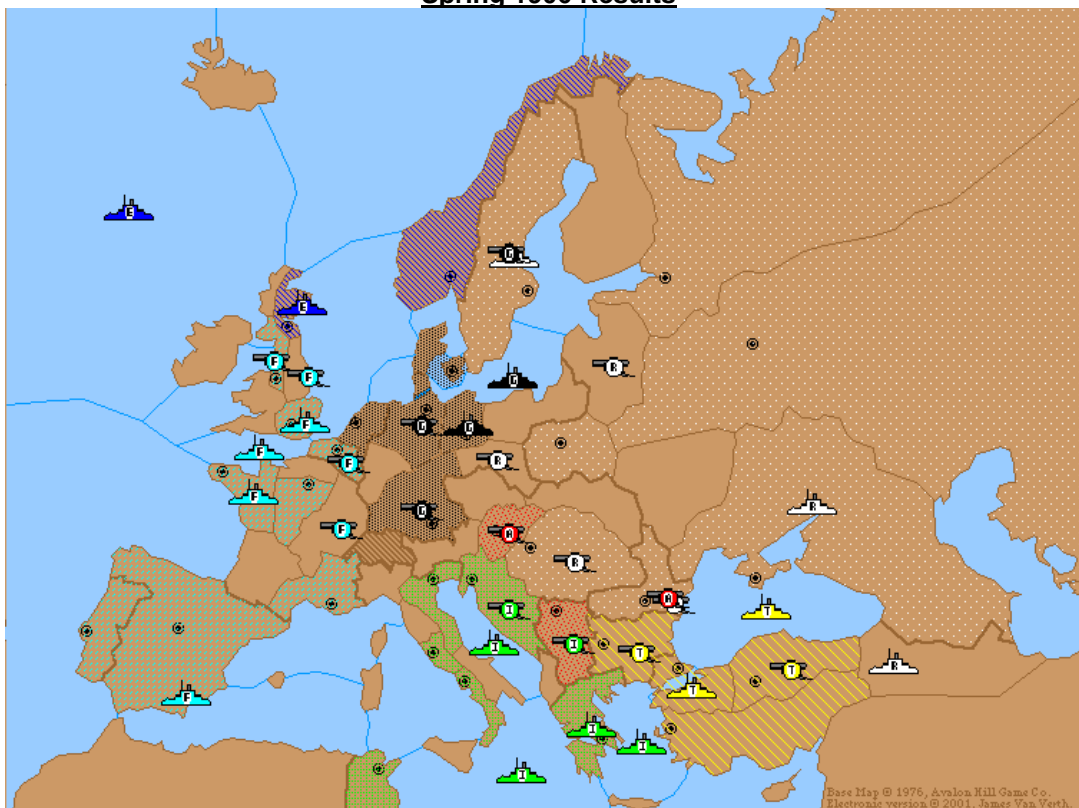
and arrange to divvy up the last two Austrian dots. They both badly need the build.

As for the upcoming Spring turn, I expect to see France continue to move north and west...Italy, Russia and Turkey to clean up Austria and stalemates everywhere else.

At least for interest and commentary, I say "nay", there will be a shake up. But I grant Jack's depressing scenario also is possible.

I would throw in that Germany is about to take Sweden. France looks like he'll be marching on Edi while slowly getting the fleets into position to move into the Med.

Spring 1906 Results



Austria: A Serbia – Rumania, A Vienna - Budapest (*Fails*).

England: F North Atlantic Ocean - Mid-Atlantic Ocean (*Bounce*), F North Sea - Edinburgh.

France: A Belgium - Ruhr (*Bounce*), F Brest - Mid-Atlantic Ocean (*Bounce*), A Burgundy - Ruhr (*Bounce*), F English Channel – London, F Irish Sea - English Channel, A Liverpool Supports A London – Yorkshire, A London – Yorkshire, F Marseilles - Spain(sc).

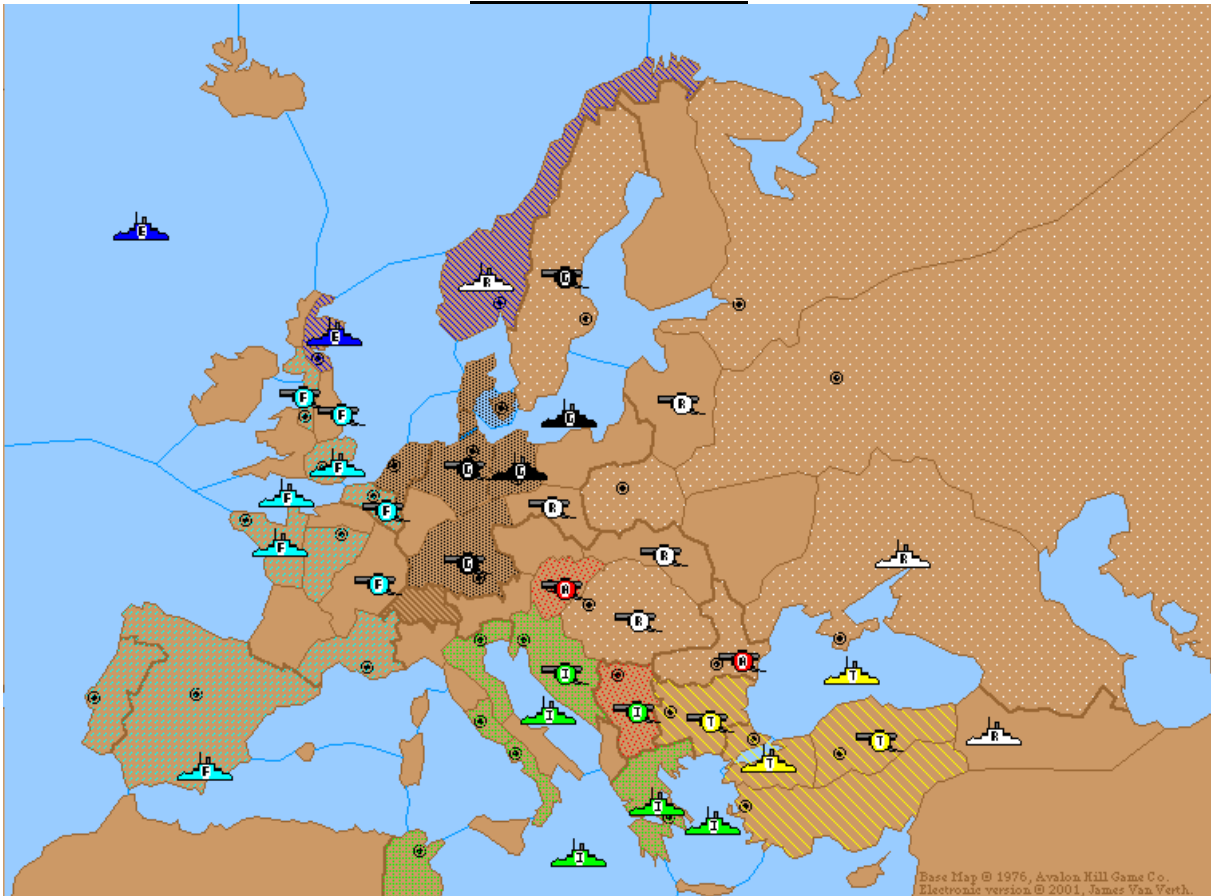
Germany: F Baltic Sea Supports A Denmark – Sweden, F Berlin Hold, A Denmark – Sweden, A Kiel Supports F Berlin, A Munich Supports F Berlin.

Italy: F Adriatic Sea Supports A Tyrolia – Trieste, F Aegean Sea - Smyrna (*Bounce*), F Greece - Aegean Sea (*Fails*), F Naples - Ionian Sea, A Trieste – Serbia, A Tyrolia - Trieste.

Russia: F Armenia - Black Sea (*Fails*), A Budapest Supports A Vienna (*Ordered to Move*), A Prussia – Livonia, A Rumania Supports A Serbia - Bulgaria (*Dislodged*, retreat to Ukraine or Galicia or OTB), F Sevastopol Supports A Rumania (*Cut*), A Silesia - Berlin (*Fails*), F Sweden - Baltic Sea (*Dislodged*, retreat to Norway or Skagerrak or Gulf of Bothnia or Finland or OTB).

Turkey: A Ankara - Smyrna (*Bounce*), F Black Sea - Sevastopol (*Fails*), A Bulgaria Supports A Serbia – Rumania, F Constantinople - Smyrna (*Bounce*).

Summer 1906 Results



Austria: Has A Rumania, A Vienna.

England: Has F Edinburgh, F North Atlantic Ocean.

France: Has A Belgium, F Brest, A Burgundy, F English Channel, A Liverpool, F London, F Spain(sc), A Yorkshire.

Germany: Has F Baltic Sea, F Berlin, A Kiel, A Munich, A Sweden.

Italy: Has F Adriatic Sea, F Aegean Sea, F Greece, F Ionian Sea, A Serbia, A Trieste.

Russia: Retreat A Rumania – Galicia, F Sweden - Norway.. Has F Armenia, A Budapest, A Galicia, A Livonia, F Norway, F Sevastopol, A Silesia.

Turkey: Has A Ankara, F Black Sea, A Bulgaria, F Constantinople.

Spring and Summer 1906 Commentary:

Jim Burgess (**BOLD**)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Jack McHugh (Comic Sans MS)

Well this is exciting!

Austria and Turkey attack Russia!

Italy attacks Austria and Turkey!

Germany attacks Russia!

Were any of these moves a surprise? Not really, well maybe Italy attacking Turkey—Since Italy already has a Tri I would argue that this like announcing

Japan the US were at war after the Battle of Midway, true but very late...

I'll follow Rick's lead and comment below him...

France kills England! (Well, not quite yet...)

Let's go through these developments from least surprising to most.

France kills England! (not yet...)

France has forced control of Yorkshire and has two armies threatening Edinburgh. However, England stay alive simply by ordering NAO - Lvp, which will either cut support or capture Liverpool if France leaves. This only happened because France's moves were incredibly conservative, ordering Eng - Lon and Iri - Eng, as if it would have been a problem if the English had moved to either place. I'd thought France would order Iri S Bre - MAO and Eng - Nth.. Given Gregory's strong tactics in the earlier moves, this is a bit disappointing.

I have very little to add here other than to say that, considering what little help England has gotten from any of its neighbors in either getting dots or in moving on France, I think Frank (England) has done a remarkable job surviving for this long. As for France's conservative attack, given the complete lack of any threats to France anywhere on the board, I'd say that Gregory (France) has no reason to not simply make conservative moves that will succeed. There is no reason for Gregory to take any chances at all.

Germany attacks Russia!

He's taken Sweden, but only one of his forces moved. :(And, as with last move, Russia's retreated to an English center. Russia pulled back to Livonia to prevent the convoy. (A convoy to Livonia could have given Germany an attack on Moscow.)

Considering the fact that, outside of the carcass that is Austria, is the front with the most units facing each other, this is no surprise. However, the limited space to maneuver and the lack of any allies means this is likely to be a long, slow war.

Austria and Turkey attack Russia!

Jim called this possibility, and really it's not a surprise. Russia had bad luck with the tactics - he could have taken the Black Sea but guessed wrong and used F Sev for support (it was cut). The retreat to Galicia is interesting. He could counter-attack Rum or Vie or just use the army to support his force in Budapest. And if there's going to be any cooperation between Russia and Italy, we should see it now.

When were Russia and Turkey ever not at war? As far as I can see this war has been going on since Spring 1901, albeit at a slow simmer, but never really stopping...or starting either. Talk about your stalemate from hell—if there is one—this "war" is it.

Italy attacks Austria and Turkey!

At first I thought Italy's capture of Serbia was coordinated with Austria and Turkey, since Serbia wasn't contested by Austria, Turkey, or Russia. The attack on Smyrna was rather ineffectual, FWIW. But Italy could easily bring another fleet to bear. What I think is more likely, though, is a coordinated attack on Bulgaria.

The disposition of forces in the Balkans is delicious. The number of different types of attacks and alliances is quite something. If Italy works with Russia we can expect one result. If he instead works with Austria, something different. If he works with Turkey, a third line arises. If he just blasts away at everybody, another set of possibilities arises. And then we have to start considering things like "what if Russia thinks he's working with Italy, but Italy thinks he's working with Austria, while Austria thinks he's working with Turkey against Russia..."

Timothy was hoping to get lucky with that move to Smy. I think Timothy knows that if he is serious about taking out Jonathan, then he needs to get a fleet into Eastern Med while remaining in the Aegean, otherwise Italy has no hope as Jonathan is too experienced a player to let Italy take Smy without support. I suspect that's where F Nap-Ion is going to end up.

Austria and England are just about gone, Germany is, in my opinion, in a better position than Turkey as his units can support each other easier and he's on the stalemate line. Turkey has the most precious position as Italy is slowly moving in for the kill but completely undistracted by France. Russia is still spread out but who is there to take advantage of it? No one as far as I can see so while Russia is vulnerable, there is no one to take advantage of that vulnerability.

Jack's power rankings after Summer 1906:

1. France
2. Italy
3. Russia
4. Germany
5. Turkey
6. Austria
7. England

We need Vizzini the Sicilian to enumerate the possibilities.

I think you thought that I was calling these moves surprising. I was just using that as a way to order the

list. I was getting bored with "alphabetical" and "East vs. West".

The only thing surprising about France's attack was that it didn't work very well.

Germany's attack on Russia is unsurprising, though I would have been less surprised by a cessation of hostilities here than on the part of France.

The surprise of "Austria and Turkey attack Russia" was that they actually worked together for a move. I expected to continue to see Turkey and Russia fight. I didn't expect to see the Austrians in Rumania.

I am more surprised to see Italy try to sneak into Smyrna. That may have been an arranged bounce, though. Certainly an attack on Bulgaria would have been more likely to succeed than the unsupported move to Smy.

This is a bit of a mathie thing. If I order people by height, I'm not saying that any of them are tall.

As for power rankings, I would agree with your top two and bottom two, but would put

3. Germany
4. Turkey
5. Russia

in the middle. Russia doesn't seem to have any allies. If he is in fact allied with either Italy or France, that would bump him up.

I am similarly most excited about the continuing battle for the disposition of the Balkans. All four players are capable of switching alliances each season to keep the situation fluid. For those of you that are weak in Balkans tactics, watch all of this very carefully, I can pretty much guarantee that you'll learn something.

Time for one of my periodic commentaries on "levels of the game" (Jim-Bob patent pending). Vizzini the Sicilian has nothing on this group. The simplest levels of the game in Diplomacy are basic lies, but especially when four countries are involved the levels can get quite complex and the players can ramp them up actively to increase uncertainty. Austria could make up with Russia, but tell Italy that he was still working with Turkey, while Turkey tells Russia that Austria is faking that make-up deal with Russia. Italy could then tell Turkey that Austria said he actually was stabbing Turkey with Italy's help. And so on, this can ramp up and up through multiple levels. Most Diplomacy players ruin the complexity of the game by trying to promise away these levels, but not these players, this will be fun to watch.

Going to the other end of the board, I agree with my fellow commentators that Gregory is stepping back to be certain of what he's getting. Why not since he has no real threats? At some point our four way Balkans war participants need to do something about the French growth. We don't see any evidence of it yet. Frank will continue to do his best to keep his feet on the ground, but unfortunately he is likely to be the first one out. He survives one more game year, at least, though. I'm not sure why Gregory didn't move French units to ensure Edinburgh would fall in the fall.... ;-)

Then, I'll give you some power rankings too.... I'm looking a bit more long term in my thinking. Turkey MUST survive since knocking Jonathan out just ensures the French solo.

1. France
2. Italy
3. Turkey
4. Germany
5. Austria
6. Russia
7. England

Fall 1906 Results

Austria: A Rumania - Sevastopol (*Fails*), A Vienna - Budapest (*Dislodged*, retreat to Bohemia or OTB).

England: F Edinburgh Hold, F North Atlantic Ocean - Liverpool (*Fails*).

France: A Belgium Unordered, A Holland - Belgium (So Such Unit), F Brest - Mid-Atlantic Ocean, A Burgundy - Munich (*Bounce*), F English Channel Supports F London - North Sea, A Liverpool Supports A Yorkshire - Edinburgh (*Cut*), F London - North Sea, F Spain(sc) Supports F Brest - Mid-Atlantic Ocean, A Yorkshire - Edinburgh (*Fails*).

Germany: F Baltic Sea - Gulf of Bothnia, F Berlin Hold, A Kiel - Munich (*Bounce*), A Munich - Tyrolia, A Sweden - Norway (*Fails*).

Italy: F Adriatic Sea Supports A Trieste, F Aegean Sea Supports F Greece - Bulgaria(sc), F Greece - Bulgaria(sc), F Ionian Sea Hold, A Serbia Supports F Greece - Bulgaria(sc), A Trieste Supports A Galicia - Vienna.

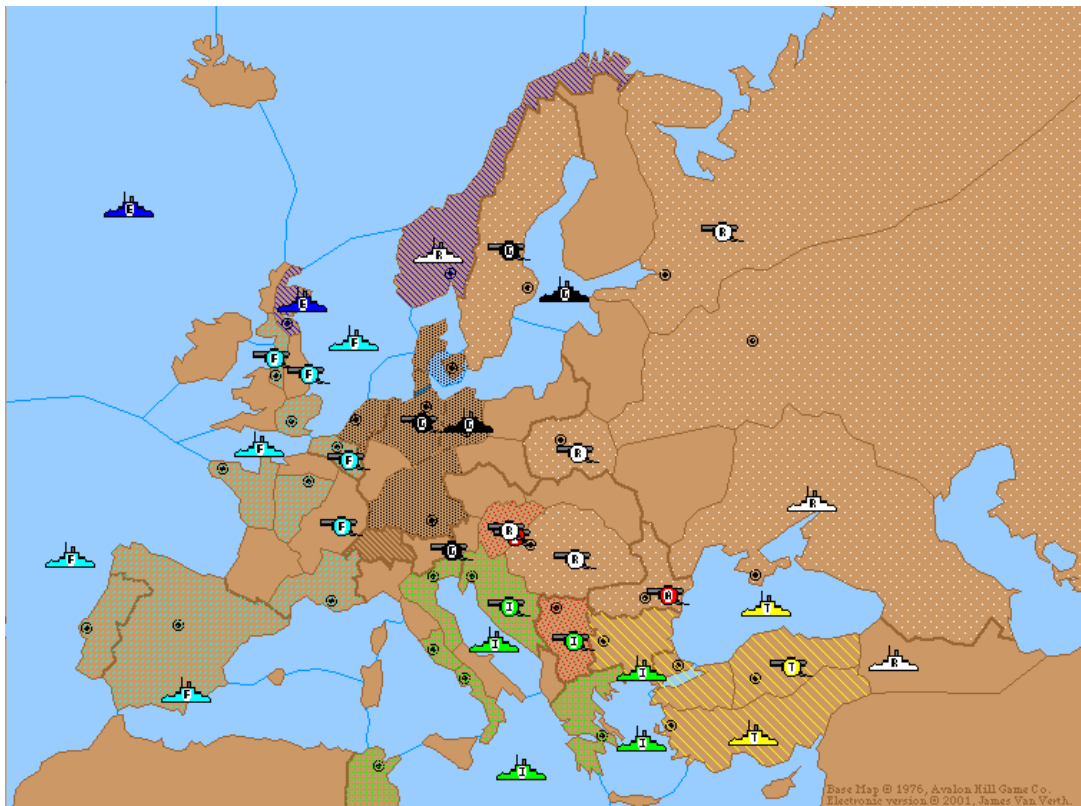
Russia: F Armenia - Black Sea (*Fails*), A Budapest - Rumania (*Bounce*), A Galicia - Vienna, A Livonia - St Petersburg, F Norway - Sweden (*Fails*), F Sevastopol - Rumania (*Bounce*), A Silesia - Warsaw.

Turkey: A Ankara - Constantinople (*Bounce*), F Black Sea Convoys A Rumania - Sevastopol,

~~A Bulgaria—Constantinople~~ (*Disbanded*), F Constantinople - Smyrna.

PRESS

Press: "England expects every man to do his duty. God save the King"



Autumn 1906 Results

Austria: Retreat A Vienna OTB. Has A Rumania.

England: Has F Edinburgh, F North Atlantic Ocean.

France: Has A Belgium, A Burgundy, F English Channel, A Liverpool, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F North Sea, F Spain(sc), A Yorkshire.

Germany: Has F Berlin, F Gulf of Bothnia, A Kiel, A Sweden, A Tyrolia.

Italy: Has F Adriatic Sea, F Aegean Sea, F Bulgaria(sc), F Ionian Sea, A Serbia, A Trieste.

Russia: Has F Armenia, A Budapest, F Norway, F Sevastopol, A St Petersburg, A Vienna, A Warsaw.

Turkey: Has A Ankara, F Black Sea, F Smyrna.

Supply Center Chart

Austria: Rumania=1, Even

England: Edinburgh=1, Remove 1

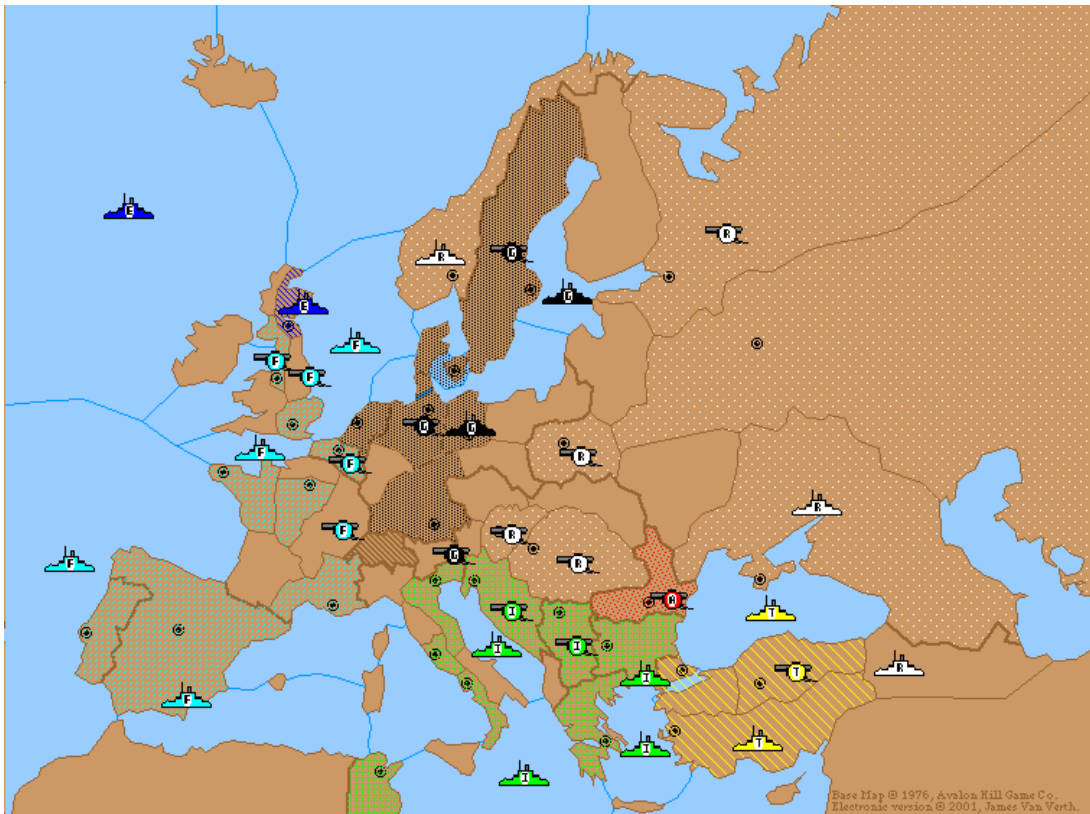
France: Belgium, Brest, Liverpool, London, Marseilles, Paris, Portugal, Spain=8, Even

Germany: Berlin, Denmark, Holland, Kiel, Munich, Sweden=6, Build 1

Italy: Bulgaria, Greece, Naples, Rome, Serbia, Trieste, Tunis, Venice=8, Build 2

Russia: Budapest, Moscow, Norway, Sevastopol, St Petersburg, Vienna, Warsaw=7, Even

Turkey: Ankara, Constantinople, Smyrna=3, Even



Fall and Autumn 1906 Commentary:

Jim Burgess (**BOLD**)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Jack McHugh (Comic Sans MS)

A Mun-Tyo???? A Mun-Tyo???? Not Kie-Hol and Ber-Kie?

I really don't get that one, yes clearing space for a build, if he got one without defending Holland. But then why not Ruhr? That's the big mystery here. Further analysis forthcoming.

I have to admit I was wrong about the coming Franco-Italian war. I was also confused by the move of F Mar-Spa(sc)???? What's up with that? Does Gregory think he needs another fleet to subdue Frank's soon-to-be-one-center England? I don't think so--so why not move it toward Italy where it might do some good?

There is the idea that you don't stab at Italy until you do it with force. More than that, Italy now builds TWO, so what would one French unit have done? Nothing. Now, MY take is that Italy should build two armies, but I'm sure you all think he'll build more fleets. Unless Italy builds two armies now, his chances of soloing drop through the floor. There might be reason for one fleet, but now I don't think France will shoot into the Med.

Well, it can still move into Western Med. And he can also move to Naf at the same time. That would guarantee Tunis if it were a surprise move.

As for this turn--Gregory's France continues to grind Frank's England into a fine powder and Peter begins to slowly move fleets toward the Med. His Keystone Kops like attack on Germany continues with a misorder in Bel and bounce over Mun, no nothing new there.

I'm still not sure this WAS a misorder, maybe we'll be able to tell through future moves.

Again Gregory is paying no cost for his rather slow moving English and non-moving German campaigns as there is currently no push back from the other powers in this game. Gregory continues to reap the benefit of the other powers refusal to work and play well with others and set up a "stop the leader" alliance.

I think he will pay a cost for his slow play. He could easily have gotten three builds this year. Instead, he only gets one while Italy gets two and Germany gets one.

Umm, isn't France even? Maybe that's even worse.

Mike continues to move toward Peter's Russia while fending off Gregory's France. I'm impressed, but not surprised having played with and been bamboozled by Mike myself, that Mike got Russia to move back toward War while simultaneous Mike moves more forces up into Scandinavia where they can only threaten Peter's hold on Nwy and St. Pete. However right now there is standoff over Scandinavia as a Russian army and fleet face a German army and fleet--it looks like this will continue until either side can spare another unit or a third power intervenes.

I hate Germany's tactical position here. He's _wide open_ to a French stab and has forces in relatively weak positions (Gulf of Bothnia, Tyrolia). Of course this isn't a purely tactical game, so he might have some more tricks up his sleeve.

I fall somewhere in between these two positions. Once Germany gets one more build, what can he do? Maybe a little bit, so not as hopeless as Rick suggests, and I'm not that impressed by Mike, as Jack suggests. But I am not sure we will see an inventive Germany here. We'll see. I like to see options, there aren't a huge number of German options.

Meanwhile in the south, Russia continues with his slow destruction of Austria. Christopher loses another, and the last of his home centers, Vie. Austria is now reduced to its exile center of Rum.

Agreed, Chris will still work with Turkey, but especially with those two Italian army builds ;-) Chris and Jonathan are in tactical trouble.

Presumably he and England will be gone after one more year.

There is no safety for England. You probably keep the fleet to see if you can do something though.

Russia and Turkey continued their sparring over the Balkans but this time Austria agrees to be convoyed to Sev by Turkish Black Sea fleet--it fails. What really hurts Turkey is Tim decides to take Bul for Italy thus blowing up Turkey's A Bul, which Jonathan

(Turkey) tried to use to cover Con with a self-bounce with his army Ank, thus cutting off his own army's retreat...ouch! This leaves Con open for Italy for the Fall turn. This also reduces Turkey to only his home centers, although he still has a defensible position for now...it remains to be seen how serious Tim is about getting rid of Jonathan.

If Tim and Peter are serious together, there is no hope for Turkey.

That is a good question. How does he respond to the Germans in Tyrolia? Does he think the French are going after Germany or not? Of course, it shouldn't take much to finish off Turkey.

I also don't agree with Jim-Bob that Turkey has to survive for France to be stopped. I would argue that Germany is the key power here as he sits on the stalemate line. Mike is also the proverbial finger in the dyke--remove his units and France has access to Eastern Europe and the Balkans as well as being in a position to flank Tim's Tyr and Pie provinces.

I think so because if they keep pushing east, then France will establish his long term position and I don't see how you stop France. Germany falls.

Well, France shot himself in the foot this year by taking neither Edi nor Holland. Had he gotten three builds, had England died, had Germany gotten no build, France would be doing much better. That is, presuming he wants to start a solo run right away. I'm not a big fan of a slower approach here. Not if he wants to solo. The more time the others have, the better their odds for a good defense.

Yes, but it does seem intentional.

Had France gotten three builds, those England fleets would have disappeared, leaving only three "frenemy" fleets: F Nwy, F Ber, and F Ber. France could have easily overwhelmed the North quickly. I'll go through what I see as the key moves:

Italy: A Tri S Gal - Vie.

Finally some meaningful cooperation between Italy and Russia. If these two actually cooperate, they can do something about F/G or F alone (whatever comes their way).

Agreed, Turkey and Austria working together could be dangerous. Italy and Russia have decided to make a joint move, we'll see how it goes against Turkey proper.

Germany:
A Mun - Tyo
A Kie - Mun
F Bal - Bot

Germany is completely committed to the further pursuit of an F/G.

So, the key is Germany isn't getting help against France, and without help, isn't helping. Germany will get the build for Sweden and France is moving slowly, deliberately, and perhaps trying to stay under the radar a bit. Patience is often a virtue in Diplomacy.

France:
A Bur - Mun
A Hol - Bel (whoops!)
F Mar - Spa(SC)

France is at least giving the appearance of somebody stabbing his German ally. Had he ordered Bel - Hol instead of Hol - Bel, he'd have gotten it for a second build this year. Is this an intentional disorder? It's hard to say what Gregory would gain by an intentional disorder. OTOH, if he felt sure that Germany was ordering Mun - Tyrol, the French orders would have ensured that Germany got no build from Sweden. A Kie could have defended either Munich or Holland, but not both.

My assertion would be that Gregory NEVER misses an order, so this was the order he intended to make. I think he's being cautious so as not to be a bigger target.

This bit is amusing:
F Bla C A Rum - Sev
A Rum - Sev
F Sev - Rum

These two forces would have changed place had it not been for
A Bud - Rum.

Well yes, he needed to get units adjusted, sometimes people forget that this tactic is possible.

Finally
A Sil - War
An end to hostilities?

Possibly. Is the Sweden/Norway trade a plan? Seems likely. But what is Germany actually DOING?

I only wanted to add that I agree completely with Rick here and his analysis is much better than mine with regards to France's solo possibilities/potentials. I was too busy identifying trees but Rick was able to see the forest much better than I was.



Winter 1906 Results

Austria: Has A Rumania.

England: Remove F North Atlantic Ocean...Has F Edinburgh.

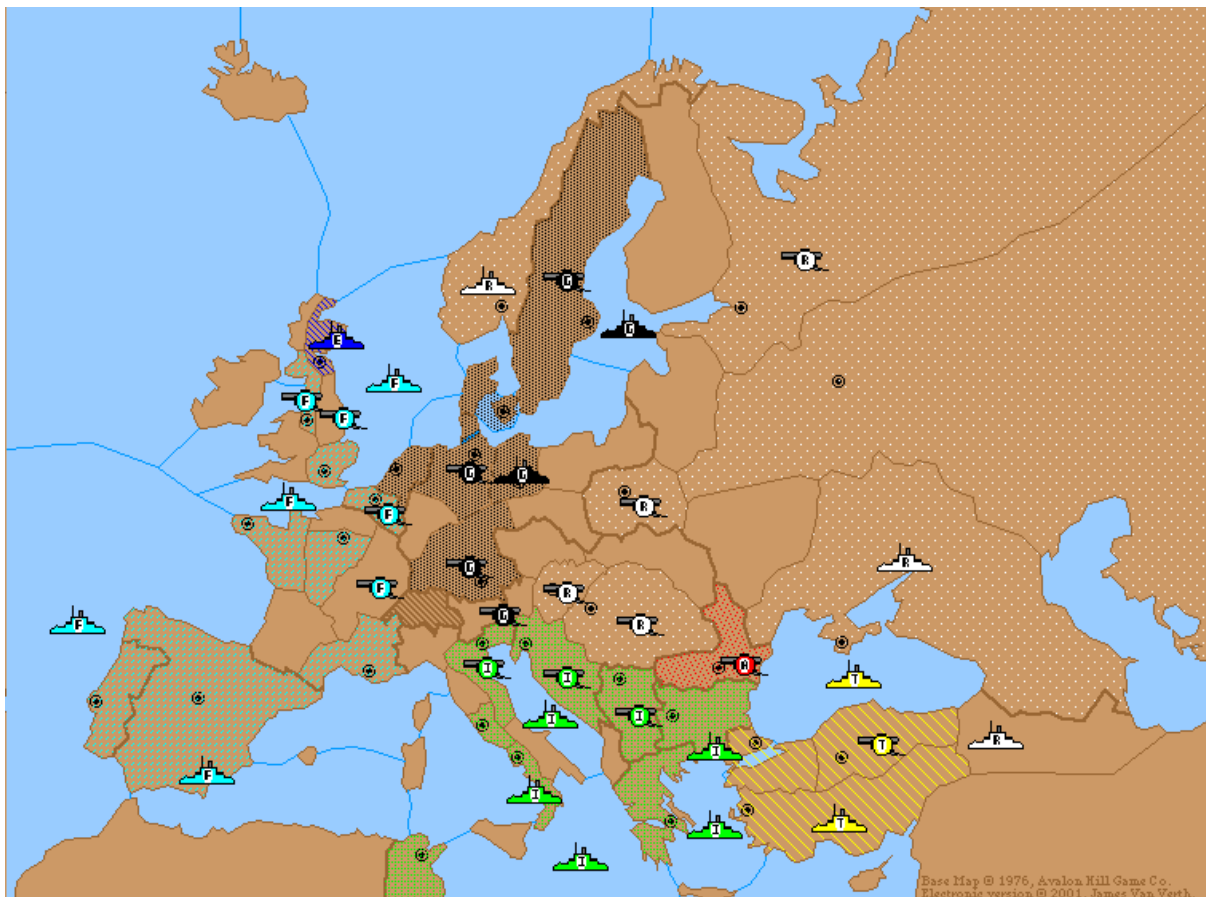
France: Has A Belgium, A Burgundy, F English Channel, A Liverpool, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F North Sea, F Spain(sc), A Yorkshire.

Germany: Build A Munich...Has A Munich, F Berlin, F Gulf of Bothnia, A Kiel, A Sweden, A Tyrolia.

Italy: Build F Naples, A Venice...Has F Adriatic Sea, F Aegean Sea, F Bulgaria(sc), F Ionian Sea, F Naples, A Venice, A Serbia, A Trieste.

Russia: Has F Armenia, A Budapest, F Norway, F Sevastopol, A St Petersburg, A Vienna, A Warsaw.

Turkey: Has A Ankara, F Black Sea, F Smyrna.



Winter 1906 Commentary:

Jim Burgess (**BOLD**)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Jack McHugh (Comic Sans MS)

So, Italy only builds one army, I know you guys aren't surprised.

And I missed that Edinburgh also was a fleet, though I probably would have kept North Atlantic.

Nothing else exciting except a bit of English press. Yay!

That's all I have to say at this point, could agree to move on to Spring.

Yeah, this wasn't a particularly surprising phase. Italy built what I thought he would.

My count for France was off for some reason. He really wanted people to catch up to him. Well, who am I to

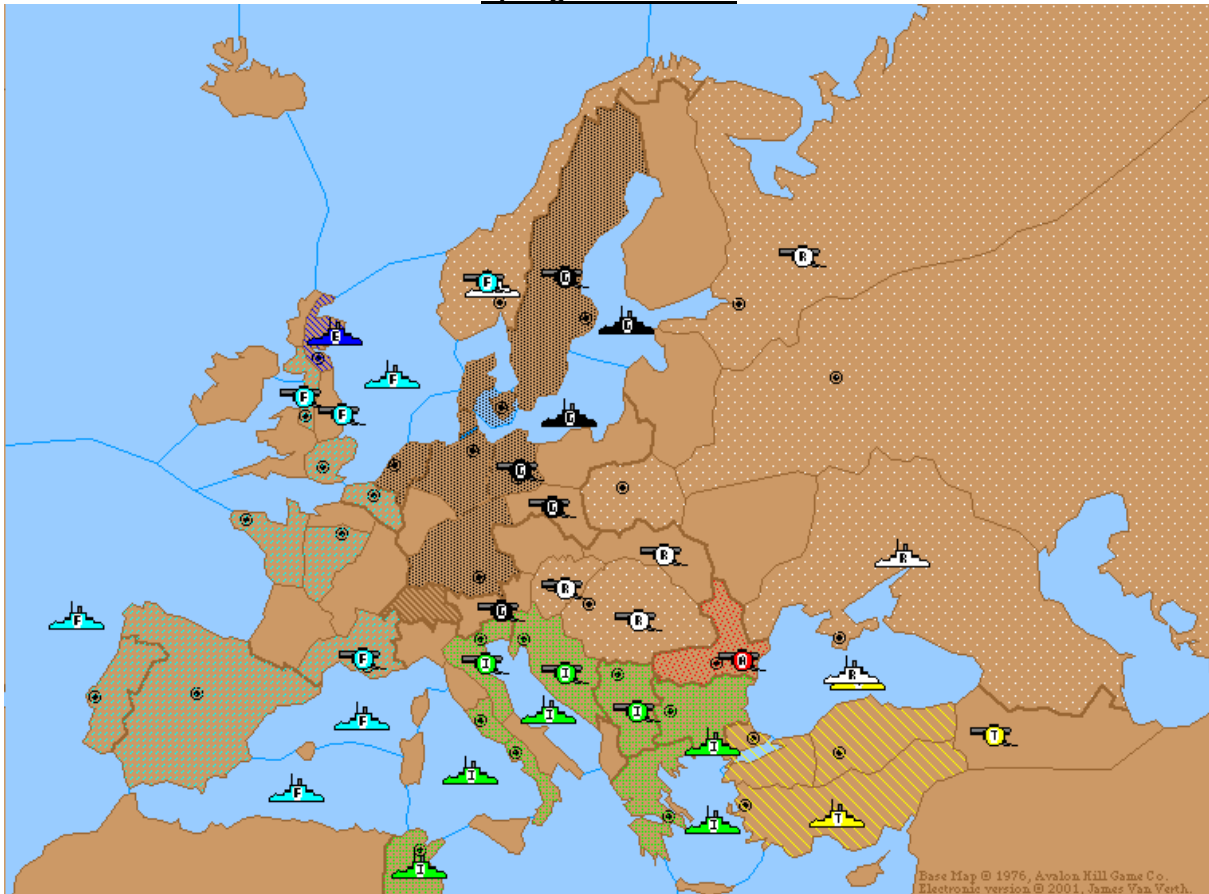
question? Really wondering what he'll do next, aside from collect Edinburgh. Maybe a convoy to Norway?

I think France does **NOT** try to bring an impotent hammer down on Italy yet, but he does need to make some move, I think.

I will agree with the consensus and say nothing surprising here. I think France really missed the bus in this game as Italy and Germany are firmly on the stalemate line.

I will say I am curious as to see what happens with regards to Italy and Russia vis-a-vis Turkey. In my opinion Jonathan needs to be removed as leaving a hostile 3 center Turkey behind a stalemate line is just asking for trouble.

Spring 1907 Results



Austria: A Rumania - Serbia (*Fails*).

England: F Edinburgh Hold.

France: A Belgium – Norway, A Burgundy – Marseilles, F English Channel - Mid-Atlantic Ocean, A Liverpool - Edinburgh (*Bounce*), F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - Western Mediterranean, F North Sea Convoys A Belgium – Norway, F Spain(sc) - Gulf of Lyon, A Yorkshire - Edinburgh (*Bounce*).

Germany: F Berlin - Baltic Sea, F Gulf of Bothnia - St Petersburg(sc) (*Fails*), A Kiel – Berlin, A Munich – Silesia, A Sweden Supports A Belgium – Norway, A Tyrolia - Vienna (*Fails*).

Italy: F Adriatic Sea Supports A Trieste, F Aegean Sea - Constantinople (*Bounce*), F Bulgaria(sc) Supports F Aegean Sea – Constantinople, F Ionian Sea – Tunis, F Naples - Tyrrhenian Sea, A Serbia Supports F Bulgaria(sc) (*Cut*), A Trieste Supports A Serbia, A Venice Supports A Trieste.

Russia: F Armenia - Black Sea, A Budapest Supports A Vienna, F Norway Hold (*Dislodged*, retreat to Barents Sea or Norwegian Sea or Skagerrak or OTB), F Sevastopol Supports F Armenia - Black Sea, A St Petersburg Supports F Norway (*Cut*), A Vienna Supports A Warsaw - Galicia (*Cut*), A Warsaw - Galicia.

Turkey: A Ankara – Armenia, F Black Sea – Constantinople (*Dislodged*, retreat to Ankara or OTB), F Smyrna Supports F Black Sea - Constantinople.

Summer 1907 Results

Austria: Has A Rumania.

England: Has F Edinburgh.

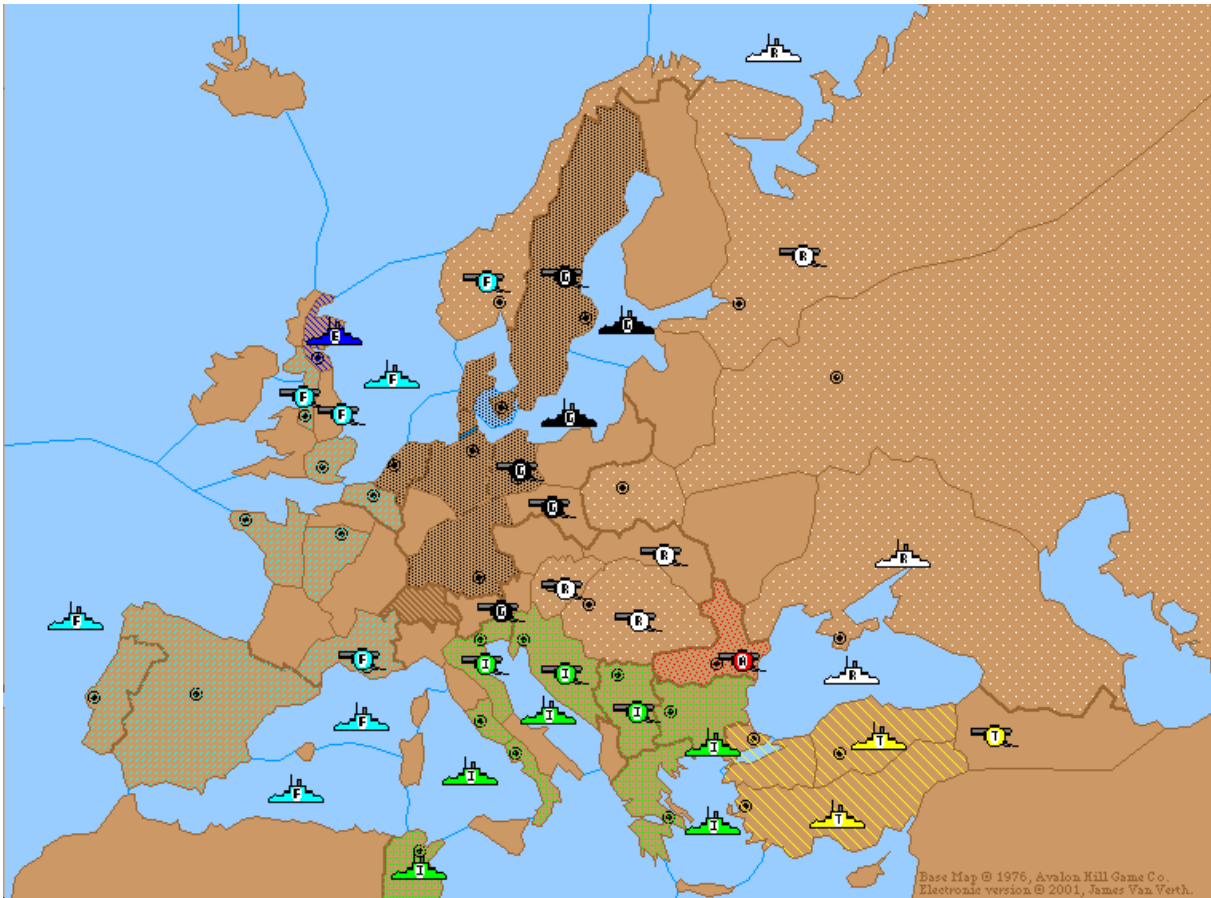
France: Has F Gulf of Lyon, A Liverpool, A Marseilles, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F North Sea, A Norway, F Western Mediterranean, A Yorkshire.

Germany: Has F Baltic Sea, A Berlin, F Gulf of Bothnia, A Silesia, A Sweden, A Tyrolia.

Italy: Has F Adriatic Sea, F Aegean Sea, F Bulgaria(sc), A Serbia, A Trieste, F Tunis, F Tyrrhenian Sea, A Venice.

Russia: Retreat F Norway - Barents Sea..Has F Barents Sea, F Black Sea, A Budapest, A Galicia, F Sevastopol, A St Petersburg, A Vienna.

Turkey: Retreat F Black Sea - Ankara..Has F Ankara, A Armenia, F Smyrna.



Spring and Summer 1907 Commentary:

Jim Burgess (**BOLD**)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Jack McHugh (Comic Sans MS)

Looks like the cat is out of the bag. We have a straight up F/G versus an R/I with Turkey probably getting snuffed out by R/I in the corner. This makes sense for all the powers involved. G/R were clearly too small to make it on their own and failing a meeting of the minds between Italy and France picking up a toady makes sense for both powers.

Unfortunately this leaves Turkey as the odd man out and Italy and Russia have no reason to leave a revanchist Turkey sitting in their rear. Better to excise the tumor that is Turkey now then risk it getting any larger. The question remains whether Russia can do this and still hold off G/F in the far north.

First off, NO press.... I know these guys haven't been the best press writers, but I wish we had **SOME** commentary to hit on the background. But no, so

speculation is all we have. I think I have lots of comments for each country, so let's go by country.

Austria: Despite Chris' difficult position, and the complex relationships between Russia, Turkey and Italy, I've been seeing Chris trying his best to sit in the middle of this. Recall, he had been helping Turkey, and if he were still doing that, he would have cut Bulgaria's support so that Turkey could get into Con. Of course, Russia has Austria by the short hairs, so one must presume that Austria's survival required him to hit Serbia, or something like that. Austria now is pretty well separated from Turkey and surrounded by Russia. And there is no evidence that RIT care much about the FG juggernaut headed their way. I've been saying for a while this is really dangerous for them, as Germany controls Tyrolia, the linchpin for control of the stalemate lines. Chris knows this as well as the others. I don't think Chris is "helping" them come together, I would probably do the same thing. Why not make them suffer for taking me down. I really do think other things are going on here, but we can only guess what they are. The key is that

there STILL is no resolution in the east, as things get more interesting out west.

Yes, I think Chris took Rumania because he was about to lose Serbia, and not part of any larger idea. He may have hit Serbia because at least there was a slight chance that he would get support from Russia. I think he's just trying to stay alive and has no higher aim.

As for the other guys in the East, if Italy and Russia hadn't realized before that they need to work together, surely this move ought to convince them. Germany has been attacking Russia from quite some time, and now France has swept into the Med. I don't think Italy was taking the threat all that seriously. Most of his forces are still in the East, and he's still in the Adriatic.

England: Pay close attention, boys and girls, there is a bit more going on here than you think. Note that France leaves Edinburgh safe by bouncing over it, and presumably asked that England go to Norwegian Sea. I would have gone to Norwegian Sea, I think, even if it was France who wanted me to go there. This also is where you might have had a chance to say something about Norway in the fall. It is hard to see why Gregory now lets Frank live, but we will see. Note that the "slowness" of Gregory's movement is now becoming clear on two fronts. First, Germany seems to have asked France to slow down, maybe even urged him to try to get England to help against Russia. Second, they didn't want to do anything to get RIT operating with some more coherence. Now, England is veering toward irrelevance, but as I said, I would have been in Norwegian Sea, just to see what I could do from there. It may not matter, but it also COULD matter. Maybe France just waited though since he DIDN'T want England in Norwegian, so didn't want to dislodge him yet. More probably that is true. Still, regardless, this was a difficult game for Frank to navigate.

I think France's motivation for not taking Edinburgh in the Spring was simple: he didn't want to force a retreat to NWG, where the fleet could influence his army in Norway. He'll take Edinburgh in the Fall.

France: OK, so Mike and Gregory clearly planned this in close cahoots. I think they were hoping that England moved to Norwegian Sea, but since then it would have been able to hit Norway, maybe they'll feel better that Frank didn't. There is some tactical worries in the north, you don't want a rogue Russian fleet in Norwegian, but North Sea-Nwg and cutting potential Edinburgh support (and probably taking it out now), there are solutions to all those worries. Eventually, St.Pete will fall and France is set on that front. On the Mediterranean front, I would expect the convoy

to Tuscany (another build coming in Marseilles) and if Germany can keep Tyrolia, then Italy is in serious trouble. Though there is a line back further, of course.

Is France going to stab? If so, when? Now would be an interesting time. He can take Edinburgh, Norway, and Holland, set up the attack on Tunis, and put an army in Piedmont. I don't think he will do so, however. The advantage to taking Holland right away is minimal. The better strategy is to set things up for next year, so he can convoy both of the armies on the British Isles into the German areas.

Germany: Mike is hanging out a bit in Tyrolia, he really needs to keep it, but he keeps it by Italy and Russia STILL sparring. I would presume, at least, that neither Italy nor Russia will help Germany, but will they dislodge him and work together? I'm not sanguine about this. Mike has played a really steady game as Gregory has flashed the metal. Now it is time for Germany to figure out how to push the line forward in the center. I'm not sure Munich to Silesia rather than Bohemia was a good idea. I'll be less sure if Tyrolia finally is dislodged in Fall. But we'll see. We seem very close to fighting over stalemate lines.

The line in Russia could collapse fast. Don't be surprised to see Germany move to Finland and Livonia. Livonia is better than Prussia, and what else do those fleets have to do? Russia's got too many fleets.

Italy: So, we see why Italy doesn't pull back on his own, but NOW continuing to fight Russia, Turkey AND Austria all together is going to start having real consequences for Italy. I would stop the convoy to Tuscany, I think, but that's a real risky bet, I agree. I also think Russia and Italy should team up to push Tyrolia back, but will they? Probably not. Otherwise, what is Italy to do?

If Italy isn't working hand-in-glove with Russia right now, they both deserve to lose. If they work together, one of them can take Rumania, and there's a decent shot of getting the other into Constantinople. Italy can use the double-bounce to defense Tuscany or simply move the army from Venice there while defending Venice with his fleet in the Adriatic. I'm not a fan of the latter possibility.

Russia: So, some success for Russia, but no success in getting France to agree to take on Germany. That puts Russia in real trouble. I would not be shocked at this point if Russia is eliminated before the end, at least that is the possible direction. To avoid this, you take out Chris, and make a deal with Turkey and Italy. No evidence of that so far though, as I keep saying.

Agree - there is no evidence of any kind of deal with anybody.

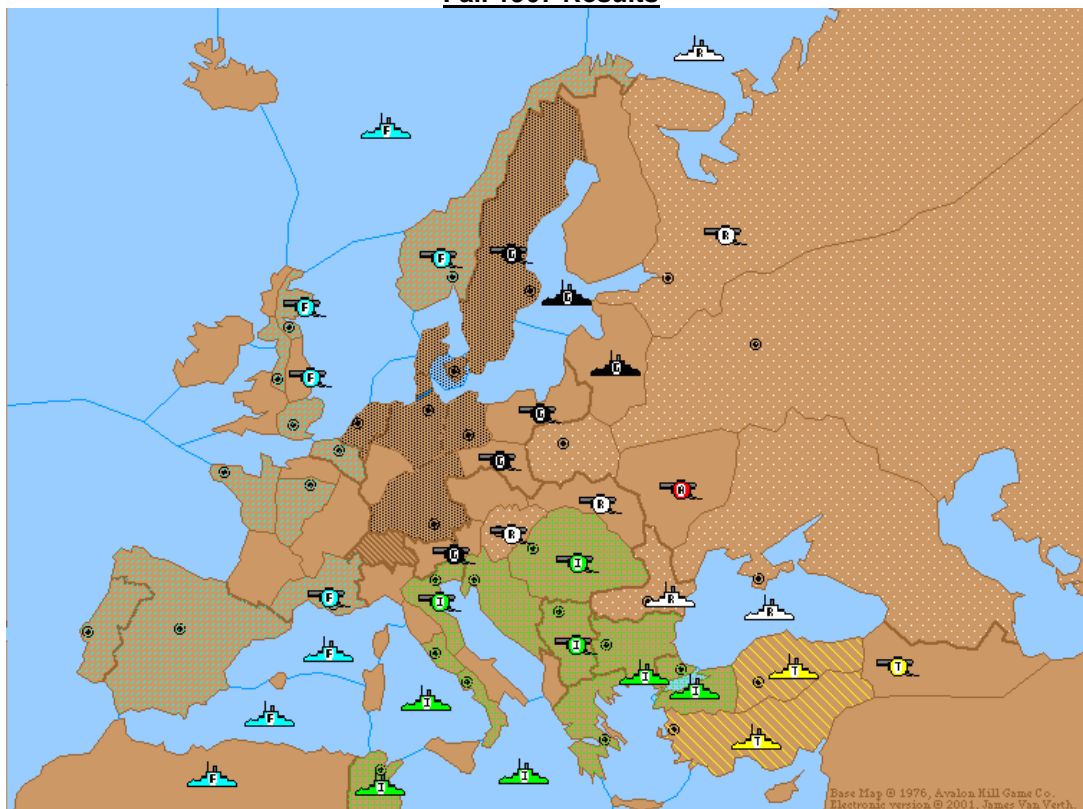
Turkey: So, they didn't take you out, yet, Jonathan. But if Russia and Italy are to survive the onslaught, they CANNOT keep attacking you and each other. You have to decide what you are going to do about that. You don't have much leverage, but you do have the "I'll sit and let you oppose them" leverage. I don't expect that to happen, and perhaps you'll just make a deal with Italy and then you'll keep attacking Russia. That could lead to Italy and Turkey surviving on one of the limited lines.

Turkey has survived this long, and his attackers are being attacked themselves. That's got to feel good. I don't know how much he has to worry about F/G. There's almost no way for F/G to try for a 17/17 draw, esp. not with France so far ahead. So Turkey should defense Con and keep his options open for the future.

In sum, this Fall turn is another bellwether turn. There is pretty much no way FG don't follow through on their alliance, and we see whether everyone else opposes them.... or not.

The F/G will continue at least for the near future. It's making gains for both players. And we've seen little inclination on the part of Gregory to find a stab.

Fall 1907 Results



Austria: A Rumania - Ukraine.

England: F Edinburgh Hold (*Dislodged*, retreat to Clyde or North Sea or OTB).

France: F Gulf of Lyon Convoys A Marseilles – Tuscany, A Liverpool – Edinburgh, A Marseilles - Tuscany (*Bounce*), F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - North Africa, F North Sea - Norwegian Sea, A Norway Supports A Sweden - St Petersburg (*Void*),

F Western Mediterranean Supports F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - North Africa, A Yorkshire Supports A Liverpool - Edinburgh.

Germany: F Baltic Sea – Livonia, A Berlin – Prussia, F Gulf of Bothnia Supports F Baltic Sea – Livonia, A Silesia - Warsaw (*Bounce*), A Sweden Supports A Norway, A Tyrolia - Vienna (*Fails*).

Italy: F Adriatic Sea - Ionian Sea, F Aegean Sea – Constantinople,

F Bulgaria(sc) Supports F Aegean Sea – Constantinople, A Serbia Supports A Trieste – Budapest, A Trieste – Budapest, F Tunis Supports F Tyrrhenian Sea, F Tyrrhenian Sea Hold, A Venice - Tuscany (*Bounce*).

Russia: F Barents Sea Supports A St Petersburg, F Black Sea Supports F Aegean Sea – Constantinople, A Budapest Supports F Sevastopol – Rumania (*Disbanded*), A Galicia - Warsaw (*Bounce*), F Sevastopol – Rumania, A St Petersburg Hold, A Vienna Hold.

Turkey: F Ankara - Constantinople (*Fails*), A Armenia - Ankara (*Fails*), F Smyrna Supports F Ankara - Constantinople.

Supply Center Chart

Austria: None=0, OUT!!
England: None=0, OUT!!
France: Belgium, Brest, Edinburgh, Liverpool, London, Marseilles, Norway, Paris, Portugal, Spain=10, Build 2
Germany: Berlin, Denmark, Holland, Kiel, Munich, Sweden=6, Even
Italy: Budapest, Bulgaria, Constantinople, Greece, Naples, Rome, Serbia, Trieste, Tunis, Venice=10, Build 2
Russia: Moscow, Rumania, Sevastopol, St Petersburg, Vienna, Warsaw=6, Even
Turkey: Ankara, Smyrna=2, Remove 1

Fall 1907 Commentary:

Jim Burgess (**BOLD**)
Rick Desper (Normal Font)
Jack McHugh (Comic Sans MS)

OK, some good play, some bad play, some risk play, and two eliminations.

Austria: Chris goes to Ukraine, committing suicide. Guess he lost interest.

I also think he got frustrated by how IRT didn't want to hear anything about Big Bad France.

England: Frank is forced out of Edinburgh and has no SCs to go to. So he's gone, too.

As I said last time, he needed to escape to Nwg the previous turn if he had wanted to survive. Not that it might have mattered.

Turkey: Jonathan can't do everything. And with Italy and Russia cooperating, he cannot hold Constantinople. I suspect, though, that I/R cooperation may be temporary.

Yeah, I even think this cooperation was quite grudging. Jonathan also must be getting pretty frustrated with Russia and Italy. I'd love to know what they're saying behind the scenes.

Italy: I just don't get it. I get taking Constantinople. What further purpose is served by taking Budapest, too? Does Timothy think Germany and France are his allies? To outward appearances, this is a terrible 1-dot stab. Russia can work with Turkey in the Black Sea basin. And who is going to stop the French attack?

Beats the heck out of me. He did divine the move to Tuscany, and get a tiny bit of tempo.

Russia: a real mess. The Italian treachery (if that's what it is) keeps Russia from getting to build Army Moscow. That's the difference between a weak position with some fight in it to a complete collapse. Warsaw and St. Pete will both fall in the Spring, and Moscow is in deep trouble.

I still go with what I said earlier, I think Russia may even be eliminated eventually. That still seems like the way we are going.

Germany: I don't think "I don't like this position" is an adequate comment at this point. Let's say this differently. If Germany's mission was to ensure a French solo, he would be playing exactly like this. He not only has nobody defending Holland, he doesn't have a single force within two steps of Holland. France has a 4-SC lead on him. Rule of thumb: if your ally is getting a lot of builds while you don't get any, he's not really an ally.

Boy, is that right, but why should Gregory stab Mike when Italy and Russia are still squabbling? As Rick says, he isn't even pretending to defend Holland.

France: the only move that didn't work was the convoy to Tuscany. Actually the two Italian builds will make it very hard for France to take anything from him. F Ion can support Tunis and a new fleet can support F TYS. Of course, it's not like Italy has any friends in the East. Also, France can stab the bejesus out of Germany whenever he wants. I'm guessing he really wants to cross the stalemate line first (i.e, take Tunis). Having worked with Germany this long, he should keep it up, at least until Russia collapses and the Italy front starts falling.

Agreed, and since they keep letting Germany keep Tyrolia, the isn't an easy line for Italy, though he can make it VERY slow.

Message to players: please write some press.

Oh boy, yes, PLEASE write some press.

Well the alliance structure I saw is still firmly in place despite Italy's swipe of Budapest and I do

understand it. Better to control the center yourself rather than another player who may or may not do what you want.

Tactically though it doesn't make sense to me as it exposes Tri--Timothy feels he can keep Germany out of Tri. Of course with that little stop he might not be getting much help from the Russian A Vie.

And why does Italy need centers? Oh yeah, France is about to lower the boom on him, so I think Tim needs all the help he can get. He may have gotten his units into position just in time as the central Med is an easy place to defend, especially if you--like Tim--have two home centers that border on the Ion. Makes building fleets to support you all that much easier.

As for Russia, I agree with my fellow commentators--his position is in disarray. He should have let Turkey blow up his F Bla for him--now he's got two fleets stuck in the Bla and nowhere near where he needs them.

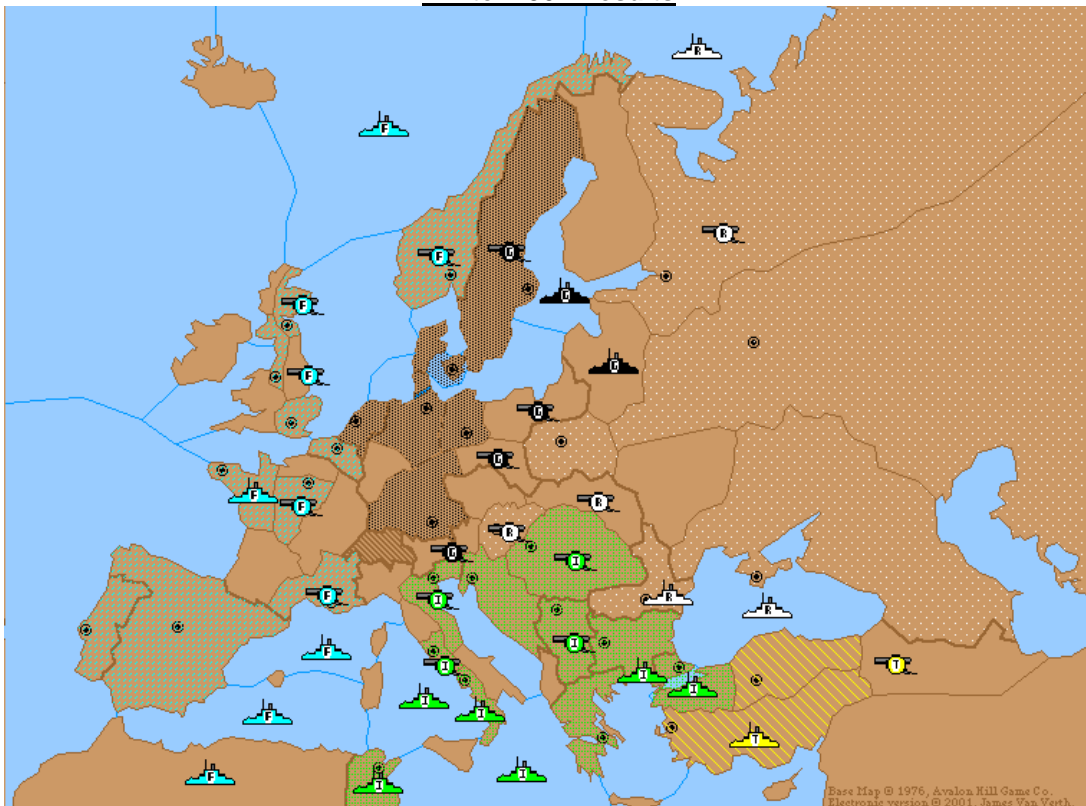
The biggest thing Peter has going for him is that Germany, Mike, only has a fleets in Liv and Bal--this limits how far Mike can go into Russia. The bad news is that Germany does have A Swe, Pru and Sil. I see Russia losing either St. P or War next year...maybe both although he should pick up Ank.

Will Italy go for Rum? He could but I tend to doubt it as he will need all of his units to march the west, not the east.

Peter will probably lose at least one and maybe both of his fleets in Rum/Bla. Of course if he does that he won't hold Ank since he'll have no units to hold it.

Italy has a good position on the stalemate. The question is what does France do with all of those units in England--he doesn't really need them to go after Russia so it might be time to cash in all of his Kaiser Mike stock.

Winter 1907 Results



France: Build F Brest, A Paris..Has F Brest, A Edinburgh, F Gulf of Lyon, A Marseilles, F North Africa, A Norway, F Norwegian Sea, A Paris, F Western Mediterranean, A Yorkshire.

Germany: Has F Gulf of Bothnia, F Livonia, A Prussia, A Silesia, A Sweden, A Tyrolia.

Italy: Build A Rome, F Naples..Has A Budapest, F Bulgaria(sc), F Constantinople, F Ionian Sea, F Naples, A Rome,

A Serbia, F Tunis, F Tyrrhenian Sea, A Venice.

Russia: Has F Barents Sea, F Black Sea, A Galicia, F Rumania, A St Petersburg, A Vienna.

Turkey: Remove F Ankara..Has A Armenia, F Smyrna.

PRESS

England: The English fleet was scuppered off Skapa Flow. Most hands were safely landed in Shetland or the Outer Hebrides from where they will continue a guerrilla war!

Winter 1907 Commentary:

Jim Burgess (**BOLD**)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Jack McHugh (Comic Sans MS)

Not much to see here. France builds F Bre, which will presumably move up to Eng to get armies off Britain. Turkey didn't have a good removal (one rarely does) but kept his most useful force: Army Armenia. Italy builds the army and fleet we thought he would build.

Italy has a very solid line against France, but it remains to see what will happen to his East. To crack Italy, France will need to get somebody into Tuscany somehow.

Of course, we could see Turkey order Smy - Eas - Ion to ensure the fall of Tunis. Why not? The position is untenable in any case.

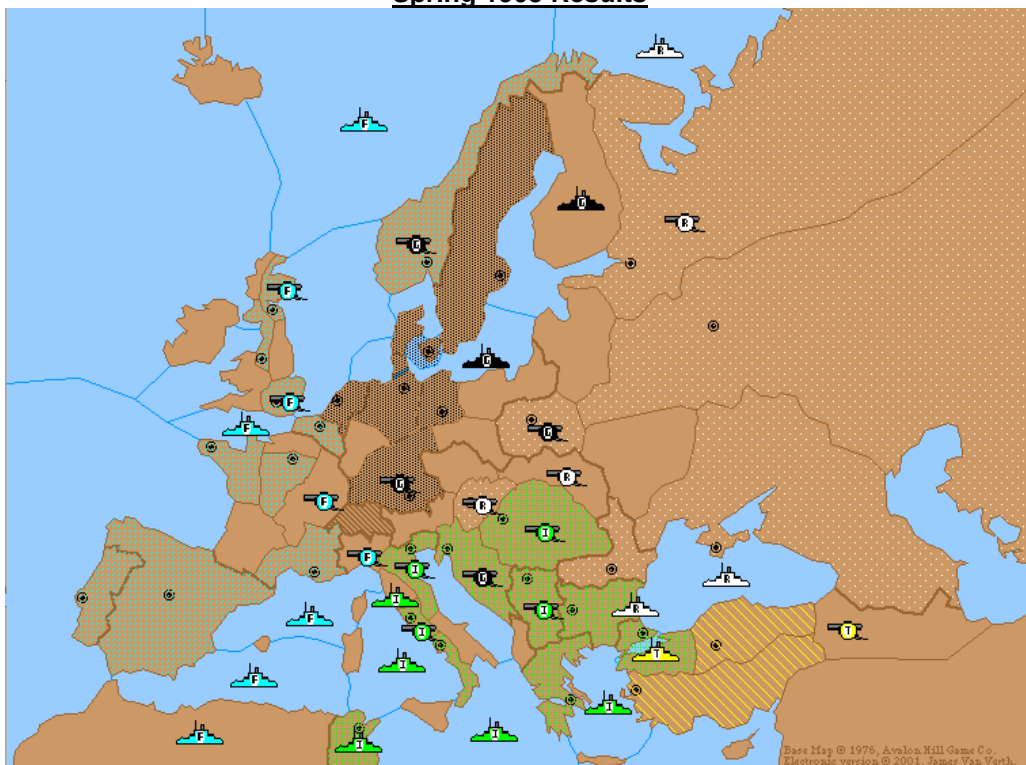
Played a game once with a variant rule called "back support". With back support, a units support was not cut

if it was supported itself by an uncut support. If Italy had this rule to use, he could keep supporting from Ion as long as he ordered F Aeg S F Ion. But it's a silly rule that makes fleet powers in particular more powerful than they should be.

I don't have much to say here either, as all the builds and removals were pretty predictable. Russia is the real issue here. He doesn't really have a line of protection and Italy and Turkey may ensure that he does not survive. This game year will prove that out, but the builds don't tell us much.

Boring and predictable given the situation on the board. Let's see what happens next.

Spring 1908 Results



France: F Brest - English Channel, A Edinburgh Hold, F Gulf of Lyon Supports A Marseilles – Piedmont,

A Marseilles – Piedmont, F North Africa Supports F Western Mediterranean, ~~A Norway – St Petersburg (*Disbanded*)~~, ~~F Norwegian Sea - Barents Sea (*Fails*)~~, A Paris – Burgundy, F Western Mediterranean Hold, A Yorkshire - London.
Germany: F Gulf of Bothnia – Finland, F Livonia - Baltic Sea, A Prussia – Warsaw, A Silesia – Munich, A Sweden – Norway, A Tyrolia - Trieste.
Italy: A Budapest Supports A Venice - Trieste (*Cut*), F Bulgaria(sc) - Aegean Sea, ~~F Constantinople – Ankara (*Disbanded*)~~, F Ionian Sea Supports F Tunis, F Naples - Tyrrhenian Sea, A Rome - Venice (*Fails*), A Serbia Supports A Budapest, F Tunis Supports F Naples - Tyrrhenian Sea, F Tyrrhenian Sea – Tuscany, A Venice - Trieste (*Fails*).
Russia: F Barents Sea - Norwegian Sea (*Fails*), F Black Sea Supports F Smyrna – Constantinople, A Galicia - Budapest (*Fails*), F Rumania - Bulgaria(ec), A St Petersburg Supports A Sweden – Norway, A Vienna Supports A Tyrolia - Trieste.
Turkey: A Armenia - Ankara (*Bounce*), F Smyrna - Constantinople.

Spring 1908 Commentary:

Jim Burgess (**BOLD**)
Rick Desper (Normal Font)
Jack McHugh (Comic Sans MS)

Italy took it on the chin this turn as Tim is being attacked from three sides and the fourth is the board edge. It's okay to anger the entire board as the number one player, as the number two player, not so much.

I really haven't seen what the point of many of Italy's choices has been. I'm not sure if it was actually angering the board, or just not working with them.

Yes, Italy is up a creek. He's managed to get Turkey and Russia to stop fighting, at least for one move.

That is hardly something to crow about when they stopped fighting to attack you.

The fleet move to Tuscany is dubious. The fleet in Naples could support TYS without any possibility of being cut. A fleet in Tuscany doesn't have the same kind of safe position. France could take TYS on the coming move, should that be his aim.

I think Italy was trying to bounce again in Tuscany, I agree that the value of this fleet move is dubious. I would agree that France will take Tyrrhenian Sea shortly.

Russia and Turkey finally bury the hatchet, right in Italy's back as Peter (Russia) helps Jonathan (Turkey) back into his home center of Con. Meanwhile the Germans take back Nwy with Russian support, hmmm, interesting.

Mike (Germany) decides to work with Peter against the common threat--Timothy's France. It appears the toadies aren't interested in toadying anymore.

Very interesting move for Germany. Takes Norway as well as Warsaw. There's a slight possibility that the Norway move was arranged with France. But I don't see what the point would be of that ruse. They didn't need to trick Russia. A simple attack would have flattened the Northern front of Russia. So I'll buy it.

I most definitely agree that Germany took Norway by agreement, and I think we need to keep understanding what I've been claiming for some time, that France's slow movement is part of dealing with Germany so France didn't get too far ahead. You may not think that was a good deal, but a deal it appears to be.

A fascinating reversal. If this is real, France will not get any builds while Germany gets two (three if he holds Trieste). And the fleet balance in the North will quickly go Germany's way.

Again, though, I don't think the FG relationship is about to fall apart.

France, Gregory, continues to redeploy but still has two armies stuck in England--bleech(!)--this is why using armies to smash England is such a pain. After you get your dots you have to get your armies back to the continent where they can do some good.

I think this next year will be France redeploying units to get ready for the next push.

The armies ensured that England would fall quickly. But then Gregory slowed down. And this is his reward. Moral: if you're going to be the frontrunner, do it big.

Or.... be patient and maybe a bit slower, and see what happens.

Italy and France continue to warily support their own units and watch each other. Mike manages to slip an army into Tri. That could be a real problem for Tim if Peter and Mike keep working together.

Certainly. If G/R/T all work together, Italy will lose at least three SCs. Russia can cover Rumania as long as the Turks support him in Bulgaria. And R/G can do a triple attack on Budapest that forces Italy to lose either Budapest or Trieste.

This is what I'm expecting, Italy could be knocked down very, very quickly unless he has performed some diplomatic wizardry.

However all is not wine and roses for Russia and Germany as Germany sneaks in to take War from Russia while Mike reorients his units slightly to the

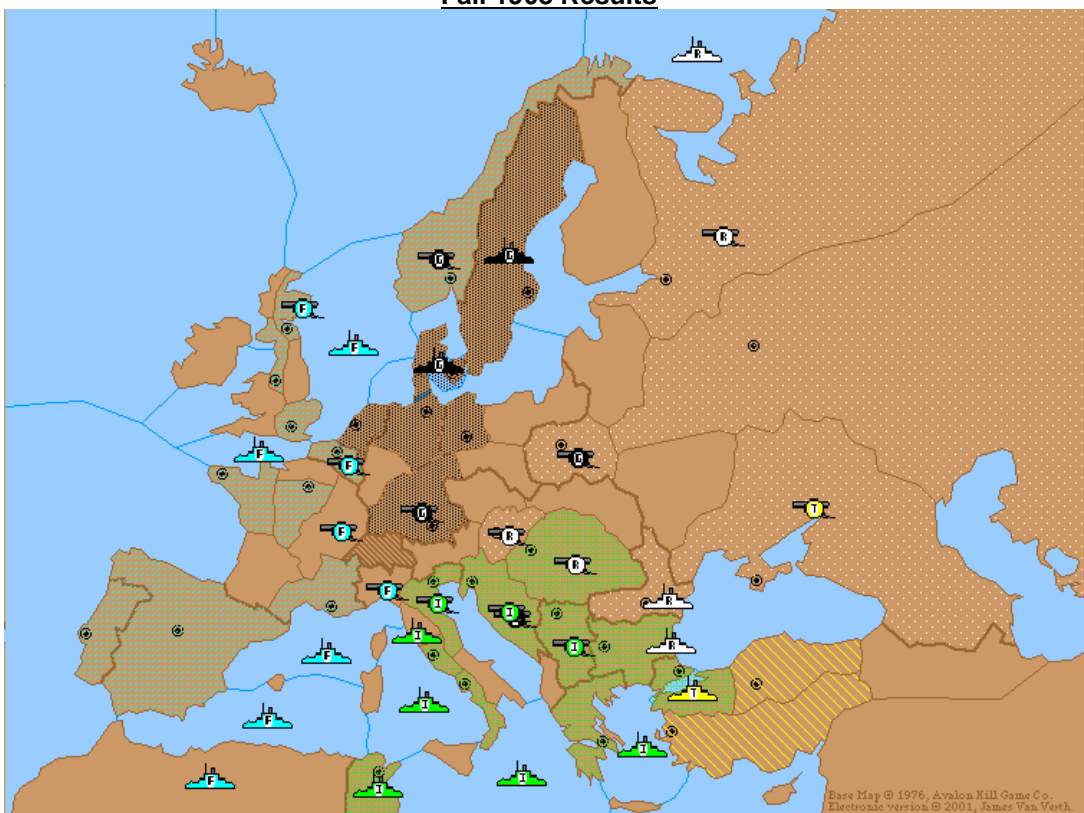
south--still no sign of a stab of Germany from Gregory yet. Will Mike try and keep War or is he simply moving through it so that he will let it revert back to Russia in the Fall? That's my guess but we'll have to wait and see....

Could be insurance to make sure Russia worked with him. Or it could have been the bribe to get Germany to work with Russia.

It might well be the case that both of our co-leaders are being attacked by everybody else, and successfully! If that's true, then this is the most delicious demo game we've had yet!

I don't think this is what will happen, but agree that continuing a dance of alliances against the leaders will make this a very special demo game indeed. So, I hope Rick is right, but don't think he quite is.

Fall 1908 Results



France: A Burgundy - Munich (*Fails*), A Edinburgh Hold, F English Channel Convoys A London - Belgium, F Gulf of Lyon - Tyrrhenian Sea (*Fails*), A London - Belgium, F North Africa Supports F Western Mediterranean, F Norwegian Sea - North Sea, A Piedmont - Tuscany (*Fails*), F Western Mediterranean Supports F Gulf of Lyon - Tyrrhenian Sea (*Cut*).

Germany: F Baltic Sea - Denmark, F Finland - Sweden, A Munich - Burgundy (*Fails*), A Norway - Edinburgh (*Fails*), A Trieste - Serbia (*Dislodged*, retreat to Albania or Tyrolia or OTB), A Warsaw Hold.

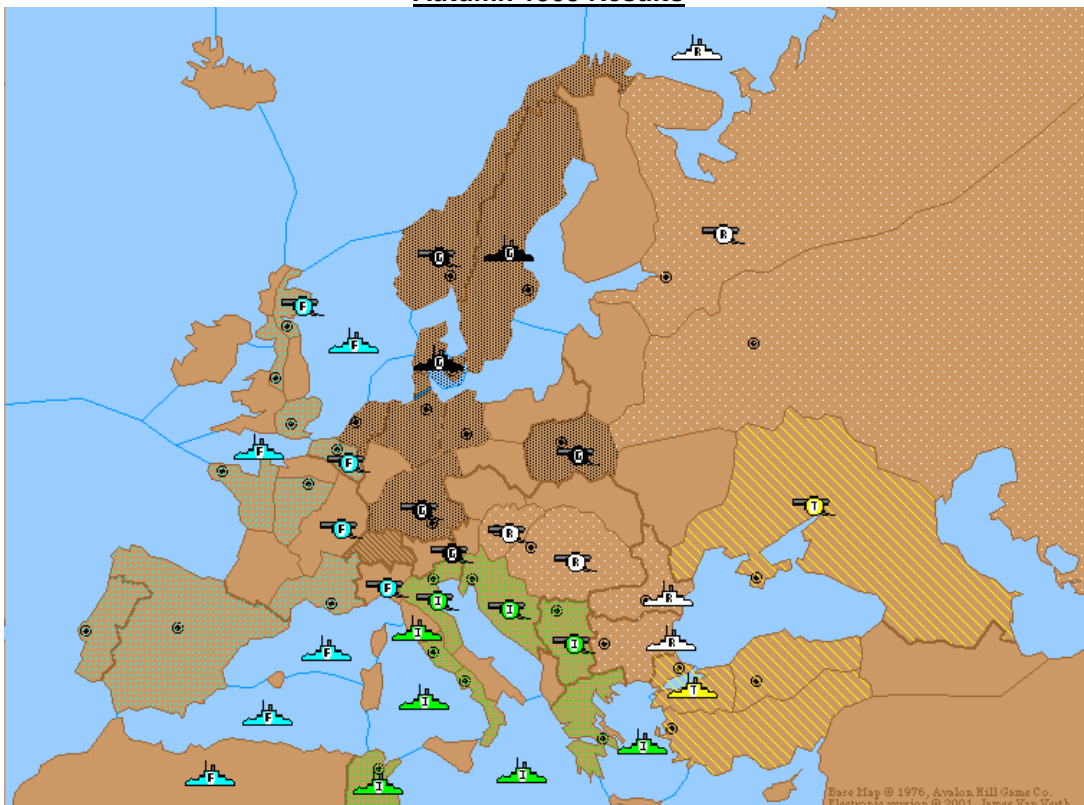
Italy: F Aegean Sea Hold, A Budapest - Vienna (*Disbanded*), F Ionian Sea Supports F Tyrrhenian Sea - Tunis (*Fails*), A Rome - Venice, A Serbia Supports A Venice - Trieste, F Tunis - Western Mediterranean (*Fails*), F Tuscany - Piedmont (*Fails*), F Tyrrhenian Sea - Tunis (*Fails*), A Venice - Trieste.

Russia: F Barents Sea Supports A St Petersburg, F Black Sea - Rumania,

F Bulgaria(ec) Supports F Black Sea – Rumania, A Galicia – Budapest, A St Petersburg Hold,
A Vienna Supports A Galicia - Budapest.

Turkey: A Armenia – Sevastopol, F Constantinople Supports F Bulgaria(ec).

Autumn 1908 Results



France: Has A Belgium, A Burgundy, A Edinburgh, F English Channel, F Gulf of Lyon, F North Africa, F North Sea, A Piedmont, F Western Mediterranean.

Germany: Retreat A Trieste - Tyrolia.. Has F Denmark, A Munich, A Norway, F Sweden, A Tyrolia, A Warsaw.

Italy: Has F Aegean Sea, F Ionian Sea, A Serbia, A Trieste, F Tunis, F Tuscany, F Tyrrhenian Sea, A Venice.

Russia: Has F Barents Sea, A Budapest, F Bulgaria(ec), F Rumania, A St Petersburg, A Vienna.

Turkey: Has F Constantinople, A Sevastopol.

Supply Center Chart

France: Belgium, Brest, Edinburgh, Liverpool, London, Marseilles, Paris, Portugal, Spain=9, Even

Germany: Berlin, Denmark, Holland, Kiel, Munich, Norway, Sweden, Warsaw=8, Build 2

Italy: Greece, Naples, Rome, Serbia, Trieste, Tunis, Venice=7, Remove 1

Russia: Budapest, Bulgaria, Moscow, Rumania, St Petersburg, Vienna=6, Even

Turkey: Ankara, Constantinople, Sevastopol, Smyrna=4, Build 2

Fall and Autumn 1908 Commentary:

Jim Burgess (**BOLD**)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Jack McHugh (Comic Sans MS)

Well, let's see what's going on here.

Germany has taken Norway and started to move forces against England. France slides into the North Sea and Belgium and will be in position to take Holland. But Germany is the one with two builds. The fight for Holland will be tricky, but Germany's builds should get

him into the North Sea soon, even if he only builds one fleet.

So, I was thinking before that Germany was going to keep working with France. The fact that he isn't makes this a much more dynamic game. Alliances very well could shift again, as they now do not look very stable. Attempting to "convoy to Edinburgh"

was admittedly a complete wish, but it signals what is happening, though France is the one to slide into the North Sea. I also think that Germany will have an interesting tactical battle over Holland in the next game year. I'm a bit less sure than Rick seems to be that Germany will get into the North Sea. It depends in part on how Russia reacts to the loss of Warsaw to Germany. That could have been planned; however that F Barents can be quite troublesome if it wants to be. Also Germany does get knocked back out of Trieste, that admittedly seemed to have been a bit of a stretch. But Italy really needed it....

Italy's had a rough year, dropping three SCs. He needs to cut some kind of deal with somebody, soon. A deal with France would appear to be timely for both of them. Right now they essentially have eight forces fighting over Tunis.

It is not clear what Italy should do, but he needs to do something. The deal with France that Rick suggests would be best for France, but may or may not be good long term for Italy. I would drop a fleet either way.

The situation in Russia and around the Black Sea is harder to figure out. Presumably people are lending SCs to other people in order to get some kind of alliance going. Russia has stayed at 6 SCs, even having lost two home SCs. So he'll still have two fleets on the Black Sea basin.

Agreed, this is looking like some kind of a stop France deal, which is what was needed. I'm not sure though in that case why giving two builds to Turkey helps anyone.

The adjustments should be interesting. As often happens, Italy has no good removal options. Turkey's builds will show whether he's going after Italy or Russia.

Agreed, there are interesting choices for everyone. How many fleets will Germany build? What will Italy remove, and what is the point of these two builds for Turkey?

Stay tuned, not much press to get any insight into behind the scenes issues.

Wow, interesting season as France goes from super power to a mere power, Germany looks like he's finally got the upper hand on Russia and Turkey returns from the dead to be a player again.

Let's go from west to east...France and Germany still look to be cooperating as France continues to deploy

forces back from England to the continent. I think its in both of their short term interest to cooperate, although if France wanted to stab Germany, the best time has past as Germany is only one center smaller than France at this point with two builds in hand.

Both powers have other fish to fry right now, Germany has Russia to worry about and France is going at it with Italy. Any war between France and Germany would only distract them from their effort to crush Italy and Russia.

Germany, Mike, is looking good--he's taken a Russian home center and despite his retreat in from Tri is able to help France keep the pressure on Italy. Mike is also getting some help from Turkey's Johnathan as he is putting pressure on Russia and, indirectly Italy, since Italy needs Russia.

Tim's Italy is now reaping the fruits of his slow movement against Austria and Turkey earlier in the game--he allowed France to redeploy to the Med and could not complete his destruction of Turkey after taking too long to take out Austria. Now Italy is faced with the ugly prospect of a three front war with Turkey in the east and France in the west and Germany in the north.

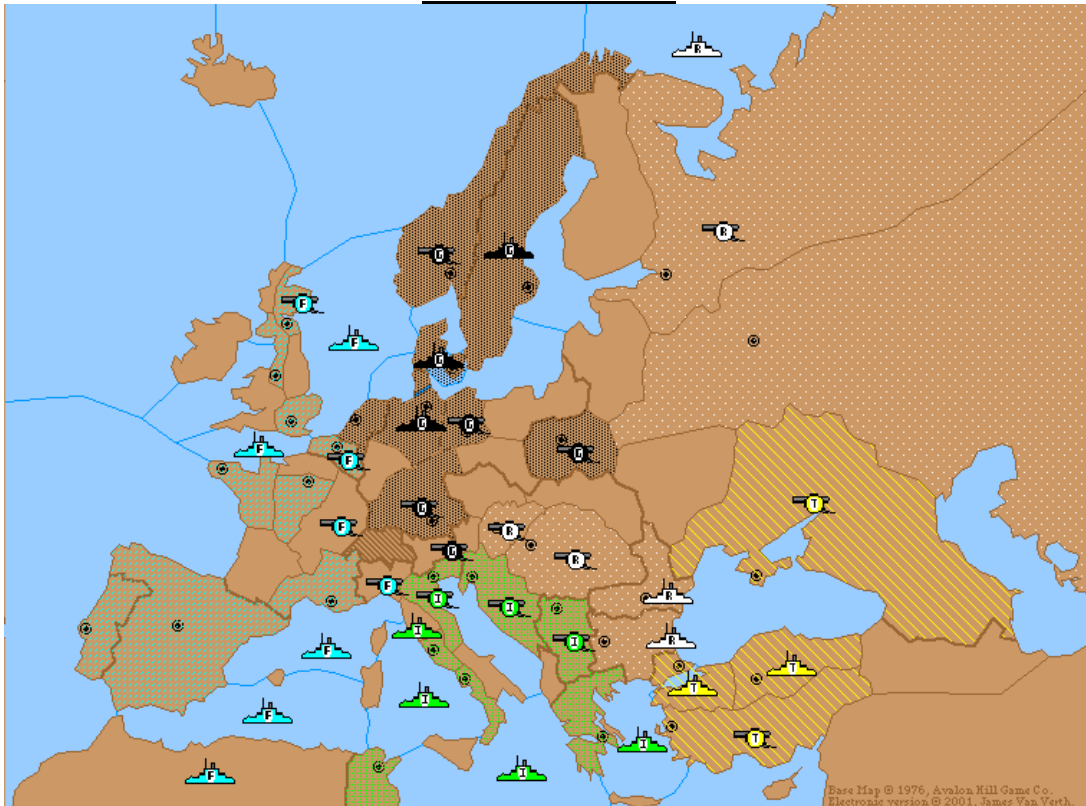
Peter's Russian position is little better--he's lost two of his four home centers and another center is directly threatened. This is not a winning recipe, in fact, its an out right disaster for Russia. Four of the six Russian units are concentrated in the Balkans with only two to defend his two remaining home centers so not only is Russia low on units but they are also not deployed to protect his two home centers. Peter needs to cut a deal with Mike or Jonathan quickly or he'll soon be reduced to an exile power in the Balkans.

Finally we have Jonathan's reviving Turkey--he and Germany are the big winners here picking up two supply centers each. Jonathan is actually in a better position than Mike in my opinion since Turkey faces very few threats--Italy and Russia are both being attacked by France and Germany, respectively, to bother with Turkey. This should give Jonathan a lot

of room to maneuver and a chance to rebuild Turkey's position.

My prediction is that the Franco-Germany alliance will last for another year or the loss of another center or two, each, from Russia and Italy, whichever comes first...

Winter 1908 Results



France: Has A Belgium, A Burgundy, A Edinburgh, F English Channel, F Gulf of Lyon, F North Africa, F North Sea, A Piedmont, F Western Mediterranean.

Germany: Build F Kiel, A Berlin.... Has F Kiel, A Berlin, F Denmark, A Munich, A Norway, F Sweden, A Tyrolia, A Warsaw.

Italy: Remove F Tunis..Has F Aegean Sea, F Ionian Sea, A Serbia, A Trieste, F Tuscany, F Tyrrhenian Sea, A Venice.

Russia: Has F Barents Sea, A Budapest, F Bulgaria(ec), F Rumania, A St Petersburg, A Vienna.

Turkey: Build A Smyrna, F Ankara..Has A Smyrna, F Ankara, F Constantinople, A Sevastopol.

PRESS

Galway - The Irish Republican Army Council noted that the French continue to treat their enemy's enemy as an enemy. The German's, who have valiantly fought off the Russian juggernaut, now find themselves facing a rear guard action against the French snipers. France has consistently attacked Russia's enemies, are the Italians the only force with any hope of defending Europe from a Franco-Russian stalemate? The mere thought is terrifying!

Winter 1908 Commentary:

Jim Burgess (**BOLD**)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Jack McHugh (Comic Sans MS)

I thought Turkey's F Ank to be somewhat disappointing...I know Russia has two fleets in the Bla already but why not go after Italy--that's where the real centers are and you'll want to keep the French navy as far west as possible. Clearly Jonathan wants

to keep working with Italy and only against Russia and his builds signal that quite clearly.

I agree with that, Russia's complete collapse is looking more and more assured. I see it as

Jonathan trying to send a REALLY clear signal to Italy, but it also suggests a limitation, what happens when Russia is gone? Doesn't Turkey want ARMIES in central Russia? We will see how it plays out. **EVENTUALLY** that F Ank could be in the Mediterranean and so Italy cannot feel completely safe.

Yes, it seems clear that Turkey's next targets are Bulgaria and Rumania. Unless he has some kind of deal to sink fleets so Russia can build armies.

But I doubt it.

Germany's build of F Kie is interesting since he could build it in Ber or just build two armies to signal his continued drive to the east. Curiously to see how France responds to this provocative build.

I agree, F Kie is in the model of "always keep your options as open as you can". Even if you do NOT attack France right now, you have leverage and a bargaining chip. I find this is one of the great difficulties that players have in raising their games to higher levels. How do you keep options open and use them to make more exciting games without being clumsy and ruining alliances? In some worlds of the hobby, F Kie would have caused France to send an angry note ending the alliance. That will not be what happens here, but you do have to play the player to some degree.

Germany is going West. He just stabbed France. I suspect he'll have all three fleets on the North Sea soon. Russia is completely dependent on Germany and won't cause trouble anytime soon.

Two other brief comments:

First, F Tun removal by Italy could have been a "if you build F Smyrna, I'm just going to come after you" order. Given that Turkey did as "told" then Italy doesn't really lose too much, though the tactics get rough if Germany comes back down (the F Kie is NOT that model). I do think the next year will be interesting to see if the alliances shift and if the

"take Peter out in Russia" move remains the focus of the other players.

I think the removal of F Tun makes the most tactical sense. Italy had been committing half his forces to defending one SC. Given the attacks by his Eastern neighbors, I don't think he can afford to ignore the developments in the Balkans. If he can get Turkey to hit the Russian possessions on the Black Sea, Italy may have some hope for advances in the Balkan area. Well, we would need to see something like Italy taking Bulgaria while Turkey takes Rumania.

Not seeing what the actual strategy for Italy is here.

Second, there IS some press, I always like to comment on the press. Fascinating press. Who do you think wrote it? Italy? I think perhaps Turkey, Jonathan, could be the author. Placing it in Galway as far from Turkey is "interesting". My hint is having known some of Jonathan's wide ranging interests from Derrida and musicology all the way to Harry Potter... and I think this might be how he is trying to "turn" the Italian view. We will see.

I'll guess this is from Italy himself. Or maybe it's Germany? It's certainly not France or Russia.

If this is from Germany, it's a complaint that the French are encroaching on his Western front. And here I thought Germany was the stabber.

I'll change my guess - I think this is Germany.

