

Diplomacy *World*

Diplomacy World #133 - Spring 2016 Issue



www.diplomacyworld.net

Notes from the Editor

Welcome to the latest issue of **Diplomacy World**, in a world where politics, religious battles and ethnic fighting make Diplomacy look like a game of solitaire. Sometimes it's good to distract yourself for a little while from the stresses of the real world; Diplomacy can help do that. You can attack your best friend, crush his nation and destroy his forces, take all his territory...and then the two of you can laugh and go get a pizza and a beer somewhere.

I think one of the most unfortunate things that can happen in the Diplomacy hobby is when two people can't separate the game from real life. I've seen lifelong friendships built among people who met through Diplomacy, but I have also seen some of those friendships torn apart when a player chooses not to ally with that friend. Diplomacy is a game (and a community)...it is best enjoyed when you allow the sting of deceit to teach you to watch your back next time, but leave that caution at the board or the computer screen. As with any other game, there are good sports and poor sports...there are people who lie constantly, and people who choose the timing of their lies very carefully. There are those who hate to lose but can accept it, and those who simply lose their cool. Don't be one of the latter people.

In fact, you can have a lot of fun dissecting a game after it is over. Why did you make that move? What made his offer seem more appealing than mine? In hindsight it can be easy to see that you should have done A instead of B, but discovering the motivations and reasoning behind other players' actions can be a very valuable and illuminating experience. And sometimes you get a blunt answer. "Why did you do XYZ when clearly LMNOP would have been better for you?" "Well, I chose XYZ because I was angry at you for taking Trieste and making you suffer had become more important to me than my short-term survival." Every reason is a legitimate one, even if you don't agree with it. Don't blame the person who made the "bad choice" but instead realize that your failure to see they might respond that way led to the situation in the first place.

And, sometimes the answer is "because I got suckered. I bought his lies. Sorry." Fair enough.

Oh well, enough of the lecture. This is a smaller issue than recent ones, but that's mostly because the Youngstown Demo Game is all finished but we haven't started a new Demo Game yet. Despite what some people (Jack McHugh, for example) think, I don't base my opinion of each issue on how many pages it has.

What I like to see is a nice variety of interesting articles. That means there is a better chance there will be a few to please any individual reader. There will never be an issue where everybody is interested in every article. The idea is to build variety while maintaining quality.

This issue does that pretty well. We have the welcome return of the Diplomacy World interview (with first subject Jim O'Kelley), for starters. There are articles on the upcoming World DipCon, some humor, strategy, scoring systems, Machiavelli, variants...granted there are some articles I had hoped to include that simply didn't arrive by the deadline, but that seems to happen every issue. Sometimes they show up for the following issue, and sometimes they NEVER show up. That's the nature of the beast.



I'll close by reminding you the next deadline for Diplomacy World submissions is July 1st, 2016.

Remember, besides articles (which are always prized and appreciated), we LOVE to get letters, feedback, input, ideas, and suggestions too. So email me at diplomacyworld@yahoo.com! See you in the summer, and happy stabbing!

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

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Ask the GM

By The GM

Dear GM,
What is your favorite country to play and why?

A Curious Fan

*Dear Fan,
The GM prefers to play with the most gullible people possible—someone who will support me into Bel when I'm playing Austria. As for what country, the GM believes it doesn't matter what country the GM draws as they all have their strength and weaknesses, the most important fact is the player.*

Your Pal,
The GM

Dear GM,
What is the dirtiest trick one can pull in Diplomacy?

A Player with a Conscience

*Dear Conscience,
The fact that you ask such a question means you should tell the GM where you will be signing up next so the GM may show his repertoire of dirty moves*

Your Pal,
The GM

Selected Upcoming Conventions

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

Tango In Taupo - Saturday April 9th 2016 - Sunday April 10th 2016 - Taupo, New Zealand - Contact: Grant Steel
grant_steel "of" roadshow.co.nz

2016 CODCon Open - Saturday April 9th 2016 - Sunday April 10th 2016 - Glen Ellyn, Illinois - Website:
<http://windycityweasels.org/codcon10>

Lexicon – Saturday April 23rd 2016 – Sunday April 24th 2016 - Clarion Convention Center, 1950 Newton Pike, Lexington, Kentucky - <http://lexicongaming.com/2016/>

Geekway to the West - Friday May 20th 2016 - Saturday May 21st 2016 - St. Louis, Missouri - Website:
<http://geekwaytothewest.com/index.html>

DixieCon XXX – Friday May 27th 2016 – Sunday May 29th 2016 – Chapel Hill, NC – Website –
<http://www.dixiecon.com>

Yorkshire DipCon 2016 - Friday June 17th 2016 - Sunday June 19th 2016 - The Lawns Centre, University of Hull, United Kingdom - <http://www.ukf2fdip.org>

Origins Game Fair - Friday June 17th 2016 - Saturday June 18th 2016 - Columbus, Ohio - Website:
<http://originsgamefair.com/>

World Diplomacy Championship at Weasel Moot X - Friday June 24th 2016 - Sunday June 26th 2016 - Chicago, Illinois - <http://windycityweasels.org/wdc2016>

ManorCon XXXIV - Friday July 15th 2016 - Sunday July 17th 2016 - Stamford Court, University of Leicester, United Kingdom - Website: <http://www.manorcon.org.uk>

World Boardgaming Championships - Friday July 29th 2016 - Saturday July 30th 2016 - Sevens Springs Mountain Resort, Pennsylvania - Website: <http://www.boardgamers.org/>

GenCon - Thursday August 4th 2016 - Saturday August 6th 2016 - Indianapolis, Indiana - Website:
<http://www.gencon.com/>

Winter Origins - Saturday December 17th 2016 - Columbus, Ohio - Website: <https://www.thecogs.org>

DW Interview with Jim O'Kelley (JOK), Interviewed by Jim-Bob Burgess (JBB)

JBB: So I used to be the Interview editor, and stepped away to try to spread out the work. But it has been clear to me for some time that if we want interviews, I'm going to have to do them. So here we are. Starting with Jim O'Kelley, leading up to the last weekend in June is a no-brainer too. I'm confident from the outset that this will be one of our best interviews. In general we're going to try to touch on three issues, World DipCon, how to do it, promote it, and discuss it; everyone looks at Chicago's local community these days as the hobby's best and most flexible, how do you create community?; and how do we keep recruits to the hobby engaged as they move around the country or the world. So, first, I usually ask interviewees to make an opening statement, about how they got into the hobby, key relationships, or anything else they want to mention to get us started.

JOK: I played for the first time as a freshman at the Harvard of the Midwest. My roommate—a guy we called The Shmed—introduced us to the game, and in time-honored tradition, we killed him. I think we played twice, and I really liked it, but there were lots of things to like as a college freshman.

About six years later, I rediscovered the game in the General, Avalon Hill's old gaming magazine. I bought a copy and started organizing games for my group of friends. It was tough getting six to commit, but I pulled off two games a year, all of which are documented in Laurent Joly's World Diplomacy Database. That wasn't enough for me, though, so after the first two games, and inspired by the General's two-part article about the postal game Leviathan, I jumped into the postal hobby.

That was June 1992, and for the next 10 years, I always had three to five postal games going. In the fall of 1997, I ran into Don Williams in a game in Cheesecake, Andy Lischett's venerable zine. Cheesecake is still going strong today.

Anyway, I thought I recognized Don's name but neither one of us could make the connection. Finally, I figured out that Leviathan had run in Don's postal zine, Fiat Bellum. I shared that with Don, which caused him to take a stroll down memory lane that culminated in him organizing a new Leviathan featuring the two of us, a couple of the original participants in Mark Fassio and Kathy Caruso, and three others, including you, Jim-Bob.

JBB: Yes, that was an extremely memorable game for me, especially for almost destroying my friendship with Mark Fassio, which luckily we were able to patch up as we both presently struggle against cancer. Mark is an inspiration to me every day.

JOK: That game was called Arsenic and Old Friends (I think it's Boardman Number was 1998-A), and the level of communication compared with my other postal games just blew me away. The World Diplomacy Championship happened to be in the States that year, at DixieCon in Chapel Hill, so someone pitched the idea of meeting there. I ended up traveling to my first tournament to meet three strangers from a postal game: Don, Faz and Steve Emmert.

Those three attended the next stateside WDC in Baltimore in 2000, along with you. Unfortunately, I had another commitment and couldn't attend, but I joined them at the North American Diplomacy Championship in D.C. in 2003.

My next tournament was the first I attended alone, the 2005 WDC in D.C. That's the one that hooked me, and when I got home, I resolved to build a Diplomacy community in Chicago that could support a tournament.

The Weasels played our first game in September 2005, and now here we are, about to host our second WDC in four years.

JBB: Let's start with the central details about World DipCon that prospective attendees need to know, what's the scoring system, when are the rounds, what are the rooming options, what other essential items do prospective attendees need to know? Of course, we begin with the website: <http://windycityweasels.org/wdc2016>. So people can go there for details, but give us the key sales pitch!

JOK: Well, let's get the dates out there first. It will be June 24-26. Chicago shows really well in June.

As I said, the 2005 WDC is the event that hooked me, so that's the one we're trying to model. WDC will be a five-round event, with the best three rounds counting for score. We're using the Sum of Squares scoring system to score the games, whereas the 2005 event used a draw-based system, and we'll have a top board whereas that one didn't, but the basic structure—two rounds on Friday, two on Saturday, and a final round on Sunday—with the safety net of two drop rounds is the same.

Those first two events I attended with Don, Faz and Steve, each time we took a round off to go out to eat, but in 2005, I played all five rounds. I know there are a lot of Diplomacy players who run marathons or half-marathons. That's something I'll never do. Playing five rounds of Dip in three days, or six in four as we did in Vancouver in 2007, that's my marathon.

So we're offering five rounds of Dip in a world-class city that's easy to get to. We're playing at Roosevelt University's vertical campus, which is right downtown in a building that was just going up when we hosted in 2012. It's a cool building. The room where we'll be playing is a charmless multipurpose room, but each of the dorm rooms that we've blocked has floor-to-ceiling windows with outstanding views of the lake, the park, the skyline, or combinations of the three.



There are hotels in the vicinity for players who prefer that, including the Congress Plaza, which was the site of the 2012 WDC. It's on the next block. And for players on tight budgets, there's a nice hostel right across the street from the venue.

And I think our best selling point is our club. At WACCon in 2006, I was talking with host Mark Zoffel about the possibility of a tournament in Chicago, and he said something that stuck with me: "We [meaning travelers] don't want to travel to events to be the event."



This will be our 10th Weasel Moot, and they've all been well supported by our local players. And many of the locals who will play this year will be guys who weren't around in 2012.

So five rounds of Dip in a world-class city with a bunch of people you haven't played with before, along with a bunch of people you look forward to seeing at big events

like this, including players from Europe, Australia and New Zealand. Yah, that's my sales pitch.

JBB: Great!!! It's going to be tremendous and I think calling this Deja Moot is the coolest idea ever. Of course Birmingham, Paris, and Chapel Hill each have hosted World DipCon three times, and Columbus also has hosted twice in the US. But if I've counted right, Chicago is the first place to hold a second WDC only four years after their first, Birmingham hosted WDC I and WDC III, but they were six years apart since we were only having WDC every two years then. So, this is the closest to a Deja WDC that we've ever had.



JOK: A few regulars on the circuit enjoy live-Tweeting tournaments, and I pride myself on coining the hashtags we use. At the final WAC, I came up with #UltimateWAC, and at the 2014 WDC, I coined #DixieOrBust. (I actually used that one in 2013, but it took off in 2014.)

Anyway, #DejaMoot seemed like a natural for our second WDC in four years, and I hope people will use it.

But it won't just be a repeat of 2012. For one thing, I'll be TDing it instead of Dan Burgess. And actually, when I presented the bid at the 2014 WDC, I hadn't planned on doing a top board. I changed my mind partly due to the persistence of guys like the Australian Peter McNamara, but mostly due to a great cross-promotional opportunity that popped up.

Last summer, Tim Jones and Tuan Ngyuen reached out to me with an exciting idea. Tim is an Australian player who is currently a moderator on webDiplomacy.net. Awhile back, he lamented in the webDip forum that he lacked opponents for face-to-face play. I sent him a private message, found out where he lived, and put him in touch with Andrew Goff and Mel Call. He's now hooked on the FtF hobby. Tuan, meanwhile, "owns" the webDip site.

Anyway, fresh on the heels of the great coverage on social media of the WDC in Milan last year, they pitched an idea of “broadcasting” a game each round from our WDC on webDip. I liked the idea so much that I changed my mind about a top board so that we could broadcast that one as well.

Tim has implemented the Sum of Squares scoring system on webDip, partly to facilitate our broadcast but also so that members of the webDip community can try out the system in advance of WDC. I believe they’re also trying to work in a chat feature so that people can see the moves and updated maps but also comment. I think that’s what people like best about the social media coverage of specific games—the ability to discuss and analyze the positions and try to predict the next moves.

So that piece of added technology will make this one feel a little different. Also, DiplomacyCast is talking about podcasting from the venue, and Chris Martin may do something with Peeriscope. Lots going on.

JBB: Wow, that’s going to be incredibly cool, I think it is the way we need to go to excite the E-Mail/Web communities to how much fun it is to play in FTF tournaments.

JOK: I agree, and to that end, I also think it’s important that our coverage includes a macro perspective of the tournament, not just looks in on specific games.



Another difference will be the venue, of course, although it’s less than a block from the Congress, so same neighborhood. Actually, I’ve been asked why we didn’t just go back to the Congress. We had that great room in 2012, the Florentine Room. But we got that as a free upgrade. We paid for the Windsor Room, which was a dreary, smoke-stained room with no atmosphere, but the Congress was overrun that weekend by a Harry Potter convention. The hotel needed the Windsor Room for that group, so they bumped us up to a much better location.

Unfortunately, going back to the Congress would have meant a significant demotion to the Windsor Room. Our room at Roosevelt is charmless, but at least it’s new and clean, and we’re able to offer affordable housing (\$87 and change per person per night) with awesome views.

So, yah, #DejaMoot will be #DejaDifferent. But I can promise you that we won’t be doing this again in 2020.

JBB: So, for me it will be hard to be Deja Moot, since that was the last time I spent with Don Williams before his death and I won’t be able to make Deja Moot, so it makes it a bit bittersweet for me, but I wish you ALL the possible good fortune that can be mustered.

JOK: I’ve said this before in this pub, but I’ll say it again: Don, Faz, Steve and I used to call our get-togethers “Weasel Moots.” That’s where the name of our club and our signature tournament came from—from those guys.

I’ve made a ton of friends in this hobby, and they were some of my closest. Especially Don. He attended the very first Weasel Moot (the tournament, not our get-togethers) and four of the first six, but I haven’t been able to get Faz or Steve to come out. As you mentioned, Faz has been sick, but I’m hopeful that this will be the year.

JBB: Yes, Faz has been having a particularly tough time in the last month or so (as have I, but nothing compared to him), but I hope he’ll feel better and make the trip up. I certainly will lobby it with him and Margie.

I think the “selection process” for the top board quickly has become widely accepted, largely, or at least partly through your efforts. Could you say something about the theory and practice of a Top Board at Something like DipCon or World DipCon and why you think it works?

JOK: Chris Martin used the selection method at the NADF Masters Invitational last year, and there was a funny photo on Facebook of him explaining the method to Yann Clouet. After 2012, a lot of people referred to the method as the Chicago Method, but we’ve always called it the French Method. I actually learned it from Laurent, and I think Yann was the first to use it.

We use it for our annual league championship game, the Weasel Royale, and for the championship for our bar league, the Bar Room Brawl, which is a subset of the league. Basically, in reverse seed order, we establish the power selection order.

The seventh seed starts it off by placing his card on the table. Then the sixth seed decides whether to select before or after him. Then the fifth seed chooses whether to pick before, after or in between them. And so on until all seven cards are on the table in order of selection. Then each player in selection order chooses which country to play. Reverse selection order acts as a tie-

breaker, so the person who picks first can't win a tied game, the person who picks second can only beat the person who picked first, and so on.

It's fun to participate in the selection, and it's fun to watch, so that's why I like to use it. It adds some drama and some interesting choices for the participants. What's more important, the country I play or the people I play next to? If I choose Country A, who are my neighbors likely to be? That sort of thing.

JBB: I think my main other questions at this point are what of the extra attraction events and how "Deja Moot" they are. First off, what about the Thursday night 8-10 PM Welcome night party, will it again feature a Dan Burgess run trivia event? This was a highlight and just as how Trivia Events are supposed to do, I really got to know Bernard Andrioli really well at that, which continued through the weekend, and continues to the present day. He has visited me in Boston.

JOK: We are definitely going to have a welcome party on Thursday night.

JBB: Another highlight, though somewhat less organized was the Karaoke Crawl. I didn't end up singing but wish I had, and IF that was happening again, and IF I was coming, I would prepare something and be ready. What's the plan for that?

JOK: There will definitely be a pub crawl that culminates in karaoke. That's a certainty. I'm not yet sure how formal the welcome party will be. Trivia was a lot of fun, but Dan is a budding entrepreneur with a trivia empire to manage. One of the reasons I'm TDing instead of him is that he couldn't commit to spending four days with us. So, we'll definitely do something fun on Thursday night to welcome our out-of-town guests, but will it involve trivia? That's a question we haven't answered yet.



JBB: Also, what about Hat Night, that sneaked up on me the last time, and I just needed to be prepared.

JOK: Yes, for sure. Friday night will be hat night—wear a good one, win a prize—and the team round will be Saturday morning.

Hat Night was actually my wife, Meghan's, idea. By the way, in 2012, she referred to our welcome party as "an ice cream social." She thought Hat Night would be funny, and it was, but it reminded me of one of the games I organized for my group of friends years ago. We all wore military-themed hats for that one, which was fun, but the Hat Night at WDC is all about being funny.

JBB: Indeed, so everyone going, get your hat together!!! So, I've been at this for a long time, having some responsibility or another for the New England hobby for about 30 years, and we've had at least four waves of that hobby, since they are so dependent on individuals. For example, Peter McNamara and Mel Call were central movers in the New England hobby at the beginning of the 2000's. I still remember that I was trapped in Chicago on 9/11, and Mel Call was trapped in LA arriving from Down Under. But then both Peter and Mel returned to Australia where they are trying to build hobby community down there. I want to explore some of this to see if we can better have hobby community multiply rather than grow and then fail. What do you think are the key aspects that are needed upon which to build local Diplomacy Hobby Community?

JOK: I'm a big believer in letting volunteers contribute in ways that they want to contribute, and we've been fortunate to have so many contributors to our success. Barry Johnson designed the database that I use to manage the club. Kevin O'Kelly drafted our club's charter. Peter Yeargin built the website. Eric Brown opens his beautiful home every year for our season-ending Weasel Pyle, and Dan Burgess always hosts the Weasel Royale club championship game. A bunch of other guys have hosted games, as well. And we've always had at least a couple of "Minutemen" players, guys I could call at the 11th hour to fill in for a player who canceled.

Then, of course, there are the guys who just want to play all the time. Their eagerness makes it possible to fill boards when the occasional players are ready for a game.

But those guys who want to play all the time tend to be the exceptions. The thing about Diplomacy is that the players you need to fill boards, the sixth and seventh players, they need to be reminded that they like to play Diplomacy. That's an easy thing for people to forget, especially coming off a bad game or a string of bad games.

So, filling boards takes a lot of hard work. It's usually not enough to post a game to a mailing list or on Meetup. If it's slow to fill, you need someone who's willing to reach

out to players personally, using whatever method works for that person—email, text, Facebook, whatever.

The Weasels have now played 298 games of Diplomacy. Not counting tournament games. Not counting premiere games (which is what we call our championship games). We've only played four of them with fewer than seven players. I've had to work at filling most of those boards. There are always exceptions. In February, we had a game that filled in 30 minutes. But most of the time, I've had to beat the bushes to round out boards.

There have also been many occasions where I've been the eighth guy. That's because I've taken a page from the airlines' book. I try to overbook. I'd much rather sit out with eight than play with six.

I think hobbies wane when the person who does what I've been doing burns out, steps back, or moves away. The person who steps up to replace them often doesn't understand the time commitment that goes into it, and they're not willing or able to put the work in. It's hard to blame them. We all got into this hobby to play games, not organize them.

JBB: I think partly because these things are based on individual personal relationships, when people leave communities and move elsewhere they tend not to do too well at "spreading the hobby." Peter McNamara and Mel Call, who CAME the longest way and went BACK the longest way are two of the exceptions. Alex Amann and Adam Silverman who were very active in organizing us in Boston, both moved to SF, and they through Edi got involved in the SF area group and both played in ConcordCon 2014, they've both dropped out pretty much since then.

JOK: But both will be at WDC!

JBB: Also going the other way, you've tried to send Weasels here to the New England hobby, but on our end that has been with almost NO success. AJ Roskam played with the Weasels until 2014 and WeaselMoot and CodCon in 2014, but then moved here, and I've been completely unable to blast him out to join any of our games or tournaments. We did a bit better with Ted McClelland, who came to both Boroughs 2014 and Boroughs 2015 played West of Boston, but he also hasn't really been integrated into our group and he hasn't come to either TotalCon or TempleCon that I've run to the South OR Carnage in Vermont, OR FTF games we try to organize. This question is a bit unfocused, but I hope we can make some progress on this back and forth.

JOK: I believe Ted has been hosting games with the Boston Backbiters group, so I think he's starting to get more involved, but you're right, when players move around, we usually don't see a smooth handoff from one community to the next.

I started the Weasels because I wanted to support the tournament hobby. I wanted to build a club that could support a tournament and from which we could develop travelers. We've been pretty successful on both counts, but one of the most frustrating things is the constant turnover. We've had more than a board's worth of active players move away: Greg Duenow is in Detroit now, Peter Yeargin is in Baltimore, Christian MacDonald is in Vancouver, Adam Berey is in Seattle, Aash Anand and Matt Kade are in the Bay Area, Ted McClelland is in Boston, and Nate Cockerill is back in Ohio. (And Peter Lokken will be moving soon to Rhode Island.) I'm sure there are others who I'm forgetting.

JBB: So, I'm definitely going to hook up with Peter when he gets here!!!

JOK: Yah, I'm excited that he'll be right down the street from you. But since moving away, all those guys have played locally or traveled to tournaments or, in Nate's case, are trying to build a local hobby, but other than Nate, Ted and Yeargin, none of them are plugged in like they were when they were here.

Ideally, players could move to a new location and fall right in with the local Diplomacy scene, which in turn would be connected to our North American hobby. Christian MacDonald wrote a great vision statement for the hobby seven years ago. I still have it saved in my email box. He wrote:

"Picture this. A 25 year-old college graduate finishes school, moves to Seattle for work, and browses the internet one day because something triggers a memory of a board game he used to play in college. He does a quick google search and comes across a sparkling and well maintained NADF website. He clicks on a map and sees there is a club operating in the Seattle area. He now has three e-mail addresses for key people within the local hobby. He sees the results of past games for the Seattle club, and upcoming games and their venues. He sees the history of the club, the membership, and past champions (if they have a championship). He can also click an area to browse Diplomacy tournaments across the U.S. and discovers there's a tournament every January right there in his backyard (except this year, cause it's in Paris). He also sees that hobby has a well organized Grand Prix network of tournaments and even has a prestigious one called DipCon, and he can see who has won the DipCon for the past 40+ years. He even can click on a link that displays the world rankings of anybody who's played in a Diplomacy tournament anywhere in the world in the past 20 years.

"Tell me this guy's not jazzed to get involved in the hobby playing a game he loves. (Particularly since he's new in town, and doesn't know anybody anyway!)"

Christian nailed it with that statement. Unfortunately, we're not there yet. I'm not sure we'll ever get there. Organizing Diplomacy players and communities is sort of like herding cats.



JBB: To return to World DipCon, how many people are you presently expecting? How many previous World Champions? Anyone you would want to predict as a surprise or expected winner?

JOK: I think attendance will be on par with our 2012 WDC, so about 80 players. We'll see, though. I'm always pessimistic about numbers when I'm a few months out. Right now, it's hard to see how we get to 80, but that's the number we're shooting for.

I'm excited to say that the reigning world champ, Toby Harris, will be attending. Last time around, we didn't get anyone from the U.K., possibly because our dates conflicted with a little event called the Olympics, which were in London that year. This time, Toby and Dan Lester both will be attending. We're also expecting at least five former world champions including one who has asked to be listed as a mystery guest.

There's some overlap here, but we're also expecting 11 past North American champions (WDC will double as the North American championship again, but there won't be separate victory conditions as there were in 2012). We're also expecting at least nine former Grand Prix champs, but that includes the TD, so only eight that the other players have to worry about. And at this point, I've heard from all the former Weasel Moot champs save Nick Rohn, our Alpha Weasel beta, who I'm sure will attend if he's able.

Plus, Dave Maletsky will be there, so we're expecting a lot of top-notch players.

I certainly don't want to paint a target on anyone by predicting a winner, so I'll just say that the only players who don't have a chance of winning the world championship are the ones who stay home.



JBB: Anything else I haven't asked you that you would like to say?

JOK: I'll just say that the work I've put into this hobby over the past 10 plus years has been a labor of love, but to steal a line from an old friend, WDC "is the end. I'm leaving NOW. I'm going. GOOD-Bye."

Maybe that's too dramatic, because I'm not really leaving, but as an organizer, I need to step down. At least until my little ones are a bit older. I've been spending too much time raising the Weasels and not enough time on raising them, so for the next four or five years or so, I need to step back and let the Weasels sink or swim with someone else at the helm.

And I hope the club will swim, because I still want to play, and play a lot. But my days as an organizer will soon be over.

For now.

JBB: Thanks, Jim, I completely understand and you NEED to do this and Meghan needs to hold you to it (have a great 5th Anniversary, I'm having my 30th with Charlotte a few weeks before yours and having relationships that come first is really important). And I hope there are the other organizers who will step up. I think this was a great reboot of the DW interviews, if anyone would like to be interviewed, please feel free to contact me, and I'll be happy to discuss it with you.

Lazarus: A Machiavelli *Machination*?

By Kevin Burt

What is a *gambit* when played later in the game?

I have become a frequent player of the Machiavelli variant at CondottieriGame.net. I've described Jose Martin's site as "elegant". It has to be played to be believed. Additionally, there is real-world diplomacy. The majority of players are Spanish – with no offense intended to my new Catalan, and Basques friends who reside in Iberia.

Communication presents a challenge. I use Google Translate liberally. My Spanish and Italian have improved. I think the interplay and exposure is especially good for Americans, who, I've read, can tend to be *chauvinistic*.

I've also said before that Machiavelli is to Diplomacy, as chess is to checkers.

After a pyrrhic war between myself as France, and Genoa, I finally prevailed. With only one army, and it an elite unit, contained on Corsica, and no other income producers, my opponent quietly left. We both committed violations of *Regola Numero Uno*, overlooking it is a *game*. It became personal.

With his quiet departure, I publically complimented his tenacity and perseverance. He was, most definitely, a worthy opponent.



I then learned about the Lazarus *machination*. He hadn't left at all. He returned with a stunning walk out of the tomb and sent me reeling.

The site has a surrender option. "Dedication" points, called "Karma" on the site, are deducted, and a replacement has to be found. I had to grudgingly admire his courtesy in just departing, and not surrendering and thereby delaying an inevitable conclusion.

My third mistake, in quick succession, was to take the situation at face value. I could take my time in taking that last piece of property – which had the lowest income factor.

A year or two cycled on.

"Lazarus, is that you?"

He hadn't quiet left – he had *quietly* sat on the sidelines. He earned some income, but his ally, a significant power, added a great deal of income.

As we began the spring season adjustments phase, he built on that *idle* property. He was now adjacent to my elite unit and he bought it.

Like his namesake, this Lazarus is righteous. His ally is the Papacy.

The game has not concluded. I'll pass on the *dénouement* to the Editor.

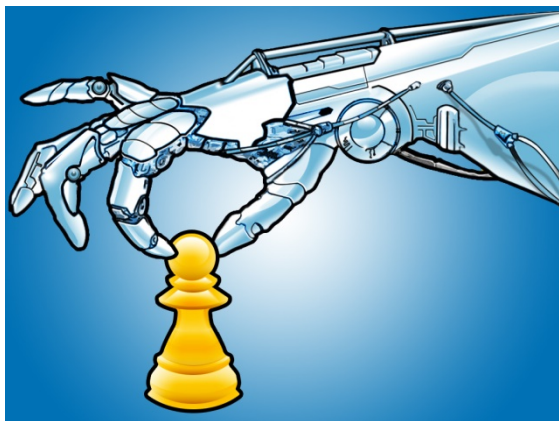
Kevin is an inveterate Machiavelli appassionato — both the man and the game. You're most welcome at his Facebook page: [Machiavelli.the.man.the.game](https://www.facebook.com/Machiavelli.the.man.the.game). He lives in Florida.



A Less Chaotic Italy — Artificial Players and Alternatives to Artificial Intelligence

by Zachary Jarvie

A few years back, while living in central Nevada, I posted an inquiry in the playdiplomacy.com forums to see if there were any other players in the area who wanted to get together for a face to face game. One of the most active and popular members of that community replied by posting a picture of a tumble weed blowing in the wind. I took the response with good humor as it was no doubt intended, but the harsh truth was no less sad. In the dusty expanse of the Great Basin, I really would need to invite the tumble weeds just to fill out a Diplomacy board. But as I understand it, finding six other players is a problem even if you don't live in an actual desert landscape. It's because of this that I developed an interest in variants of diplomacy that simulate the presence of a missing player.



As many of you already may know the subject of artificial intelligence, specifically as it applies to games, was very much in the news this last March. Computer programs capable of besting the world's top Chess players have been around for many years. But only within recent months has a computer been able to play on the same level as a world class Go player.¹ I have no background in either the fields of computer programming or artificial intelligence; so this article has nothing of substance to contribute to any efforts to create a computer program capable of playing a game of Diplomacy. Also, to wade into that subject would require more in the way of philosophy, or just pure science fiction, than I am partial to. I can hear it all now; **"We would have to strip the game of its soul or else imbue a machine with one. Blah, blah, blah."**

I'm just a guy who wants to fill a board. So back to the essential question; what do we do when we really want to play a seven player Diplomacy game but we only have six people available? Let's first examine the six player variant that is present in the 2008 rule book by Avalon Hill.

"Six Players: Eliminate Italy. Italian units hold in position and defend themselves, but don't support each other. Units belonging to any of the players can support them in their holding position. If Italian units are forced to retreat, they're disbanded."

The chief merit of the "official" rules for 6 players is that it is both easy to understand and implement. It's just not very satisfying as the Italian player takes no action to advance its own interests, . . . in fact, it takes no actions at all. But to create a system in which Italy advances its own interests and actually tries to win the game would require the addition of more rules and more-and-more complicated procedures, eventually making the game unplayable — at least without an independently operating computer A.I. But is it possible to create a simulated player without writing a million lines of computer code?

As a matter of fact, Edi Birsan has already solved much of the problem for us with his variant **Chaos Italy San Francisco Style**². We don't need to become computer programmers or bother with crafting an artificial intelligence in order to create an artificial player. We need only lend the artificial player our own human intelligence and make the moves for it. The rules for this variant are fairly straightforward.

1. Each player submits a set of orders for Italy with their own orders for the Spring and Fall.
2. Once the orders are submitted, a six-sided die is thrown starting with the order around the edge of the map from Italy so that the order is France=1, England=2 etc.
3. The person that wins the die roll has his orders read first for Italy. No other orders for Italy are read.
4. If there are retreats, the retreat **MUST** be made.
5. If it is **FALL**, the player who winds up owning Italy cannot get credit for any Italian supply center it takes that year. So, if Austria winds up in Venice in Fall 1901, and it also owns Italy for that Fall move, then Italy still owns Venice.
6. The owner in the Fall decides the Fall retreats.
7. Builds and removals are also done by random roll with the orders as submitted.

With only just a few additional and easy to understand rules we have an artificial player that actually appears to be somewhat engaged in playing the game, or at least is

making things more difficult for some of its neighbors. There is the downside that each player must go through the trouble to write orders for the Italian pieces knowing that there is only a 1 in 6 chance of them being read each season. But that strikes me as a very small price to pay to get a simulated seventh player with only a half page of additional game rules. Marvelous!

Mind you, the purpose of the *Chaos Italy* variant is to create a fun fake player rather than a self interested fake player. *Chaos Italy* is like a King who has staffed his governing cabinet with the ambassadors of all the surrounding countries. This mad (or simply apathetic) monarch casts lots each season to determine whose advice he should take. But worst of all, there are never any consequences for bad advice and no incentives for governing the nation well. No one is ever elevated in trust and no one is ever placed in disfavor. Every year all of these traitorous advisors have the exact same chance of being selected to run the affairs of the Italian state as they did the previous year. Although *Rule 5* is a very good mechanic to prevent players from taking extreme liberties with Italy, it still offers no actual consequences for attacking the Italian nation and taking its supply centers. We have to ask ourselves; what kind of self respecting Italian would continue to give a 1 in 6 chance of controlling his military to some Turkey who has just pinched Naples?

The only real motivation the other players have in directing Italian units is to use the green blocks as a cudgel against the other players. As long as other players are issuing orders for Italy this will always be the case, at least to some degree. The question before us is this: Can we create a set of incentives for the players so that they start issuing orders for Italy that are not only good for themselves, but also good for Italy as well?

My solution is to roll a pair of six-sided die instead of only one. Rolling two of the spotted cubes allows for a greater probability of rolling certain numbers as opposed to other numbers. This is shown in the table, below.

2D6 roll	Probability	
2	2.78 %	
3	5.56 %	
4	8.33 %	
5	11.11 %	
6	13.89 %	
7	16.67 %	
8	13.89 %	
9	11.11 %	
10	8.33 %	
11	5.56 %	
12	2.78 %	
Total	100 %	

We can rearrange the above table to place each die roll in order of decreasing probability and give two spots on this table to each of the six players. You will notice that in order to have two spots for each player I have added a space for "rolling a 1" which is impossible with two dice and thus has a zero percent chance of happening.

2D6 roll	Probability	Players
7	16.67 %	Player 1
6	13.89 %	Player 2
8	13.89 %	Player 3
5	11.11 %	Player 4
9	11.11 %	Player 5
4	8.33 %	Player 6
10	8.33 %	Player 6
3	5.56 %	Player 5
11	5.56 %	Player 4
2	2.78 %	Player 3
12	2.78 %	Player 2
1	0.00 %	Player 1
Total	100.00 %	

Each player begins the game with an equal (1 in 6, or 16.67%) chance of controlling the Italian units. If we allow the events of the game to move each player's position up or down on the table, certain players will gain greater influence over Italy while others will have less influence. Now we have created a system that we can use to represent shifting Italian biases towards or against each player.

Next we only need to formulate a few rules for how and when players increase or decrease their personal standing with our imaginary Italian. One of the things we can incorporate is an increase in position for players who issue orders that increase the Italian's supply center count. Players that help the Italian get bigger will be rewarded with an increased (but not absolute) chance of controlling Italy in the future. The idea is that it might loosely mimic how you interact with real players. Give someone good advice and he just may listen to you with increased regularity. Screw someone over and they are more likely to work with your enemies. Naturally, we must incorporate a significant decrease in position for players that attack Italy and take its supply centers. This means we can eliminate the need for *Rule 5* from the original *Chaos Italy* variant. It will now be OK to stab Italy if that is what you really want to do; Italy can now "get upset with you" as a result!

If the players are given enough incentive to play Italy well, and not solely for their own short term benefit, this approach could result in creating a simulated player that might be able to do more than just briefly defend the Italian Peninsula. We can't expect too much; this kind of artificial player will always end up becoming someone else's tool. We shouldn't expect to ever see an artificial Italian lead the board in supply centers. But it may not be out of the realm of possibility to see it play a small

role in eliminating an actual human player and then turn and try to "stab" one of its former "allies".

Notice that even if a player were to attack or otherwise offend Italy enough to be reduced to the bottom two positions on the above table, they would still have a (2.78%) chance of rolling box-cars and having their orders read for the Italian pieces. Likewise a player who can secure the top two spots has a slightly better than 30% chance of controlling Italy on subsequent turns. If two allied players could control the top four positions on the table, then their alliance would have a better than 55% chance of controlling the Italian pieces allan. each subsequent turn. This strikes me as very much like the dynamic in a three-way alliance. It all goes very well until two of the players decide to stab the third or someone just flakes out.



The last thing I would want to say is that I see no reason why eliminated players in this or in any version of Chaos Italy need to leave the game. I don't think an eliminated player should ever just be allowed to assume complete control over Italy. However, I do believe that eliminated players can and should remain at hand in the event that a roll of chance allows them to exact some sweet revenge on the rest of the board.

In order to keep this article fairly theoretical (and reasonably short) I'll post the actual rules for my variant in a separate article.³ It is my honest wish that all of your future games of Diplomacy have seven players. But failing that, I hope that I've intrigued you enough to give **Critical Italy** a try at your next shorthanded house game.³

Article Footnotes

1. In March of 2016 AlphaGo, an AI developed by Google's DeepMind unit, defeated the 18-time World Go Champion, Lee Sedol of South Korea, in each of the first 3 games of a best of 5-game match on a 19x19 board. It's been said that this historic achievement in Computer AI came ten years earlier than experts had predicted. Lee Sedol would come back to win Game 4 before losing the 5th and final game to the machine.
2. I made an effort to contacted Edi Birsan and Adam Silverman to learn what I could about the initial creation of the *Chaos Italy* Variant. To paraphrase what Adam told me: *Chaos Italy* arose as players tried to develop a solution to the inevitable no-shows at house games. Part of the reason it was called "San Francisco Style" is that the rules somewhat organically developed over time (in the Bay Area). Probably no one person can be singly credited with invention of the variant. The origin likely came from a variant for 6 players played in Boston where instead of Italy being neutral, it has set moves (Rom S Ven, Ven S Rom is ordered in perpetuity, and then: S01: Nap-Ion; F01: Ion-Tun; W01: Build F Nap; S02: Nap-Ion; then Tun S Ion, Ion S Tun, Rom S Ven, Ven S Rom in perpetuity). The idea was to make Italy a tougher nut to crack (although it does allow someone to eventually walk-in to Naples). The system was evolved so that Italy could make real moves, and over time the concept and variant rules of *Chaos Italy* were born. A lot of the ideas came from Edi; but probably other players a well. But the "formal" rules, those were organized and compiled by Edi Birsan.
3. See **Critical Italy**, printed in this issue. You can also download a printable, single page, (.pdf) copy of the rules at;
https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BwO_MmwkrRyHb1ZkMIRuZUZzeDA/view?usp=sharing

What Happens When A Diplomat Runs Into a Diplomat?

By A/GIS/IPS/RL/RC, SA-2 and Larry Peery

Have you ever wondered what would happen when a Diplomat ran into a diplomat in the bureaucratic jungle that is known as "Foggy Bottom?" Well, come along with me and share my recent experience.

Some weeks ago, while thinking about Allan B. Calhamer and Henry A. Kissinger, I got to wondering if the State Department had ever had any interest in or done anything with ABC's game, Diplomacy. Seems like a pretty simple question, right? Ah, little did I know.

I went to the State.gov web site and checked with my usual contacts but nobody seemed able to answer my question. Undeterred I decided to explore a path through The Government's bureaucracy that I had only used years ago when I was researching my brother's assassination by the Libyans. Perhaps, I thought to myself, a FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) query would answer my question: yes, no, or maybe?



So I found the appropriate link, filled out the information asked for about ABC and the game Diplomacy, and sat back and waited for a response. Since I'd sent an email request I was expecting an email reply but instead I got a real, posted form letter response. Wow, I was really impressed!

From here I'll let A/GIS/IPS/RL/RC, SA-2 take it away:

(From the front of the over-sized envelope)

United States Department of State, Washington, D.C.
20520, Official Business, Penalty for Private Use, \$300,
A/GIS/IPS/RL/RC, SA-2
An Equal Opportunity Employer
Postmark: Postage paid \$.00.485, March 01, 2016,
Mailed From Zip Code 20520.
Addressed to: Mr. Lawrence Perry, 3275 Navigator
Circle, Oceanside, California 92056
(A typed mailing label was used for the address. First

red flag goes up when I saw that A/GIS/IPS/RL/RC, SA-2 had misspelled my last name, but that's hardly unique to the State Department. After all, the Veterans Administration had done the same thing on David's grave marker and he was a real hero!)

(OK, on to form letter.)

United States Department of State, Washington D.C.,
20520

/Official Seal/

Stamped Date: February 27, 2016

Dear Requester:

RE: /handwritten/: Allan B. Calhamer & the game of
DIPLOMACY

This is in response to your request dated
/handwritten/ Feb. 6. We have assigned Case Control
Number /handwritten/ F-2016-00882 to your request.
Based on our review of your correspondence, we have
determined that we cannot process your request for the
following reason(s):

☒X___ You have not reasonably described the records
you seek in a way that someone familiar with
Department records and programs could locate them.

___ You have not provided identifying information
(such was your date and/or place of birth, or the date
and/or place of birth for all parties associated with your
request: citizenship status for all parties associated with
your request).

___ You have not provided proof of your identity (see
attached information sheet pertaining to certification of
identity).

☒X___ Some or all of the records you have requested do
not appear to be State Department records (other
agency information may be enclosed).

___ The records you seek are in the public domain.

___ Your request is not dated.

___ You have submitted your identifying information
on forms that were not issued by the State Department,
which we do not accept.

___ You have not agreed to pay the fees associated
with the processing of your request.

___ Your request is not a FOIA Request.

___ Your request was not submitted in English.

Accordingly, your request is invalid and your case has
been closed.

___ Please see the enclosed information sheet
pertaining to access to third party information.

___ Please see the enclosed information sheet
pertaining to custodial verification.

Should you want to contact us, you may call our FIOA
Request Service Center on (202)-261-8484 or send an
email to FOIAstatus@state.gov. If you want information
concerning how to file a request, please refer to the
Information Access Guide which is available at
www.foia.state.gov. Please refer to the Case Control

Number in any communication.

Sincerely,

Requester Communications Branch /handwritten/: KGB
& a cute little rubic, Office of Information Programs &
Services.

The Department of State is responsible for formulating and executing U.S. foreign policy and primarily maintains records dealing with U.S. foreign relations. The Department also maintains records of applications from U.S. citizens for U.S. passports and visa requests from non-citizens to enter the U.S., records on consular assistance provided to U.S. citizens abroad, and records of Department employees.

Based on our review of your correspondence, we have determined that we cannot process your request because you have not reasonably described the records you seek in a way that someone familiar with Department records and programs could locate them. As the Department of State consists of hundreds of offices and overseas posts, with many different filing systems, your request should be specific, detailed and include as much of the following as might be relevant:

☒ Please specify or narrow the time frame of your request;

☒ Please narrow the scope of your request;

☒ Type of record, subject matter, countries and/or organizations involved;

☒ Circumstances which lead you to believe the records exist;

☒ Full description of incidents, meetings, events, persons involved, etc., pertaining to the documents requested;

☒ If persons are involved, are they public figures or deceased individuals.

Documents about a Deceased Person

For deceased individuals, unless the death has been widely reported, please provide proof of death, e.g., a newspaper obituary or a copy of a death certificate, or advise us that none will be forthcoming.

Based upon the information contained in your communication, some or all of the records you see may no longer be in the possession of the State Department. The majority of State records (excluding passport and visa records) that are 25 years or older and considered to be permanent are transferred to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in accordance with Title 22, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 171.6.

Accordingly, you should direct your request to:

FOIA Officer, NARA, 8601 Adelphi Rd., Room 3110,

College Park, MD 20740, Tel: (301) 837-FOIA, FAX:
(301) 837-0293, E-mail: foia@nara.gov,
<http://www.archives.gov/foia/index.html>

And there you have it, the State Department's response to my FOIA query about Allan B. Calhamer and the game DIPLOMACY.

However, I'm not discouraged and I don't intend to give up. After all, I remember how, in David's case it took the General Services Administration seven years after he died to cough up the: 2 Rolex watches (one real and one fake), \$7,000 in cash, 11 credit cards, a defunct airline (TWA) ticket with a \$6,200 balance on it and one cancelled passport. And, after thirty years, I'm still waiting for the US Navy, NSA or CIA to admit that he didn't die of natural causes in Siracusa, Italy as his Italian-provided death certificate showed, but as a result of the 1986 Gulf of Sidra "Zone of Death" incident with Libya; and in fact was actually assassinated by Gaddafi's agents for an entirely different reason (e.g. oil).

So, I'll be sending another FOIA query off to the Statement asking: 1) what equal opportunity employer positions I'm eligible for; 2) how I can narrow a request on a topic as specific as "the game DIPLOMACY"; and, most importantly, 3) Is KGB with the cute little rubic in the Requester Communications Branch really a State Department employee, a former Soviet KGB agent, or a secret agent of the Diplomacy Illuminati? I'll let you know what response, if any, I get.

In the meantime, I'm sure tracking down the answers to those questions will keep the diplomats in Foggy Bottom and the bureaucrats in College Park busy for a while.



Destruction and Discretion

By Joshua Danker-Dake

Progress or stagnate.

Diplomacy is a game of efficiency: you have a limited number of turns in which to employ a limited number of units. The players who are best able to do this are those most likely to achieve tactical superiority.

Tactical efficiency goes beyond the basics of giving sufficient support, not holding unduly, not leaving holes in your lines, and so forth. There are a lot of little ways to get ahead, many of which come only with experience and/or a comprehensive understanding of the game rules. Let's look at a couple.

You're no doubt familiar with the destroy rule: a dislodged unit cannot retreat to an occupied space (obviously), the space the dislodging unit came from, or *any vacant space that was contested on the same turn* (i.e., a space that experienced a bounce). I've italicized this last bit, as it's the part of the rule that new players are most likely to be unfamiliar with (and to be taken unawares by). It's also a part of the rule that you can use to your advantage.

Why destroy units? First and foremost, because it's quite satisfying. Second, because it can be a great way to bring down an opponent's efficiency. Within the structure of Diplomacy, moving a unit far from home is a substantial investment—again, limited turns to move limited units. Limited opportunities to move freely across the board—opportunities that are greater early on in the game, when a third of the game's centers are unclaimed and a third of the units unbuilt. When you destroy a unit, sending it all the way back to its home center to be rebuilt, you wipe out that time (turns) investment.

For example, if you're Germany and I'm Turkey and you dislodge my army in Bohemia, I can retreat to Vienna, perhaps, and I'll be right back after it on the next turn. But if you manage to *destroy* that same army, it's going to take me five turns (at least) to hike all the way back there, and at least four to get that unit back to my front lines where it can help its cohorts. Most inefficient.

Keep in mind, though, that you never want to dislodge a unit in the first place if it's going to be able to retreat to a better position (e.g., deeper into your territory, or into one of your supply centers). Any time you dislodge an enemy unit, you ought to have a decent idea of where it's going—or at least, where it's *not* going.

If that unit only has one (or maybe two, in the right circumstances) potentially valid retreat, you might have a

chance at destroying it. Can you take away its only valid retreat? By moving to that space, perhaps, or ordering a self-standoff there? If so, is it worth it? Can you spare the manpower?

If you answered any of those questions with, "I'm not sure," then remember this tip, which will help you in every strategy game ever made: ask yourself what your opponent is going to do in response to your action.

When forced to disband a unit because of the net loss of a supply center, I'm going to disband the unit I feel is in the least important position. Which is it? If my home centers are safe, it will likely be a unit that's not on the front—one that might not affect the balance of power as it pertains immediately to you.

But if my home centers are under attack, this disband will probably be a unit far from home, as I'm looking to circle the wagons. (I mean if a third party is attacking my home centers—if you're the one doing it, you probably aren't too worried about destroying my units).

In short: with an eye toward how your opponent will respond, choose your best target, and do as much damage to it as you can.

Not to get all Sun Tzu on you, but there's another side of this coin: when *not* to dislodge or destroy.

Recall that any dislodged unit can be disbanded even if it has a valid retreat. Picture this: things are going badly for me and my home centers are feeling the pinch. You dislodge one of my units that's a fair distance from the heat of the most pressing action (a candidate for the first unit off the board should I lose a home center). But if I haven't lost a home center, I can disband that dislodged unit and rebuild it at home. That ability to rally the troops could benefit me tremendously—and you inadvertently helped. Better for you to *not* dislodge me in such a case, and to work against me in some other way instead, to find a way to make that unit languish ineffectively where it is.

There are a lot of principles at work here: thoroughly understanding the rules, perceiving the possibilities the board offers, anticipating what your opponent will do on the current turn and the subsequent one, identifying what will benefit you most in the long run.

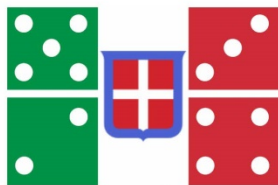
Every game of Diplomacy you play offers lessons on some if not all of these topics. Keep after it with honest self-analysis, and you'll improve.

Critical Italy

by Zachary Jarvie
printed in Diplomacy World 133

a six player **Diplomacy** variant,
inspired by *Chaos Italy*

the game of **Diplomacy** is published by Avalon Hill & Hasbro



For this **Diplomacy** variant you will need pair of six-sided dice as well a leader board with the names of each player on cards that can be moved up and down the board. A chalk board or dry-erase board could also be used.

Set up your leader board to look identical to the one below. Possible dice rolls (2D6) are listed in order of decreasing probability. The order and placement of these numbers will remain static throughout the game. Each player has two positions on the leader board and starts the game with an equal (1 in 6) chance of having one of their numbers rolled.

2D6 Roll	Player/Power
7	 England
6	 Russia
8	 Germany
5	 France
9	 Turkey
4	 Austria
10	 Austria
3	 Turkey
11	 France
2	 Germany
12	 Russia
" The Pit "	 England

Begin play and negotiations as normal. Roll the dice after orders have been submitted but before they have been revealed. The person that wins the die roll is Italy's Owner for that season and has five additional minutes to submit a set of orders for Italy. No other orders for Italy need to be written or revealed.

Each season re-roll the dice to select a new Owner for Italy. If there are retreats, the retreats **MUST** be made by Italy's Owner for that season. Builds and removals are also done by rolling of the dice to select a new Owner. Builds for Italy **MUST** be made and cannot be waived.

After each Spring and Fall adjudication, prior to writing Build orders, the leader board is adjusted to reflect the changes in each players level of influence with Italy.

Apply each of the following steps in order. Steps 1, 2, and 3 are done after both the Spring and the Fall Adjudications. Steps 4 and 5 are only done after the Fall Adjudication.

If Italy gets to 18 supply centers, then it wins the game!

After both the Spring and the Fall Adjudications

Step 1: For each Power that issued a MOVE order resulting in any kind of standoff (per Diplomacy game rules) with an Italian unit — move all leader board positions **down one**

Step 2: For each Power that dislodges, or supports the dislodgment of, one or more of Italian units — move all leader board positions **down three**

Step 3: Move, **up** by **two**, all leader board positions of Powers that accomplish one or more of the following;

- Supported one or more Italian units to successfully MOVE into any supply center
- Supported one or more Italian units to successfully HOLD in any supply center
- Successfully CONVOY one or more Italian armies into any supply center

After the Fall Adjudication

Step 4: Adjust the leader board positions of both the Spring and Fall Owners as follows;

- If Italy increased its supply center count — move all positions belonging to both Owners **up two**
- If Italy decreased its supply center count — move all positions belonging to both Owners **down two**
- A player that owns Italy in both the Spring and the Fall receives the credit (up or down) for both seasons
- Double the downward movement if Italy lost any of its Home Supply Centers. Double the upward movement if any Italian Home Supply Centers were retaken

Step 5: For each Power that took any supply centers away from Italy — move all leader board positions **down five**

When executing each step, move each position of all the affected players simultaneously. When players move on the board they displace players who are not moving with them; each position is always occupied by one and only one player.

Players can only move as far up or down as the leader board will allow and cannot pass others who are also instructed to move during the same step. Any unused movement is lost and has no affect on subsequent steps.

Eliminated players continue to move up and down on the leader board and can still write orders for Italy when and if they are selected by the dice. If a player leaves the game location, roll the dice to reassign their leader board positions.

" The Pit "

When rolling the dice to determine Italy's Owner for each Spring, Fall, and Build Season; check to see if the player that occupies "The Pit" has a unit occupying, or has previously captured and now controls, an Italian Home Supply Center (Venice, Rome, or Naples).

If so; the winner of the dice roll (Italy's new Owner) acquires the pit position at the bottom of the leader board, stealing it from the other player. In this way players can lose, or gain additional, positions of influence.

Drawmongery, Soloism and the Way Diplomacy is Scored

By Thaddeus Black

This article proposes, specifies, justifies and analyzes a straightforward scoring convention to reduce the incidence of unnecessary draws in the game of Diplomacy.

Introduction

Some Diplomacy players are alliance-oriented; others are stab-oriented. Some seek partners with whom equally to divide the map; others risk ruin against a chance at sole victory. Some value the drawn result; others spurn such a result. Some keep faith till the end; others shortly strike down all who stand in their way. In brief, we have *drawmongers* and *soloists* in Diplomacy. Saith the poet, "Oh, East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet." [Black, *Dip. Pouch*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1998. Cohen, *ibid.*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2002. Kipling, 1889.]

The poet never played Diplomacy, though, did he? At Diplomacy, the drawmonger meets the soloist, and the soloist the drawmonger, at almost every table at which he plays! Any, arbitrary selection of seven players may include players of both, contrasting styles, and probably will. The drawmonger and the soloist are familiar features of the diplomatical topography of the game.

Still, the poet had a point. *In attitude*, the drawmonger and the soloist seldom do meet. After more than 50 years of Diplomacy play, the chasm between the drawmonger and the soloist yawns as broadly as it has ever done.

Like Berch, Johnson, Staats and Cohen, I am a soloist. The article you are reading, which regards scoring conventions, will be best appreciated by fellow players of the soloist's creed. [Berch, *Dip. World*, no. 34, 1983. Johnson, *ibid.*, no. 63, 1991. Staats, letter to the editor, *ibid.*, no. 64, 1991. Cohen, *op. cit.*]

Scoring conventions

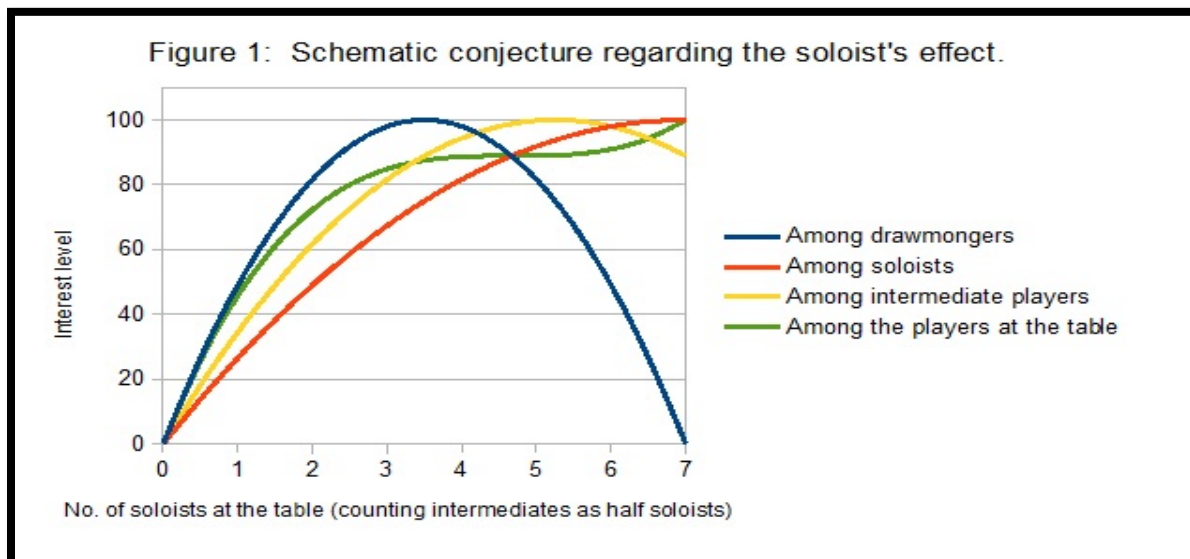
Traditionally, Diplomacy is scored by Allan B. Calhamer's convention. Calhamer, the game's inventor, awards a single point for solo victory, dividing the point equally between survivors in the event of a draw.

Calhamer's is not a bad convention. It is simple. It is obvious. It maintains a constant sum (a sum whose fine virtues my article in issue 130 has already explored). It resembles the usual convention of chess. Our hobby has always regarded Calhamer's convention as standard for the game of Diplomacy. As far as I know, it should regard it as standard, and probably always will.

To the soloist however, Calhamer's convention carries a significant flaw: Calhamer affords the draw too much credit.

A conjecture and an asymmetry

Though one can have fun at Diplomacy against almost any opposition, some kinds of players are more enjoyable to play against than others.



What kinds? You could probably get a lot of opinions on that question. This article asks about two, specific kinds:

the drawmonger; and the soloist. You also have players of intermediate style, of course.

Examine Fig. 1, which conjectures that players enjoy Diplomacy more, or enjoy Diplomacy less, depending in part on how many soloists happen to sit at the table. A player of intermediate style can be counted in the figure as half a soloist, which suggests the figure's blue (drawmonger's perspective), yellow (intermediate's perspective) and orange (soloist's perspective) curves.

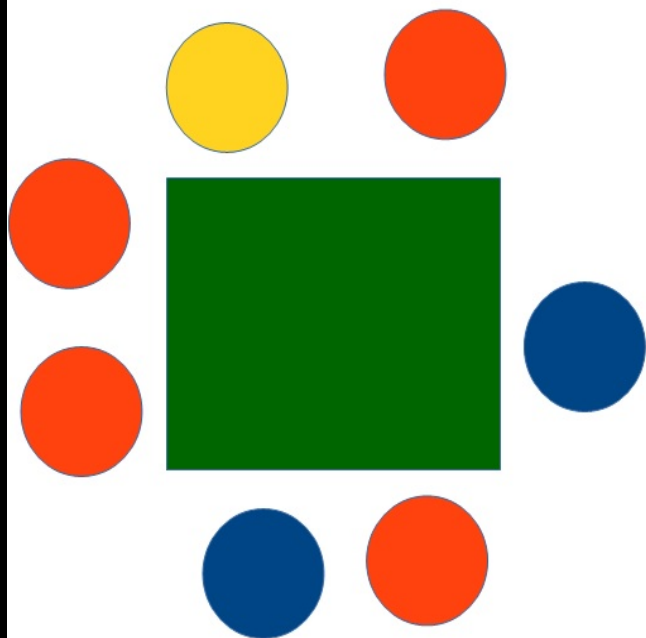
To the soloist, the larger the number of fellow soloists at the table, the better. Stabs on all sides keep the game fluid. Stable alliances between a soloist's opponents constrict opportunities for meaningful negotiation. In my observation, soloists actually do not mind having a few drawmongers at the table, so long as the drawmongers are not too many; but *soloists do not need drawmongers* to make a good game.

The drawmonger's position does not mirror the soloist's. To the extent to which the drawmonger takes pleasure in maintaining a steady alliance with a faithful friend in the face of treacherous foes, he needs *both* a faithful friend *and* treacherous foes! Regarding the distribution of players at the table, neither extreme will suit the drawmonger. *Drawmongers need some soloists* to make a good game.

The asymmetry is notable. Soloists do not need drawmongers, but drawmongers need some soloists, to make a good game, if the conjecture is true.

A happy ratio of drawmongers to soloists

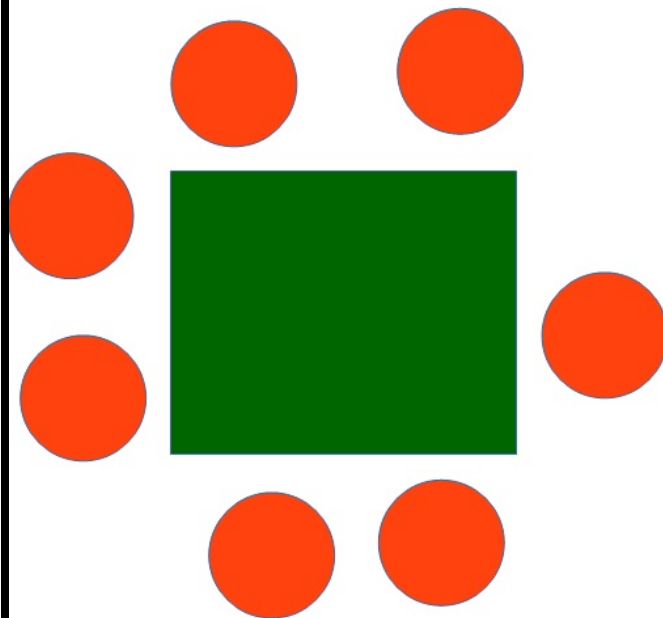
Figure 2: Example of a probably unobjectionable ratio: two drawmongers, four soloists and one intermediate at the table.



If the conjecture is indeed true, if Fig. 1 is roughly correct, then the least objectionable ratio among players for everybody concerned might be something like two or three drawmongers to four or five soloists. Why? Well, just look at the figure. In the figure, two or three drawmongers to four or five soloists represents approximately the ratio at which the drawmonger's and soloist's curves cross. Fig. 2 depicts such a happy ratio at the Diplomacy table.

However, returning attention to Fig. 1, if you are a soloist, then there is another point to observe. Everyone is unhappy at the far left edge of the plot of Fig. 1, but if you are a soloist, then *the far right edge is good for you*. Moreover, in another sense, the far right edge is not actually too bad for drawmongers, either, because, when the game plays on the right edge, there are zero drawmongers at the table. That is what the right edge means: seven soloists; zero drawmongers. The zero drawmongers at the table can be neither pleased nor displeased, since they are not there at all. See Fig. 3.

Figure 3: Another type of unobjectionable ratio: seven soloists. (If drawmongers were here, they might object, but none sits at this table.)



The figures are only schematic, of course, and moreover are schematic of a mere conjecture, so you need not perhaps in Fig. 1 study the curves' precise shapes too closely. Still, the curves of Fig. 1 are more or less consistent with my own experience. Perhaps they are consistent with yours, as well. One suspects that such curves do not diverge too far from reality. As a schematic, at any rate, these curves will do for us to go on with.

Repentance of the drawmonger?

If you happen to be a drawmonger, then the green curve of Fig. 1 may merit some thought. The green curve suggests that, if you felt up to it, then you might just give soloism a try.

Yet even if not so, the figures as a whole seem to imply that it should be hard for *anyone* to make a really good game of Diplomacy with fewer than two or three soloists at the table. "Too many cooks spoil the broth," 'tis said. Also, "Too many drawmongers spoil the Dip." Even the most committed drawmonger can agree that play at a table with seven stabless opponents is unlikely to please.

One can debate how great a problem excessive drawmongery in the hobby really is. Few would assert that *moderate* drawmongery were much of a problem, or at least I would not assert that. Moreover, I suspect that—to the extent to which excessive drawmongery does make play dull—the problem probably tends to self-regulate. That is, in too great a concentration, if drawmongers make play so dull that soloists will find their own tables at which to play, then some drawmongers, left behind, may just bore themselves out of the hobby—thus restoring by their absence an enjoyable balance among the hobby as a whole. Though it is a fundamental error to suppose that any end self-regulation might achieve must be a desirable end (hot soup self-regulates to room temperature, for example), nevertheless, where self-regulation works for most concerned, self-regulation is probably a good thing.

How well a scoring convention helps the hobby's self-regulation to achieve desirable ends is a question one can ask.

Summary so far

All right; so, we have the drawmonger, we have the soloist, we have the intermediate player between. Any selection among these players can make a pretty good game of Diplomacy, except that too many drawmongers at one table might spoil the action. Otherwise, it's all right. Each plays as he likes.

Where are we going with this?

The observation that one can play Diplomacy well without drawmongers but not without soloists turns out to be theoretically significant. When examined, the observation reveals a fundamental flaw in Calhamer's standard scoring convention for Diplomacy.

The flaw in Calhamer scoring

Calhamer scoring is simple. It is obvious. It is standard. It maintains a constant sum.

It affords too much credit to the draw. [Staats, *op. cit.*]

To understand why and how Calhamer scoring affords too much credit to the draw, let us, for exposition, think of Diplomacy as though it were a game played for stakes (it isn't, and should not be, but just for the sake of mathematical analogy, let us imagine that it were).

Suppose that each player had contributed a stake of \$1.20 to a prize fund, constituting a prize of \$8.40 in total—a convenient figure, since some factors like 3, 5, 7 and 8 can divide it.

So, we have a prize of \$8.40, paid by the players. In case of a draw, who takes the prize?

The survivors split the prize, of course. Per Calhamer, the survivors equally split it.

This being the case, is Calhamer scoring not fair?

Answer: Yes, Calhamer scoring is eminently fair. It is not the only fair system, but it certainly is a fair system. However, fair or not, Calhamer scoring may or may not be good for the game.

Consider: In a game, if you and I are allies, if we have 11 supply centers apiece and no opponent can find a stalemate line against us, then reason suggests that you and I consider playing together for the two-way draw, securing \$4.20 each, wholly excluding the five others from the prize. Drawmongers are well suited to such play.

Soloists are not well suited to such play. If you and I are soloists, or if even one of us is a soloist and we both know this, then suspicion must be expected probably to destroy our alliance ere the end. I will stab for the whole \$8.40. Realizing this, you will stab first. The result of all this treachery is not unlikely to be that some third player wins the game in dramatic fashion, leaving you and me with no prize for our trouble.

In this sense, per Calhamer, drawmongery is arguably the most rational way for any, for every, player to play.

Unfortunately, as already established, drawmongery by *all* players is probably bad for the game. If this is so, and if Diplomacy is indeed a good game (which it certainly is), then it is to this extent a good game despite Calhamer scoring, not because of it.

But is such analysis too simple?

Now admittedly, the motives players bring to the table are complex and varied. The game's action is nonlinear. Players do not play for stakes. Often, our simplistic analysis may not even apply.

Often, however, our simplistic analysis does indeed apply. Diplomacy has been observed by others to suffer too many static draws [Berch, *op. cit.* Powell, *Dip. World*, no. 85, 2000]. If you would rather encourage most players to play to win rather than to draw, then *Calhamer's convention does not do that for you very well*. If such is your purpose (as I think that it should be), then you shall need to consider another scoring convention.

The hobby's revealed preference against Calhamer scoring

The science of economics brings a concept, *revealed preference*, which may interest us here. Revealed preference works more or less like this: You commission a market survey in which you ask me and others whether we prefer tomatoes or apples. If I answer, "Tomatoes," but then you discover that I actually buy and eat nothing but apples, then you shall have discovered my revealed preference for apples.

It is rather intriguing that, even after 50 years, significant numbers of players continue in one way or another to object to Calhamer scoring, or to stand uneasily by it, as a matter of revealed preference. Probably no rule of the game provokes more deviation than Calhamer scoring does. In *Diplomacy World* alone, for example, see Beyerlein in issue 2, Johnson in issue 63 and Staats in issue 64. In *The Diplomatic Pouch*, see Cohen as earlier cited. Online, WebDiplomacy and Stabbeurfou both dispense with Calhamer scoring by default. Face-to-face tournaments bring their own problems, of course, but C-Diplo (one of the more popular conventions used face to face) declines to follow Calhamer even in spirit. And when Diplomacy's own publisher during the 1970s printed its original *Gamer's Guide to Diplomacy*, a significant fraction of the whole work was taken up by advice on how best to avoid Calhamer scoring.

The late Calhamer himself seems to have worried about this, though as far as I know he never went so far as to question the propriety of his own scoring convention. "Would you really rather be beaten by a cartel than by a stab?" Calhamer asks. "Is there any more advantage in winning through a cartel than through a stab?" [Calhamer, *Erehwon*, nos. 85–87, 1975]. The "cartel" to which Calhamer here refers is more or less the informal association of drawmongers, perversely intent on suppressing stabbing, soloist play [Cohen, *op. cit.*].

The idea of Calhamer scoring seems most reasonable, most fair. Indeed, it is reasonable and it is fair. It is simple, too—and there is much to be said for that. It's just that, for too many players, Calhamer scoring does not quite work.

So, let's look at some alternatives.

Draw-zero scoring

Robert Staats wrote in issue 64, "A draw has little value except to those who crave ratings points. There does need to be a system in which only winning the game is rewarded...."

The simplest, most radical such system of which I know is just not to credit the draw at all. In case of a draw, every player reclaims his \$1.20 stake, leaving no prize to split. Interpreted as points, were there no stakes, this means that every draw is effectively a seven-way draw.

The obvious fault in this draw-zero convention is that it affords small Powers little incentive to survive. The struggle of the small Power to survive is so fundamental an element of the game as we know it that, as it seems to me, this fault is a fatal one. Indeed, Staats himself realized this, completing the above quote with the words "... while still keeping the interest of all players."

Draw-zero scoring does however seem to make drawmongery pointless. To make drawmongery pointless is to carry the crusade too far, but too far in the right direction.

A compromise: draw-disvalued scoring

Fortunately, a straightforward compromise can be made. Let the prize fund be split in halves, one half awarded per Calhamer, the other per draw-zero. The combination of the two halves shall constitute what we may call *draw-disvalued scoring*.

Interpreted as points, results are as Table 1 lists (*see the top of the next page*). Results appear to satisfy Staats' criterion as nearly as can perhaps be done.

Advantages and disadvantages

Draw-disvalued scoring seems to offer most of the advantage of draw-zero scoring while avoiding its chief disadvantage. Draw-disvalued scoring might interest us for this reason.

Draw-disvalued scoring does arguably bring a minor, curious disadvantage of its own, though. Compared to Calhamer scoring, draw-disvalued scoring could in theory alter the terminal behavior of a doomed, stabbed, vengeful, minor power on the brink of elimination. Whether such alteration were for the better or the worse can be discussed, but as Table 1 shows, the constant-sum logic of draw-disvalued scoring does afford the soon-to-be-eliminated minor a small interest in a later draw. Remember the hypothetical \$8.40 prize? Once the draw has been disvalued to \$4.20 in total, the remaining \$4.20 can hardly go elsewhere than back, in equal shares, to the seven players who originally made the stakes. In draw-disvalued scoring, survival is better—still much better—than elimination, but

TABLE 1: CALHAMER SCORING VERSUS ALTERNATIVES,
EACH COLUMN HAVING CONSTANT SUMS

RESULT	CALHAMER	DRAW-DISVALUED	DRAW-ZERO
Solo victory	1 = 420/420	1 = 840/840	1
Survival in a 2-way draw	1/2 = 210/420	1/ 4 + 1/14 = 9/28 = 270/840	1/7
Survival in a 3-way draw	1/3 = 140/420	1/ 6 + 1/14 = 5/21 = 200/840	1/7
Survival in a 4-way draw	1/4 = 105/420	1/ 8 + 1/14 = 11/56 = 165/840	1/7
Survival in a 5-way draw	1/5 = 84/420	1/10 + 1/14 = 6/35 = 144/840	1/7
Survival in a 6-way draw	1/6 = 70/420	1/12 + 1/14 = 13/84 = 130/840	1/7
Survival in a 7-way draw	1/7 = 60/420	1/14 + 1/14 = 1/ 7 = 120/840	1/7
Loss by elimination from a drawn game	0 = 0/420	0 + 1/14 = 1/14 = 60/840	1/7
Loss of a game won by another Great Power	0 = 0/420	0 = 0/840	0

elimination is yet worth \$0.60, provided that no one player wins the game.

Now, anecdotally, based on my own experience, I would say that the hot heat of vengeance probably tends to sweep away most considerations of scoring and \$0.60—and even if not so, I am not sure that the difference is for the worse; and even if it were for the worse, I doubt that it amounts to much, since for minor powers to resist the leader is already pretty normal behavior in Diplomacy—but it is indeed a difference and thus should be noted here.

Expectations

Regarding the advantages of draw-disvalued scoring, consider again the \$8.40 prize. Suppose that you and I are playing at the same table, that we have each paid in our respective \$1.20 stakes, that we are now allies, that I am a drawmonger, that you are a soloist pretending to be a drawmonger, and that—after the vicissitudes of a long struggle—you and I have broken across the stalemate lines and are sweeping the map. Given Calhamer scoring, my concept is that you and I have earned the \$8.40 together, that fair is fair, and that you and I are each entitled to a \$4.20 share. Your concept of course is quite different. You want the \$8.40. You rightly mean to take it all, leaving me with zero for my trouble.

Ill treated as I see it, I may be unjustly angry when you stab me. If I am, then my unjust anger is an unfortunate, inadvertent artifact of Calhamer scoring.

On the other hand, under draw-disvalued scoring, the only way for either or both of us to extract the full \$8.40 prize is for *one* of the two of us to win. In case of a draw, even a two-way draw, each opponent claws back half his \$1.20 stake! The draw left credit on the table, so to speak.

For this reason, draw-disvalued scoring affords even the drawmonger an indisputable excuse to stab, along with a strong incentive to do so. And of course, in Diplomacy, as we all know, he who stabs first can gain the upper hand!

Which type of game will prove the more interesting, do you think?

Recommendation

It is recommended that players who wish to playtest draw-disvalued scoring proceed to do so.

If you do playtest, kindly feed back your findings to Diplomacy World's technology editor, thaddeus.h.black "of" gmail.com.

Diplomacy at the Great Northern Hotel

By Special Agent Dale Cooper

** Bzzt. Click. **

"Diane, it's Friday evening and I find myself sitting around a table with some of the residents of Twin Peaks I have grown to know so well. I'm in one of the banquet rooms at the Great Northern. In front of me I see a slight variation of a map of World War One era Europe. I'm about to engage in a game of Diplomacy, which is a practice in negotiation, manipulation and investigation. Those are skills we can both agree I am well trained for. The tactical part of the game is a bit complicated but I think I have the hang of it. I have been assigned the role of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. I hope I can deliver better results than the real war did to that fragile confederacy."

***Click. Bzzt ***

** Bzzt. Click. **

"Diane, it's 8:13pm on Friday. I'm finding this game quite fascinating. Benjamin Horne, who is playing the role of Russia, is jovially smoking a cigar and leaning back in his chair as if he has already conquered the continent. We spoke privately, where he appealed to my "intelligence and clear thinking" and suggested we should work together to rid the board of some of the other players. His daughter Audrey is playing the nation of Italy, and Mr. Horne regards her as a threat to both of us. Turkey is played by Leland Palmer, the late Laura's father and Mr. Horne's attorney. I think under normal circumstances I would expect he and Mr. Horne to be working together against me, but Leland's mannerisms suggest he is being honest with me about peaceful relations. There is something deeper, though. Perhaps it is too soon after his daughter's death for this kind of endeavor. I will need to watch for cracks in his mental stability.

"Some of the players are imbibing on cocktails from the bar, but I have chosen to stick with hot, fresh coffee. The aroma of the crushed beans takes on a special life in a room of wooden walls and thick posts like this one. I wish you could see this part of the country, Diane. It is truly something to behold."

***Click. Bzzt ***

** Bzzt. Click. **

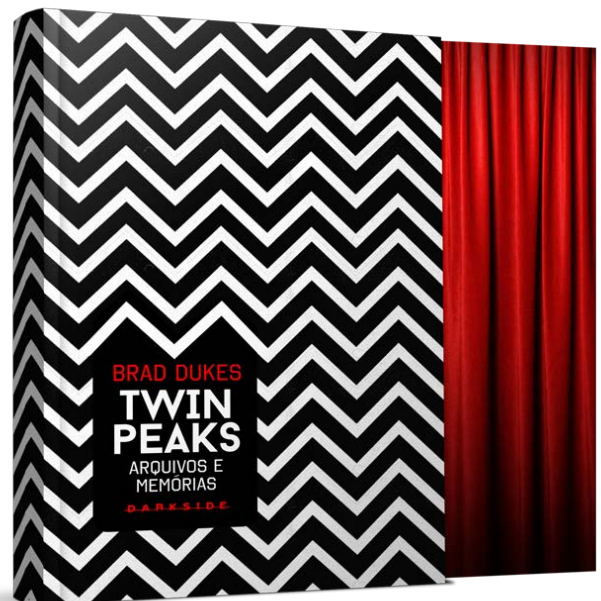
"Diane, it's 8:32pm on Friday. We have just completed the initial negotiations in what is called the Spring 1901 phase of this game. I need to submit movement orders for my forces, so I'll try to make this brief. Timeliness is

imperative in this game; if you are late with your instructions you stand fast.

"I spoke with young Audrey first. She holds a real resentment for her father, but she and I have carved out an unusual friendship since I arrived in Twin Peaks. She has implored me to strike at Mr. Horne before he strikes in my direction. There is not a lot of trust in that family, Diane; and not a lot of love. Audrey says she will move to handle any interference from Leland Palmer while I engage the overconfident Mr. Horne.

"Germany is being played by a woman referred to as The Log Lady. She has been rather uncommunicative, as she sips coffee and chews a large wad of pitch gum. She holds a sturdy log in her arms; cradles it like a child, really. She tells me her log knows there is treachery afoot but it does not know from what direction. The necessity of her translating the messages from her log makes negotiation with her quite slow and time consuming. I will need to allot more time before the next turn for our conversation.

"Major Briggs has taken on the role of France. He is quite reluctant to reveal any information, and speaks in strange shreds of sentences while he tries to adjust from a career full of forced secrets to a game of selected ones. He seems willing to be more open when the time comes, which I can only assume means once we have forces in closer proximity.



"

Finally, Diane, there is England, which is being played by Deputy Andy. I do not think he has fully grasped the way the game works. All of my questions to Andy were met with "I don't think I'm supposed to tell you that, Agent Cooper." I believe his reluctance to lie is complicated with his desire to keep things secret, so that leaves him no option but silence. He isn't the smartest Deputy, but he has a good heart, Diane.

"I'm off to submit my orders, refill my coffee and wait for the results of Spring 1901. This is quite exciting in its own way, Diane; a battle of wits and a battle of perception."

***Click. Bzzt ***

** Bzzt. Click. **

"Diane, is it 9:02pm on Friday. I feel like I have in some strange way left the world of reality and stepped into another plane of existence. It seems almost as unreal as those dreams of the little man and Laura Palmer I've spoken about. Things I thought I understood or thought I knew have been twisted and torn apart.

"I'll start at the top of the map. Deputy Andy still will not answer any questions. And his movements are utterly baffling. Or should I say lack of movements. His island nation left all of its forces exactly where they started. I'm detecting a desire of his to not offend or upset any of the other players, which he has carried to the extreme or barricading all his forces within England. Sadly, without any growth he is doomed to fall eventually. But his psychological desire to be liked by everyone has overridden his survival instinct within the game. He cannot separate the board from real life.

"Major Briggs is moving with impunity. Iberia will be his by the Fall, and he has a fleet sailing happily in the English Channel. But his pleased demeanor and good-natured ribbing of Andy have worked perfectly. He has respect for Andy as a Deputy and as a person, so if he succeeds in taking all of England in the coming years, Andy will find himself eliminated but satisfied.

"Mr. Horne is poised to take most of Scandinavia. This is something I should have foreseen, although there was little I could do to stop it. He is lecturing the players on the fine timber that can be cultivated in Norway, and lamenting the fact that Iceland is an impassible space in this game. He seems to have predicted my movements to Galicia perfectly, but rather than stopping me he has simply provided ample defenses for any attack in the Fall. In the south he slipped easily into the Black Sea, as Mr. Palmer sent all his forces southward.



"Leland seems to have mentally cracked. Once the deception by Benjamin Horne in the Black Sea became apparent, Mr. Palmer started sobbing at his chair. Right now he has retreated to a corner of the room, where he is playing old swing records, dancing with himself, and crying silently. I fear we may see no further moves for his units, which will live most of Turkey ripe for the taking by Benjamin Horne's Russian hordes.

"The Log Lady appears to be in a cooperative effort with the Major, but hasn't completely shown her hand. Moves to Denmark and towards Holland suggest she is content to grow slowly and not attract too much attention. We have asked her not to spit her pitch gum on the board any longer. She was silent about the request, but I think we won't have a repeat of that action.

"Finally, Diane, we come to Audrey. She has deceived me completely. I am trying not to feel personally betrayed. After all, this is just a game, and she keeps reminding me of that. I can only try to understand her actions. Either she is looking for the most direct route to Russia so she can face her father head-on, or else I was simply a pawn in her schemes. She has moved to Trieste and Tyrolia, and now not only holds one of my supply centers but threatens another. If I retreat to defend myself, Mr. Horne is bound to follow in behind me. I fear I may be doomed already, only one turn into this exercise. The only reason Audrey gave me for the attack was a laugh and a rebuke of "I'm Audrey Horne, and I get what I want!" At least in this game of Diplomacy, that appears to be accurate.

"The coffee is turning bitter as it continues to be heated in the pot. There is an abundance of cigar smoke in the room, fogging the view and concealing the sweet smell of wood. I feel there much I could learn from this collection of locals if I could only clear my head, but the dreamlike state persists. Diane, I am afraid I have just become another victim in this town of secrets, and in this game of secrets.

"Signing off for now, Diane, from the Great Northern."

***Click. Bzzt ***

Chicago: It's Any Dipper's Kind of Town – What to Look for at the 2016 World DipCon

By Larry Peery

For only the 2nd time ever and the first time since 2012 WDC is returning to Chicago! Those who attended that year may recall that “Doc” Michael Binder won the individual tournament, Don Scheifler took second place and Matt Shields came in third in an event that combined the World and North American Diplomacy championships.

However, the story really goes back much further than that, to 22-23 July 1972 when the first “real” DIPCON was held in Chicago hosted by Larry Blandin and TD Len Lakofka. That event attracted players from all over North America playing Diplomacy in a real tournament format event and featured Allan B. Calhamer's first appearance at a Diplomacy event, a real formal banquet, and the first world-class city to host a DipCon! Richard Ackerlay won that first Chicago event. The next three consecutive North American DipCons were also held in Chicago (an interesting story in its own right, but I'll leave it to Edi Birsan to tell that one) with the 1973 winners being Conrad von Metzke and John Smyth; 1974 winner Mike Rocamora; and 1975 winners Walter Blank and Bob Wartenberg. I hope the hosts of this year's event will make an effort to track down some of these previous winners and get them to attend.

That 1972 DIPCON attracted 49 players and eight boards (no, I don't remember either, but that eighth board must have been very lonely). John Boyer wrote an interesting account of what happened that you can read online in DIPLOMACY WORLD #7. Over the last 44 years I've told and re-told my memories of that most memorable of events time and again so I'm not going to do it again. Instead, my goal is to motivate you and especially you foreigners to come to Chicago and, hopefully take home a championship and an award or two. God knows it's time.

But first let me answer the three questions you may have seen on the various Facebook Diplomacy sites:

- 1) Why is it called “The Windy City?”
- 2) What's the difference between a weasel and an otter?
- 3) “New York has the Rockefellers, Boston has the Kennedys, and Chicago has...”

1) Those who live along Lake Shore Drive will tell you that Chicago is called “The Windy City” because of the fierce winds that blow off Lake Michigan, especially in the winter. Everyone else will tell you it's because of all the hot air that emits from 121 N. LaSalle (Chicago's City Hall) all year along.

2) Mustelids are mammals that belong to the weasel family. Mustelids include 65 species (and 25 genera) of weasels, badgers, ferrets, fishers, grisons, martens, otters, polecats, stoats, minks, tayras, wolverines, and more. Generally speaking weasels are Dippers, polecats are dippers, and badgers support Donald Trump. Most female Dippers are minks, although some are minx. Rex Martin, of The Avalon Hill Game Company, taught me (or actually his ferrets taught me) that ferrets make good masters for humans that want to be petted.

3) Whereas the Rockefellers have always been The Power Family and a member of the social elite in New York and the Kennedys have always been a Power Family but not a member of the social elite in Boston; the Daleys of Chicago have always been a Power Family that preferred to rub shoulders with the city's cops, firemen, aldermen, and the residents of 5800 N. Ravenswood Ave. and 6011 West 111th St. Anyone who can identify what's at those two addresses is a real Chicago history buff.



I remember meeting Mayor Richard J. Daley on my first visit to Chicago to attend the 1972 DipCon. He seemed surprised to discover he actually had a young, Democratic fan in California. Years later I had a chance to meet his son, Richard M. Daley, in the same City Hall office where I'd met his father years before. Alas, if I make it to this year's DipCon there will be no Daley holding court at 121 N. LaSalle.

Although Allan B. Calhamer, Richard J. Daley and the Bismarck Hotel (site of the 1972 DipCon) are gone, as are many of the old time Dippers from The Windy City, Chicago, like Diplomacy, is alive and well. The city is often referred to as the center point of “America's heartland,” and so it is. It's the rail hub of America, it's airport is the busiest in the world (according to some criteria), and it's the center of America's agricultural markets.

For those worried about their personal safety the numbers are encouraging: Chicago recorded an all-time high of 504 killings in 2012, but just two years later homicides were down to 392, and the overall crime rate has declined to its lowest level since 1972 (I'm not sure if there's a link between that and the fact that the city hosted the 1972 DipCon)

attractions-/chicago-us-il-chi.htm



By European standards Chicago is a relatively new city built after a disastrous fire in 1871 that sparked the famous 1893 World's Fair, the legacy of which included such all-American favorites as Cream of Wheat cereal, Juicy Fruit gum and Pabst Blue Ribbon beer (Note to Jim O'Kelley: Now wouldn't that make a great gift package for foreign attendees?). Chicago actually has a very good museum devoted to its own architecture, many examples of the work of America's foremost architect, Frank Lloyd Wright; and many fine recent examples of modern architecture. Among other favorite places to visit are the 30 km long Lake Shore Drive I mentioned with its almost-new Millennium Park, beaches, etc.; Wrigley Field if you've never been to an American baseball game; and, for any serious Dipper, a visit to the Shrine of Our Founder, Allan B. Calhamer, located at 501 N. Stone Ave., in LaGrange Park, Illinois.

Here are some other ideas of places to see and things to do in Chicago: <http://www.planetware.com/tourist->

Chicago has lots of interesting places and things to do, of course, but like with any other great city it's the people that make Chicago what it is --- truly a world-class city. Perhaps this one example will suffice to show you what I mean. While lying over in Chicago in 2003 on my way from a WDC event in Denver to a Prez'Con event in Charlottesville via AMTRAK; I had a chance to explore the area around the huge Chicago Union Station; which is filled with various ethnic villages and towns. I found a superb Italian restaurant with a waiter from Ethiopia, a wonderful Greek restaurant with a waitress from Livonia, a great Mexican restaurant with a waiter from Belize, and a huge McDonald's with a staff that didn't include one native American! That would only happen in Chicago. And trust me, the Chicago area Dippers are just the same: wild, wacky and wonderful. Where else would you find Dippers bragging about how close they live to where Al Capone was captured or buried, or that one of his former houses recently sold for \$400K and another is on the market for \$4M?

Go and enjoy WDC 2016 in Chicago. Just remember, unlike a WDC in Europe where you have to watch out for the Brits, French, Italians and Dutch; in Chicago you'll have to watch out for the weasels, ferrets, otters, polecats and wolverines!