

Diplomacy World #141



Spring 2018 Issue

www.diplomacyworld.net

Notes from the Editor

Welcome to the latest issue of **Diplomacy World**, the Spring 2018 issue. Here in Texas we're already hitting the 70's on most days. I have to enjoy spring while I can, because it only lasts a few weeks where I live. Then we get six months of summer. THAT can be longer than a Larry Peery book review (and if you don't believe me, read his Xenogogic column for this issue).

Honestly this issue was rather refreshing to assemble, because of how much new blood it contains. There is nothing that makes me enjoy an issue more than seeing new names, new writing styles, and new ideas. Not only does it offer a change from the other issues, but more importantly it reminds me that the download numbers for each issue (which remain much higher than I ever expect) actually include some new players, or people just getting fully immersed in the hobby. With how many decades Diplomacy World has been around, sometimes I forget that every quarter there are some brand new readers just downloading it for the first time. I do TRY to encourage contributions from newcomers, but maybe I don't try hard enough. Or, perhaps, the storied history of the zine leaves some people a bit intimidated. Don't be. At the very least, send a letter in with some new idea the way Sean Robert Meany did this issue.

It's a double-edged sword the way the Diplomacy hobby has grown and expanded over the years, because at the same time the hobby has lost the cohesion it had in the 1990's. Instead of a sense of community throughout the nation (and the world) we have fractionalized groups where the sense of community remains strong, but which are set apart from each other. Technology may have some of the blame. It is so easy to play online or organize something locally because of social media that it is much harder to get Diplomacy players to travel for a major event.

It even seems that some events consider the idea of hosting a DipCon a "burden." This, and other convention thoughts, are addressed in an article by first-time contributor Stanley Rench. And his piece reminds me, among other topics (humor, fiction, variants) Diplomacy World has seen a drastic decline in entertaining

convention reports. If you attend an event, **write about it**. It's great to read how you played the game, what mistakes you made, and most importantly the things that took place away from the board: food, drink, new people, the atmosphere, how the tournament was run, location...if you don't tell us about your experiences, how can you expect to encourage others to attend an event themselves? And how can you hope that future events will avoid pitfalls (or duplicate good ideas) unless we hear about them?

While you'll see familiar names elsewhere in the issue (including the 1902 Demo Game results and commentary), as I mentioned there is plenty of fresh blood. Jason Regnier contributed two excellent pieces, and there's also a Strategy & Tactics piece from newcomer Luis L.S. Neto. Be sure to check those articles out as you work your way through this issue!

(Yes, I even wrote an article for this issue, which is not something I do very often these days).

And I would be remiss if I didn't properly credit Jason Regnier for the wonderful cover art this issue as well.

A number of Diplomacy World Staff positions remain vacant, but I'm hopeful that even if they remain so some of you will pick up the slack by submitting articles yourself that would normally fall under one of those categories.

Uh oh, I just came up with an idea for a short article myself. It's probably not a very GOOD idea, but perhaps I'll put it together right now just in case I want to include it in this issue. Parts of it might be a bit of a stretch to make it work but.... well, why not?

I'll close by reminding you the next deadline for Diplomacy World submissions is July 1st, 2018.

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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Knives and Daggers - The Diplomacy World Letter Column



Baron Von Powell - Douglas, I found some topics in Diplomacy World #139 that I would like to comment on.

"The Strongest Country on the Diplomacy Map, Revisited." by Thaddeus Black.

I think it is extremely gracious of Thaddeus to link my name with a sample of data that he states, "might be the standard reference on Great Power Performance in the game of Diplomacy." He later suggests that "Powell's sample" might become "canonical" because it captures game results from a time during which player identities were known. "Data gathered today [ie., when players often play anonymously and adhere to quicker deadlines] might have a different quality."

Though I would dearly love to achieve some sort of Diplomacy immortality by having created the penultimate record of game results, I know I am just one of many who contributed to the compilation of the sample Thaddeus used in his article. Indeed, "my" sample used data from 3,485 game results that others, namely Mark Nelson, Conrad Minshall, Doug Massey, Nick Fitzpatrick, Geoffrey Bentz, and Thaddeus himself, put together for publication in issue 81 of **Diplomacy World**. My own contribution to the sample Thaddeus examines consists of a mere one hundred thirty-six games, one hundred twenty-two from my own records of games that took place under the auspices of the AOL Diplomacy Club and fourteen games from Tim Richardson's 'zine, **The Old Republic**. It hardly seems appropriate to use the label "Powell's sample" when my part of that sample was such a tiny piece (3.8%) of the total effort.

I also do not believe I am the last person who will add to the existing record of games results. I can easily envision an industrious individual going into the archives of the numerous online sites that maintain game records (ACD, Diplomaticcorps, DPjudge, Play Diplomacy Online, and Redscape, to name just a few) and adding the results to the 3,621 games currently available. I think the advances in technology we enjoy today would greatly facilitate such an effort. Though many of the games players have contested online may have had tighter deadlines and the players may never have known each other's true identities, I do not feel these conditions in any way negate the value of the final outcomes, if the games followed the standard rules of **Diplomacy**. My guess is that a larger sample will serve to further validate what we think we already know, but we cannot be sure

of this until someone does the research. I look forward to seeing the next iteration of the game results sample.

"Is it Time to Bring Iceland Out of the Ice Age in Diplomacy?" by Larry Perry.

I hate to disagree with Larry, but no, I do not think it is time. I speak with some experience on this matter.

Stephen Agar wrote an article that appeared in issue 80 of **Diplomacy World** ("New Improved Diplomacy"). His recommendations prompted me to respond with an article of my own that appeared in issue 81 ("Improving on New Improved Diplomacy"). In addition to discussing the merits of Stephen's suggestions, I came up with a few rule and map changes of my own. One of my ideas was to include Iceland as both a playable space and a SC. With encouragement from a **Diplomacy World** subscriber, Steve Reul, I turned my ideas into the **1900** variant. The first play test was in 1997 (has it really been over twenty years?). That play test clearly showed me that an SC in Iceland was far too advantageous for **1900's** Britain. The neutral SC in Britain's back yard was practically tantamount to giving the Prime Minister an extra unit to work with. I strongly suspect that **Classic's** England would enjoy an even greater advantage, if only because **Classic's** Germany is far weaker than its robust **1900** counterpart.

Larry has a proposed solution to having an Icelandic SC in proximity to England. He suggests giving Iceland a fleet, allowing that fleet to move to Norwegian Sea or North Atlantic Ocean (or support other units moving to or holding in those spaces), and allowing all players to submit orders for the Icelandic fleet (I assume the most common order is the one F Iceland will follow with a hold resulting in the event of a tie). Larry's idea might work well (with some refinement), but I think its application would be misguided. Here is why.

- I think it is inconsistent to have an armed Iceland, but no units in other minor power SCs. Several of the minor powers had significant military strength. When drawing up their war plans, the Great Powers all tried to account for the responses of their smaller neighbors. Several variants (e.g., 1648, 1936, Ambition & Empire, College of Cardinals) use a combination of armed neutrals, Diplomacy Points (DPs), and minor unit sorties to simulate the impact of minor powers on their more powerful neighbors (and vice-versa). I believe the additional rules work very well for those variants and add to play balance. In each of the variants, however, all SCs that are neutral at game-start have a unit in them.

- Though Iceland's strategic value in a naval war for control of the Atlantic is indisputable, the fact remains that any garrisons stationed there during the Great War were tiny in comparison to the massive armies and navies the Great Powers mustered during that conflict. When one considers the size of the force an army or navy token represents in Diplomacy, it seems a bit of a stretch to picture so many military resources basing at Iceland, especially given how far away Iceland usually is from the action. To demonstrate just how out of the way Iceland is, consider this. Though Iceland is no longer an SC in **1900**, it is a passable space. In the twenty years that **1900** has been around, a period that has seen hundreds of games played, a fleet has landed in Iceland in roughly 2% of those games. It seems the only reason anyone would go to Iceland in a "typical" contest would be solely because there is an SC there.

- Despite any garrison that Iceland might have, the fact remains that it only a stone's throw from England's shores. This naturally means that England benefits the most from the addition of an SC in the northwest corner of the map. Should the English fail to acquire the SC that is within their grasp (two tempi), it seems the Great Powers that would mostly likely step in are France and Russia. Both nations are within three tempi of Iceland. Germany at four tempi "might" get there, but it would almost certainly be a rare game that saw Austria-Hungary, Italy, or Turkey in possession of Iceland at the end. The logical conclusion can only be that turning Iceland into an SC makes the path to victory easier for those Great Powers that are already the strongest while doing nothing at all to help the game's weak sisters. In effect, an Icelandic SC would further unbalance the game. I cannot imagine this being a good result.

I can envision Iceland being an important strategic location for variants that take place AFTER the Great War and that include both North America and Europe. Despite Larry's compelling arguments, however, an SC in Iceland seems inappropriate for Classic.

Jim Burgess.

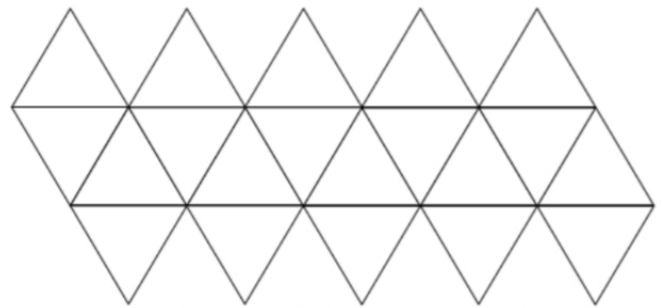
I really have nothing to add to Jim's story. I never met him, I had no relationship with him, and I never corresponded with him that I can remember. Even though we were both in the Hobby for decades, my lack of familiarity with Jim is not too surprising to me. It seems Jim was at the very center of the Hobby's activities while I have operated at its fringes and within my own small circles. After reading the testimonials and knowing that there are many others who did not share their stories, I sense that I missed out on something special and that my life is somehow the poorer for not

knowing Jim. I am sure his friends, his family, and the Hobby will miss him very much.

In closing, I want to thank you for the good things you do for the Hobby. I know it cannot be easy. Please know that there are many people out there that notice your work and appreciate your contributions.



Sean Robert Meany - I suggest a radical variant on Diplomacy from the standard game. Rather than a map of Europe, I propose a flattened out twenty-sided polyhedron map. The Use of Boardman numbers can be replaced by a random terrain generator creating colours in the triangles blue for ocean, brown for mountains, yellow for desert, green for forest each game world unique to a game.



Movement off the board then takes the game piece to the opposite triangle or around the far side of the world. Breaking the individual triangles down into four smaller triangles. It will allow increasingly complex game maps.

[[I don't know what you mean by "the use of Boardman numbers" in this example, as those are simply registration numbers for each game and (sadly) not used much these days.

The two biggest objections I would have to playing such a variant are:

1. ***With a different map every game, there is no way to build and develop strategies from one game to the next.***
2. ***If you truly randomly generated the map, the use of stalemate lines or any balance between powers is completely lost.***

The only thing this variant would have in common with the actual game is the rules regarding movement, attack, and support.]]

Selected Upcoming Conventions

Find Conventions All Over the World at <http://diplomacy.world/> and at <http://petermc.net/diplomacy/>

I am trying to locate additional sources for Upcoming Conventions. PLEASE, if you have an event coming up, notify me, and why not make up a one page flyer for inclusion in Diplomacy World?

CodCon – Friday April 13th 2018 – Sunday April 15th 2018 – Glen Ellyn, IL – www.codcom.com

DixieCon – Friday May 25th 2018 – Sunday May 27th 2018 – Chapel Hill, NC – www.dixiecon.com

GenCon – August 3rd 2018 – August 5th 2018 – Indianapolis, IN – www.gencon.com

WeaselMoot – Friday August 31st 2018 – Sunday September 2nd 2018 - Chicago, IL – www.windycityweasels.org

World DipCon – Friday October 5th 2018 – Sunday October 7th 2018 - Washington DC – www.ptks.org

Carnage – Friday November 2nd 2018 – Sunday November 4th 2018 – Killington, VT – www.carnagecon.com

Ask the GM

By The GM

Dear GM:

I once asked a wise man for the best opening in Diplomacy and he said it was to always offer centers to people around you, so they would leave you alone.

What are your thoughts on this odd advice?

Sincerely,

Advised,

Dear Advised:

I assume this person is trying to get your centers as well—remember, trust no one...no one. If I were in a game with my mother I wouldn't trust her.

If you feed your neighbors they will leave you alone initial but eventually they will put you on the menu as well.

Your pal,

The GM

Dear GM:

I never play for Triple Alliances—I think they are too unstable—what are your thoughts on this?

All the Best,

Three's a crowd

Dear Crowd:

No alliance in Diplomacy works for very long if you're playing in the cut throat style as the game is meant to be played.

I will say this—Triple alliances tend to be like any three-way relationships. It always eventually becomes two against one.

Your pal,

The GM

Diplomacy at the Digital Edge

By Jason Regnier

If you have not heard of it, you should. Take a listen to the free, fascinating and funny **DiplomacyGames podcast** by Amby “the Ambassador” and Kaner of Brisbane, Australia. It is in essence the Diplomacy World of free internet podcasts about the Digital World of the Game of Diplomacy. The podcast covers current

games the duo are playing in, new variants developed and implemented, great discussions on ideas for future variants, and the technical aspects of making and coding them for the digital interface. They also throw in just a hint of their exotic and fine culture of Vegemite and Kangaroos – yes..... all things Australia.



These guys are amazing, funny, and definitely worth a listen. They are, in my humble opinion, in this order: Decent Diplomacy players, excellent variant developers, fine podcast if quiet podcast makers, and Full Blooded Australians ----so naturally they are serious drinkers.

This last fact becomes evident as the show progresses, the wine is poured, the beer is sipped, and the speech is slightly slurred. It is also a bit of an adult oriented show from a language point of view, so listen first before inviting the kiddos.



As a bonus, they profile the bar where they meet for each podcast, describe the fine beverages usually locals from Australia, and have covered a huge range of great

places in Brisbane, Australia. One funny aspect as well as they occasionally include what I as an American, and their European audience find quite novel and interesting

– weather reports that are the exact opposite of what are experiencing. On their latest podcast, “Christmas Summer Show”, was released just as Europe went into a post-Christmas Russian deep freeze and America had a monster winter snow storm. Nothing like hearing about a Christmas dinner at Amby’s where he had to go into the shade just to cool off and eat Christmas prawns whilst we all froze in the northern hemisphere.

The podcast can be found on www.Diplomacygames.com as well as the iTunes app for Apple users or Stitcher app for Android enthusiasts. It is definitely worth a listen. If you are like me, I had never really listened to or bothered to even find out how to get podcasts on Android, but I found Stitcher really

easy to use and the Diplomacy Games Podcast is a real gem.

Amby and Kaner cover many digital Diplomacy things, but are generally focused on three key large Diplomacy websites. These are **PlayDip**, **webDip** and **vDip**. They have done numerous interviews of developers, owners, tournament directors, and players across the three sites. I am not as familiar with **PlayDip**, but I know from Amby and Kaner’s guests, descriptions and interviews that www.PlayDiplomacy.com has a great interface and fun user community. I think it may be the largest Diplomacy website in terms of numbers of players.



I mostly see the two podcasters digitally in two different websites, www.webDiplomacy.com, by far the bigger of the two I use with 97,000 users, and www.vDiplomacy.com (for Variant Diplomacy) with about 10,000 users. **WebDip** is highly focused on the **classic** Diplomacy game and some variations such as Gunboat – all with a great user interface and lively community message board. Lots of hot Diplomacy and political discussions on there – talk there that could definitely put your angry political relatives on Facebook to shame.

I spend most of my time on **vDip** because of the staggering variety of **variants**. These two sites have a similar look and feel as in the past they have shared some of the developer’s code that runs the backbone. The number of variants continues to amaze me, and Amby and Kaner have had a hand in coding quite a few of them into the digital realm. Below is a brand new variant, a 1913 version with an expanded France, Germany and England.

Welcome to webDiplomacy!

A multiplayer web implementation of the popular turn-based strategy game Diplomacy.

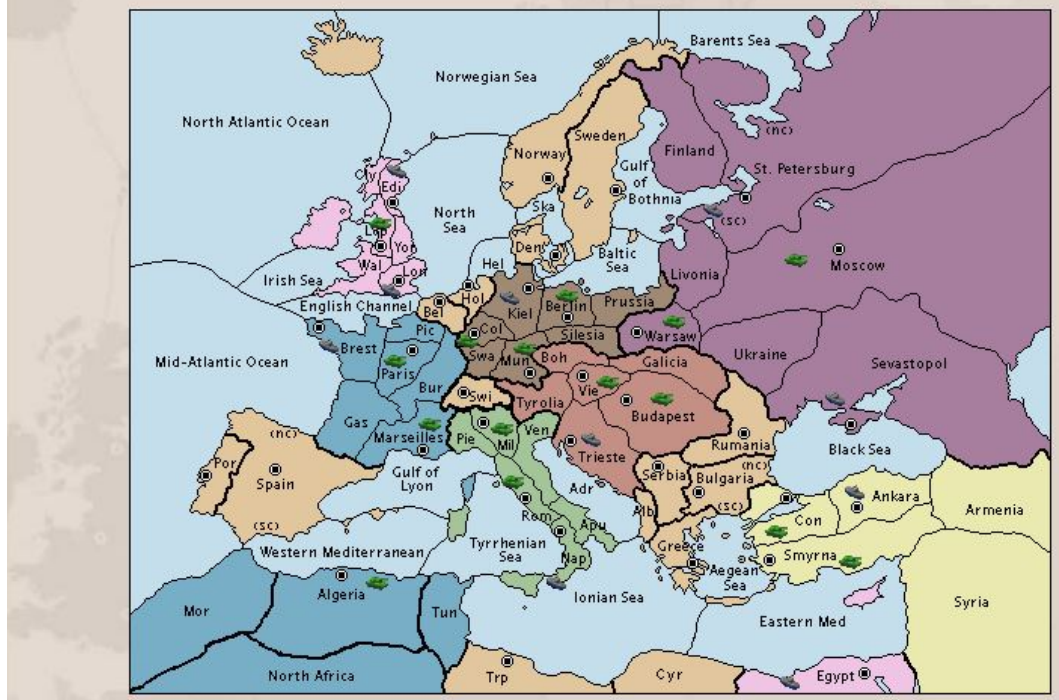


"Luck plays no part in Diplomacy. Cunning and cleverness, honesty and perfectly-timed betrayal are the tools needed to outwit your fellow players. The most skillful negotiator will climb to victory over the backs of both enemies and friends.

*Who do you trust?"
(Avalon Hill)*

Classic - 1913 (7 players)

Europe in the prelude of the Great War.

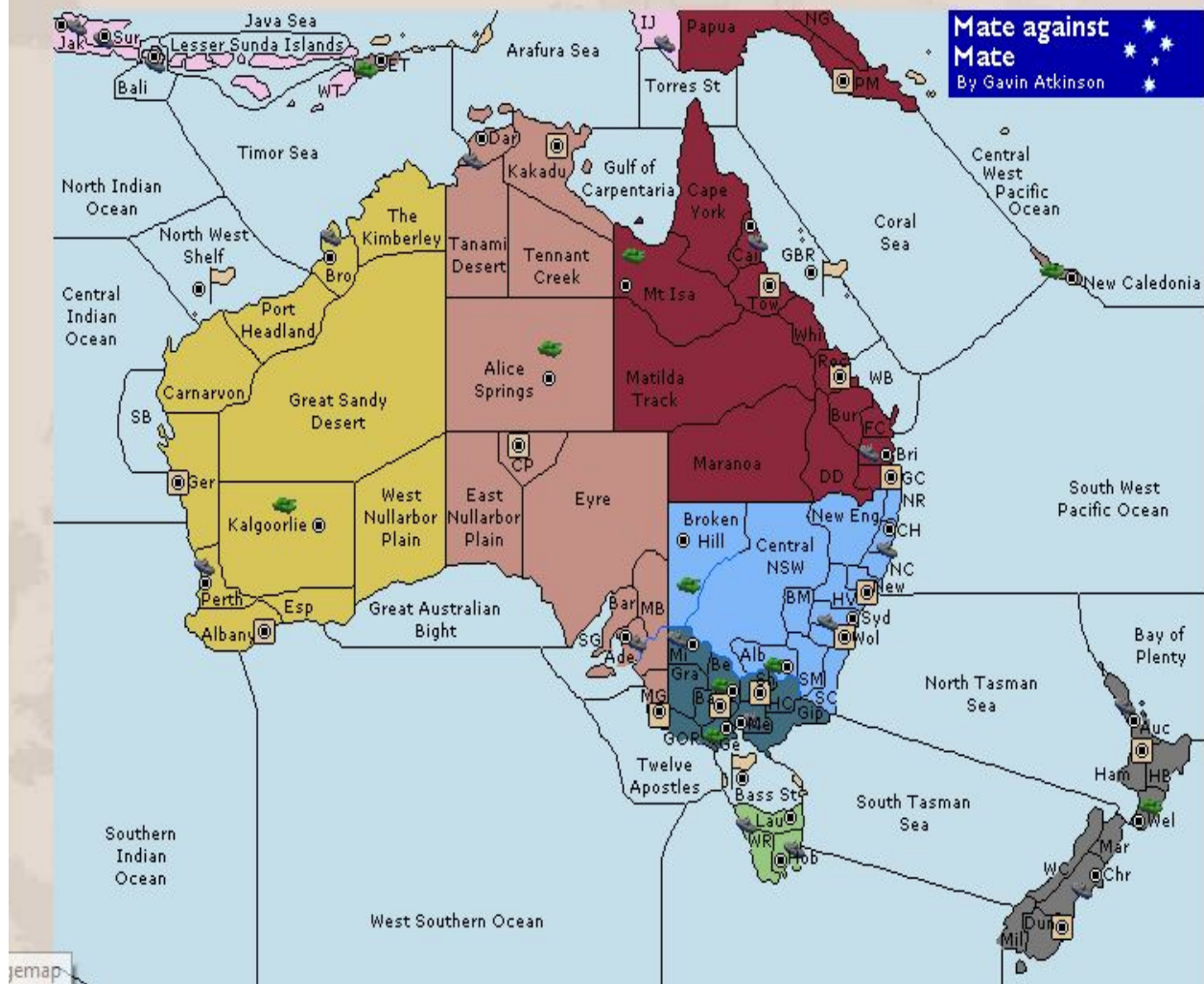


A great example on www.vDiplomacy.com, actually developed and coded by Amby is "Mate Against Mate," an alternate history version that asks "what if the states

of Australia did not unite, and instead went to war?" It's a good playing, well balanced game variant. Give it a try!

Mate Against Mate (8 players)

The Mate Against Mate variant is an alternate history starting in 1973 allowing 8 players to struggle for control over Australia and surrounding territories.



In conclusion, if you love Diplomacy, and have an interest in what is going on digitally, take a listen to the free funny **DiplomacyGames podcast** by Amby and

Kaner. Then, perhaps take a Dip into the Diplomacy websites for online action.

DIXIECON 32

MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND - CHAPEL HILL, NC



It's that time again – for every year since 1987, there has been a Diplomacy tournament in Chapel Hill, North Carolina to start the summer Con season in the Diplomacy Hobby. This year is no exception, as Dixiecon 32 will take over Tar Heel Town May 25-27, 2018.

Dixiecon first began in 1987 as a regional Diplomacy event attended largely by the local Diplomacy club, called the Carolina Amateur Diplomats, as well as travelers from Virginia and other parts of North Carolina. Now in its 32nd year, Dixiecon is primarily known for the more relaxed style of play (no central time clock) and its draw-based scoring system, which used to be standard fare in North America but is now a rarity. Of course, when some people think of Dixiecon, they first think of food – because since 1990 the event has hosted a North Carolina-style barbeque dinner on Saturday afternoon between the two Saturday Dip rounds!

Players will begin to show up at the event on Thursday night, to begin what will certainly be a heavy dose of open gaming. Dixiecon now brings as many non-Dip players as it does Dip players – actually most of those folks are ex-Dip players who can sometimes be cajoled into playing a round as needed. The Diplomacy tournament itself will begin on Friday evening at 6pm, with one round each on Saturday morning and Sunday morning (which is the only round with a time limit.) The Saturday morning round also doubles as the Team Tournament, in which teams of 3 total their scores to determine which team will take home the championship medals, and which ones will just be made fun of by the tournament director.

When the tournament officially kicks off on Friday night, there will be the usual announcements plus the awarding of plaques and other awards from past Dixiecons (a yearly tradition.) A highlight will be the presentation to last year's winner Andy Bartalone of his Order of the Knife medal. All past Dixiecon winners are inducted into the Order – quite a list of rogues and scalawags, honestly – whose primary purpose is to help the Tournament Director by “volunteering” to add or drop a particular round to make the numbers even out, and also to help on other projects throughout the weekend.

Fun facts about Dixiecon – there have been a total of 425 separate players, from 12 different countries, who have attended at least one event. North Carolinian Tom Kobrin has the most finishes in the Hall of Fame (coming in 1st, 2nd, or 3rd) with a total of 8, with Doug Moore in the second spot with 6. Original Carolina Amateur Diplomat Steve Wilcox played in the very first Dixiecon in 1987...and played last year as well, in 2017! Last year's event had six first-time Dixiecon attendees, four of whom were playing in their first Diplomacy tournament ever. Early registrations for 2018 already include three new players.

To find out more information, visit www.dixiecon.com where players can also register for the event online. The costs are low - \$35 registration fee and \$35 per night to rent rooms at the college dorm where the event takes place. Other housing options are available, feel free to contact the tournament director David Hood at davidhood@dixiecon.com!

Why Negotiations?

By Lewis Pulsipher

- Attitudes
- Number of sides
- Multi-sided non-parallel competition
- Competition and egos
- Psychological (vs Systematic)

Diplomacy specifically:

- Support and Convoy - direct co-op
- Zero-sum
- Secret negotiations
- Simultaneous adjudication

What I'm writing about is a fundamental question that most people don't think about. That is, why does it make sense to negotiate in some games, and not make sense in other games? Furthermore, why is it that some players assume the negotiation is part of any multiplayer game, while others assume a negotiation is not a part of **any** game?

The answer to the first question derives from the nature of games, in particular the situation where parallel competitions - puzzles disguised as games are much more common than traditional style opposed games. As for the second question, we only need keep in mind that game players as a group are very diverse, with some players accustomed to certain styles of play and others accustomed to very different styles, in many cases both deriving from the answer to the first question.

Example. Diplomacy players especially may not realize how uncommon the urge to negotiate is in game players. I'll give just one example. As most of you know my vocation is board and card game designer. I recently designed, with another person, a stock market game where the players manipulate market prices by creating certain events, as though the players were very rich people who are not bothered by doing crooked or downright illegal things to affect the markets. I saw this as an opportunity for lots of collusion and other negotiation amongst the competing players. I pointed this out when the game was first play tested. But the play testers are accustomed to playing Euro-style games, where negotiation is almost unheard of because there is virtually no way for a player to hinder or help another player directly. Yes, this was the first time they had played this game, but I can imagine someone who is a Diplomacy player making some effort to negotiate, and there was **no** such effort. The players were used to going it alone, to doing their best to solve the puzzle presented to them by a game, even though this clearly is not a puzzle game.

Each player in this situation was outnumbered 5 to 1 but had no apparent thought to do something to reduce the odds. The nature of negotiations in multiplayer games, is that you're outnumbered and you want to do something to reduce the odds against you.

Diplomacy players may also not realize how many people assume that negotiation is just a popularity contest. Those folks don't understand that there is both logic and emotion in negotiation, that it's about persuasion and mutual interest, not popularity. Many of those people who think it's a popularity contest evidently don't do very well in such contests, and avoid negotiation like the plague. Some even regard it as unsporting!

Number of Sides. Keep in mind that the number of independent sides in a game, not the number of players, plays a great part in negotiation. A game for partners has four players, but two sides. Football (either kind) has 22 players in the game, but only two sides. A co-operative game may have four or five players, but only one **intelligent** side, though computer programming may enable the opposition to act coherently at times. Axis & Allies can have five players, but it's fundamentally a two-sided war.

In virtually all single-sided games, there is no room for persuasion of any kind, as there's no other entity. In a single-player game where programming (usually via computer, but you can program with cards up to a point) is used to provide a semblance of an opposing player, you may be able to negotiate in very simple ways, as in solo computer Civilization. There you can make an offer, get a response, and try to sweeten the offer, but you're limited to simple treaties, not to actual military or economic co-operation. The game mechanics don't provide for it.

In two-sided opposed games, you can try to persuade the other player (side) to do or not do something, but there's rarely a way to provide a quid pro quo (QPQ)/mutual interest. You might be able to design such a game so that there's a third entity (non-player controlled) that threatens both sides (like a two player Game of Thrones - The Boardgame with the threat from beyond the Wall). And then you might be able to offer a QPQ. But this is an exception to the norm.

It's in games for more than two sides that negotiation can come to the forefront, because two players can collude to the disadvantage of the other player(s). The

inherent situation in multi-sided (more than two) games of conflict is that each player is heavily outnumbered by the other players, and must do something to redress the balance. That's what negotiation is for in these games, to give yourself a chance to survive.

In contrast, in parallel competition games, where the other players can do nothing or next to nothing to hinder you, you're not outnumbered at all. You have just as good a chance as anyone else to out-execute them, to solve the puzzle.

Most games are in between to a greater or lesser extent, of course.

Competition and Egos. Puzzles have always been more popular with people than games, in part because you're not putting your ego on the line to the same extent in a puzzle as in a game - you can't lose - in part because you can see more or less continuous progress toward solving the puzzle. And if you watch most people play Eurostyle games, most of which are puzzles, there's much less emotion attached in a Euro than in an opposed game of direct conflict such as a war game; people are not putting their egos on the line even though there's a winner and losers. Consider also the recent popularity of co-operative board and card games, where everyone loses or wins together, playing against the game. Moreover, RPGs are inherently co-op games.

You can also observe that in many Euro groups players help each other solve their puzzles, suggesting best moves, not the sort of thing you often see in wargames.

The Systematic-Psychological Spectrum. Some people refer to politics in games rather than negotiation. Rather than use politics as a description of what happens in games where there are more than two sides, I much prefer the term psychological games. No one respects politics anymore and it seems to me that the people who call such games political or talk about politics in multiplayer games are people who don't like to deal with other people, at least some of the time!

Every game sits on a spectrum, with a purely systematic game at one end and a purely psychological game at the other. Few if any games are purely systematic or purely psychological but many lean heavily to one side of the other. Diplomacy, for example, is a heavily psychological game that nonetheless has an interesting system component that many people study extensively, that is, the movement of the armies and fleets. Gunboat Diplomacy, where negotiations are (at least theoretically) outlawed even though body language can be used for negotiation, is a game that's almost entirely systematic rather than psychological. Poker is even more psychological than Diplomacy because the system is so simple. Formal puzzles (such as Crosswords) are extremely systematic, though even here, the player may

try to read the intentions of the puzzle designer, a psychological element in an otherwise entirely systematic activity.

Players nowadays are used to playing against the system in non-wargames (most of which are characterized as Eurostyle games even though there's great disagreement about what that means). They're not used to playing a psychological game. There is no persuasion involved in playing against the game system, yet the essence of negotiation is persuasion; negotiation is an epitome of the psychological in games. (Another epitome is bluffing in high-stakes Poker.)

Can Negotiation Make a Difference? Negotiation only makes sense when it can make a difference. And it can only make a difference when there's a way for players to hinder or help other players. The support function in Diplomacy is the most brilliant part of the game system because it gives players a way to help other players directly rather than indirectly, and that is rare in games. In most games where there are ways to hinder other players, the only way to help one player is by hindering the player's enemies, not by actually helping the player. But in Diplomacy you can directly help the player via the support action (and also the convoy action).

In parallel competitions players have no direct and possibly no indirect ways to hinder or help other players. Frequently, blocking the other player from doing something is about as much as you can achieve, and that's usually at the cost of your own progression.

Advantage Through Talking. In your typical Eurostyle game, no one can gain an advantage within the rules by talking with the other players about the game. (Psyching an opponent, or persuading the opponent to do something disadvantageous to him, is external to the rules.) This contrasts with a game such as Diplomacy where anyone who doesn't talk to others is at a great disadvantage.

Negotiating is NOT horse-trading or haggling. That is, it's not a matter of going up (or down) in price until you meet in the middle (or don't agree at all). It's a matter of persuasion. In the case of buying and selling, you try to persuade the other person that the logic behind your offer is better than the logic behind his or her offer. (Or, for win-win negotiation, you try to establish a standard you both agree on, then determine what price best meets that standard.)

Which brings up the question: do you win at negotiation? Is the objective of negotiation to win that negotiation?

Outside of games, in negotiation the objective is to achieve your most important objectives, knowing that

you're not likely to achieve all of them. Much of negotiation is about what you Must have, vs what you Want to have. If you can achieve your must haves, you've succeeded, haven't you?

Within games, you might think more in terms of winning a negotiation, just as you're trying to win the game.

Persuasion vs Negotiation. We must differentiate between persuasion by itself, and persuasion as part of negotiation. Even in a two player non-co-operative game involving conflict, where each player's goal is to overcome the other in some way, one player can try to persuade the other to do, or not do, something. There is no need for co-operation or for a quid pro quo (a favor or advantage granted or expected in return for something). Co-operation, the need for a quid pro quo, is inherent to negotiations but not to persuasion by itself. It's still about persuasion, but there are consequences on the bargaining table for both sides.

Zero-sum Games. Diplomacy is a zero-sum game, that is, the only way to gain something is to take it from someone else. There are only 34 supply centers. Thanks to zero-sum, a Diplomacy player cannot sit back and watch others destroy one another while the player on the sidelines gets stronger. Players MUST participate in the action if they want to win.

Most games are not zero sum: most Euros are about constructing some entity/thing, while most wargames involve ending with less of the things important to players existing than at the start (think Chess, Checkers). Keep in mind also that wargames in general involve tearing down the opposition, stealing away or destroying that their assets. Diplomacy is unusual as a war game because the overall number of units in the game is very stable owing to the supply center system. Even then you are likely to be destroying enemy units and stealing their Supply Centers.

Secret Negotiation. Another element of Diplomacy that makes it the ultimate negotiations game (other than the support and convoy mechanics) is that negotiation is secret. This makes for a LONG game face-to-face (hence those who want to play Gunboat, to get a much shorter game), but the nature of negotiation is that it takes a long time. Nonetheless, THE essence of the game is Secret Negotiation, not the other elements I talk about.

Simultaneous Adjudication. A third element of Diplomacy that makes it the ultimate negotiations game is simultaneous adjudication of orders. This allows for surprises both good and bad from an individual's standpoint. Backstabs and co-operation are both stronger when executed simultaneously; in fact, may not be possible without the simultaneity.

Unfortunately, a strong trend in games is to not require players to write down anything. In Game of Thrones the Boardgame, which can be seen as a variation of Diplomacy (though I wouldn't call it a Diplomacy variant per se), the designer devised a method allowing for something approaching simultaneous adjudication, without writing anything down. In second edition Britannia (2006), Fantasy Flight Games included scoring markers so that players would not have to keep a scoresheet, though scoresheets had been part of the game for 20 years. (I've seen those markers used for scoring exactly once. But I've also seen game-changing errors in arithmetic on tournament scoresheets.)

The upshot of this: if you want to design a negotiation game, making players write things down is a bad idea. In computers, of course, players move pieces with their mice/fingers, so it's not a problem to use simultaneous adjudication.

Another Example. My game Britannia is not primarily a negotiation game, though it is a four-player direct conflict game. When I revised the design in a new edition for 2006, some players asked me to outlaw negotiation. This is of course impossible, because a gesture made at the board, any look, any statement about the state of the game can be negotiation because it's intended to persuade. (What I did do was outlaw secret negotiation, which makes a big difference.)

In some blog comments a poster described Britannia (without naming it), implying that it was a puzzle just like any other "game."

My response was: The most successful players recognize that it's about persuading people to do things to your advantage, and about not letting them persuade you to do something that's to your disadvantage. Not like a puzzle.

Part of the commenter's response:

The board state is the board state. No persuasion is necessary. I can certainly assume that my opponents will make sub-optimal plays, but that's a poor starting point for a discussion on game strategy.

My response was: I am dumbfounded by [this]. In any game where players are able to significantly help or hinder others (and there are more than two sides), persuasion is a vital part of the game, or will be unless players refuse to participate. I know there are people who think games should not involve any kind of negotiation or persuasion, while to others it's the major point of games. I recall in particular one tournament Britannia player who refused to negotiate. He asked me what he could do to be more successful, and I told him as long as he took that stance, he was outnumbered 3 to 1.

1. Though secret negotiation is prohibited in the game, you can't practically outlaw negotiation, because any comment or gesture a player makes about the state of the game can be a form of persuasion.

I don't know, but suspect that commenter would agree with the statement (which I have seen several people make), "all games are math". My view is that games are about people, and if anything is about math, it is puzzles.

Puzzles have always correct solutions. Classic pure puzzles often have only one correct solution, but may have several. The typical parallel competition Eurostyle game usually has several always-correct solutions, also known as paths to victory. An opposed game, like traditional classic games, either has no always-correct solution, or the always-correct solution is so complex that humans cannot achieve it, as in Chess. In contrast we have Tic-Tac-Toe as an example of an opposed game that is an easily-solved puzzle, hence the certainty of a draw between optimal players.

Three Types of Game Fans. You can characterize game fans as belonging to one of two or perhaps three groups. Many people act as part of one group in some situations and as part of another group and other situations, while some are extreme representatives of their type.

One believes that all games are math. These are usually people who actually prefer puzzles, and often prefer that there's no other player to interfere with what they're doing. They also believe that everything in the game can be reduced to calculations (math). In a simple two player game they're often correct. A pillar of the Mathematical Theory of Games is that you can assume your opponent is a perfect player and plan your strategies accordingly, and if the opponent plays less than perfectly you'll gain more than you would otherwise.

But in a game of any complexity it is no longer possible to calculate the necessary mixed strategies.

The purely systematic game is the ideal. Almost all single player games are purely systematic games.

Another group believes that games are all about people. This group prefers psychological games. They expect opposition, and they expect that they'll be able to negotiate in one way or another with the opposition B if there are more than two players. Even when there are only two players they will likely talk to the other player and perhaps try to persuade that player to do something that benefits themselves more than it benefits the other player

Games like Poker and Diplomacy are ideals.

The third group, which I sometimes think of as a subset of the second group, says that games are about stories. I sometimes wonder how strongly they believe that when I see that stories tend to sell Eurostyle games even though the game itself may have nothing to do functionally with the actual story. For this group the story is more important than the winning in most cases. And many in this group are happy to follow the leader of the game or the game master in the case of role playing games. This can be seen as a subset of the second group because stories are ultimately about people, but this group values the story more than the winning.

Conclusion. I started writing this to help support Doug/Diplomacy World as well as to write what would ultimately amount to the first part of a book about designing multi-sided games that involve conflict. Sometimes I stuck to my original question, sometimes I've rambled a little bit about a lot of things. It can be seen as a work in progress - I don't think I have an overall one-sentence conclusion.

The Tuscan Opening

by Luiz L. S. Neto (a.k.a. Enriador)

I would like to present you with an Italian opening that I thought of recently: the **Tuscan Opening**, also accurately described as the **Tuscan Variation** of the **Lepanto Opening**.

It all started with a simple question: what is Tuscany's purpose? Okay, it's the gateway between Italy and France in the battle for the Mediterranean during the mid/late game. But what about its early game use, especially in 1901? Can it be used for any other purpose than screaming "I'LL KILL YOU FRANCE!!1!" in a

French Attack (A VEN-PIE, A ROM-TUS, F NAP-TYN) where Army Rome Hold has identical use?

Let's go through some other moves to unusual spaces first:

Army Liverpool-**Clyde** is a shady opening, but it guarantees that Fleet NRG alone can convoy the army. It ensures that England will either convoy to Norway or waste both fleets convoying it elsewhere, which in any case will make Germany (and to a lesser extent France)

more certain about English (lack of) influence over the Low Countries.

Army Moscow/Warsaw-**Livonia** can be convoyed to Sweden, which enables a supported attack on Denmark in 1902 (while disabling many other options).

Army Vienna-**Bohemia** can, under rare circumstances, be a key part in an even rarer Austro-Italian opening where Austria moves for Serbia and Greece while Italy convoys to Tunis, with A Venice being supported by A Vienna into Munich - an almost assured 2-center grab for each power.

Army Smyrna-**Syria** in Fall 1901 is not just an effective anti-Lepanto move, but enables flexibility in the case of a pro-Russian Pastiche Opening (A CON-BUL, F ANK-BLA, A SMY H) where Fleet ANK goes to CON in Fall. It allows maximum flexibility as Turkey sends Army SMY-SYR away and waits Russia's move: if the Tsar treacherously moved to BLA, ANK will be open for the fleet build; if Russia kept its word then Fleet SMY can be built normally.

Army Berlin-**Prussia** is part of the legendary Centrifuge Opening (A MUN-KIE, F KIE-BAL) where the army is convoyed to Denmark in Fall.

But what about **Tuscany**? Can a move there in 1901 make sense somehow? Well, turns out it can!

Imagine the following context before Spring 1901 (when your only source is what other powers say!):

1) Italy is willing to help Austria stop a rising Juggernaut

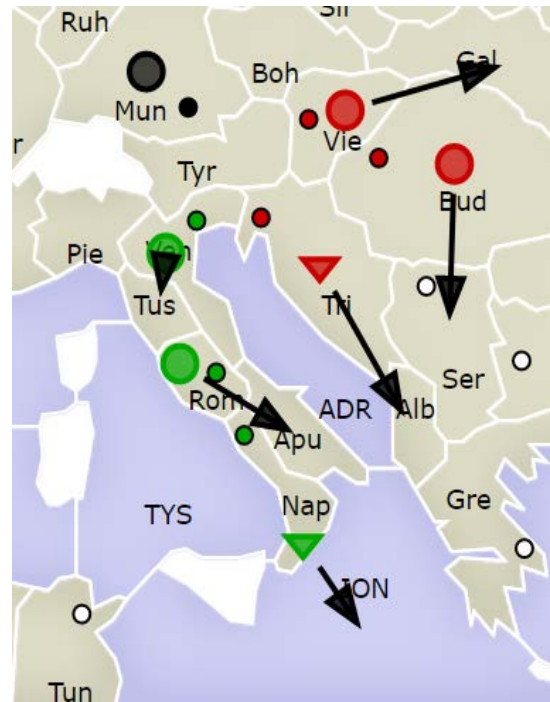
2) Austria is paranoid about its defense

So nothing uncommon right? Obviously, if Italy does not care about Austria's doom or if Austria does not mind moving east in force while an Italian army looms in the horizon, more traditional openings will certainly give the Pope more options. The **Tuscan Opening** attempts to give Italy a reasonable start when both points above are true (which they usually are), by **making a move towards Turkey** - the traditional Lepanto - while also **reassuring Austria that its home centers will be safe** - unshackling the Archduke to use the powerful Balkan Gambit Opening, Galician Variation. To achieve both objectives, here is the opening:

A VEN-TUS

A ROM-APU

F NAP-ION

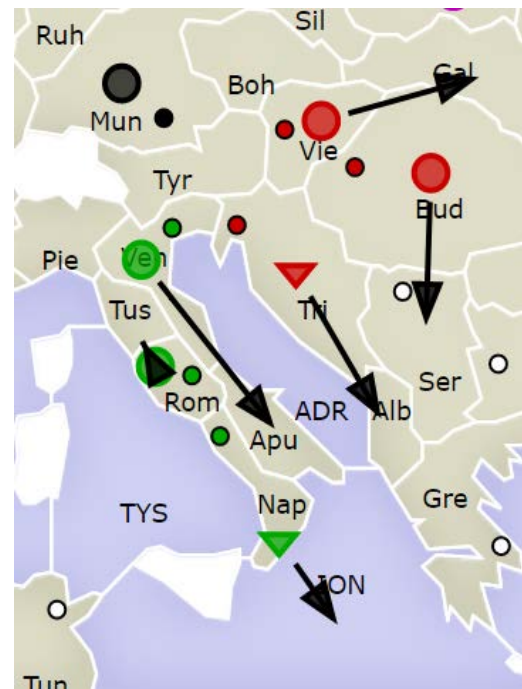


For this article we shall refer to the opening above (the Venetian Variation), but there's an alternative set of moves (the Roman Variation) that has the same result:

A VEN-APU

A ROM-TUS

F NAP-ION



By moving to Tuscany from the start (alongside a Lepanto Opening), Italy makes it impossible to stab Austria at Trieste in Fall 1901, giving the Archduke much-needed freedom to halt Russo-Turkish ambitions in the Balkans with all their three units. An initial dosage of trust is needed from both sides, but if things go well by Spring then full-blown cooperation by Fall will be a great reward in their anti-Juggernaut crusade.

The opening does give Italy less leverage over Austria, and may actually be considered more to Austria's advantage than Italy's, but it's up to the Pope to balance whether keeping a shadow over Trieste is worth it when a Juggernaut is on the move and Austria has to constantly watch over its back - potentially wasting a precious unit to do garrison duty or rush back to Trieste due to some nasty rumour (probably from France's President or England's Prime Minister working in junction with the Juggernaut).

If Austria breaks their word and moves Fleet TRI-VEN, your units at Tuscany and Apulia can easily retake the center and still grab Tunis with the fleet; if Austria attempts a flamboyant opening like the Blue Water (F TRI-ADR, A VIE-TYR/TRI) you can assure both a bounce in Venice and the build. In any case, Italy hasn't much to lose by trying the Tuscan Opening while the gains (bounce in Galicia and possibly Rumania or two units on Bulgaria by the year's end with a Italian sea invasion on its way) can be quite numerous indeed.

Perhaps you're wondering: if the problem is staying with the army in Venice, why move specifically to Tuscany, and not anywhere else? Well, the problem is that:

Tyrolia sucks even more than staying in Venice - it borders Vienna on top of Trieste, and adds Munich and thus an angry Kaiser into the mix. Not exactly the most helpful behavior when stopping a Juggernaut is the goal.

Piedmont may be used to balance the West sometimes, but most often it'll cause a nasty build of Fleet Marseilles that will do your march to Syria no good at all. Why

meddle in the West when a larger shadow rises in the East?

Apulia is out of question - it forces Army Rome to do a "Lesspanto" towards Naples, and in the case that Austria does move its fleet to Venice you cannot be assured of retaking it.

Rome addresses many of the problems stated above, however it has two drawbacks: first, it blocks a home supply center from builds, and no matter how marginal Rome can be in the early game, it's important to keep the option of Fleet ROM open if and when the wind changes course. Second, and there's where it loses to Tuscany: Rome lacks vital leverage over Piedmont, which means less of a say in western affairs should anti-French policy become a priority. From Tuscany, and army can reach Marseilles within a year - not an option to be underestimated.

Be warned that there are contexts where using the Tuscan Opening may not be to Italy's (and Austria's) advantage. Notably, when a Juggernaut is not so certain: too friendly behavior risks throwing Tsar and Sultan into each other's arms a bit sooner than needed. There may also be a case for Army VEN-TYR then TYR-BOH, enabling Italy to help with Galicia in 1902, or for Italy to interfere in a Western Triangle resolving too quickly by sliding into Piedmont or Tyrolia. Finally, using an unusual opening may raise eyebrows across the board regarding your skill or experience, which can serve as a liability or a key advantage in your race to 18.

In conclusion, the **Tuscan Opening** is Italy's answer to the question: **"how can I send Austria spinning madly at Russia/Turkey without the guy freaking out about Trieste?"** It's a minor sacrifice of Italian early power in order to boost Austria's own initial capacity to strike at a feared enemy, and may constitute the foundations of a happy and well-built alliance that will open many windows - and supply centers for the green units.

When the stab on Austria comes in your victorious end, may you have sweet memories of opening to Tuscany in an equally sweet Spring.

Monty Python Diplomacy – A Silly Variant for Silly People

By Douglas Kent

British humor was a big part of my childhood. Whether it was listening to LPs or watching strange, fascinating comedy shows on PBS (back in the days when you had to stand up and walk over to the TV to change the channel), the special brand of humor you could find in British comedy had not yet made its way into American television sitcoms. As John Cleese's character Archie explained decades later in "A Fish Called Wanda": "Do you have any idea what it's like being English? Being so correct all the time, being so stifled by this dread of, of doing the wrong thing, of saying to someone "Are you married?" and hearing "My wife left me this morning," or saying, uh, "Do you have children?" and being told they all burned to death on Wednesday. You see, Wanda, we'll all terrified of embarrassment. That's why we're so... dead. Most of my friends are dead, you know, we have these piles of corpses to dinner. But you're alive, God bless you, and I want to be, I'm so fed up with all this." Cleese based his show "Fawlty Towers" almost entirely on this principle alone.

But I digress. I found the humor intoxicating. The Goodies. The Two Ronnies. Fawlty Towers. And, the king of them all, Monty Python. For some reason being a fan of Monty Python was a very common characteristic of members of the Diplomacy hobby when I first became aware of the Play by Mail community. Zines had been named after them, games named in their honor, pages of press derived from the TV show, their record albums, or the films. It was just another way people communicated back then: in Monty Python language.

Netflix announced a few weeks ago that it had picked up the rights to the entire Monty Python catalog, which includes the show, the movies, and possibly some "lost material." I don't know what that material might be, and I haven't bothered to read about it. I already own all the films on DVD, plus the complete television series, and the record albums on vinyl or CD (or both). I don't know what might be "new" unless it's the German episodes completists have seen already, or perhaps comedy from The Secret Policeman's Other Ball and other live events.

Anyway, because I am too lazy to get up and look through my files to see if someone has already created a Monty Python based Diplomacy variant, I decided to throw one together myself. It's nothing complicated...each of the seven players is given a special power to be used only once during the game, with that power derived from a selected Monty Python television skit. The Pythons focused on World War II much more frequently than any other wartime period, so I'm using poetic license and appropriating tidbits

regardless of how they might fit with the World War I era of Diplomacy. Monty Python isn't required to make sense, and therefore neither am I.

As I said, each nation is given a special power, to be used only once during a game. They are as follows:



Austria-Hungary: In one popular Python skit, a Hungarian national visiting England is attempting to buy a pack of cigarettes with the help of an English/Hungarian phrase book. Unfortunately for both the Hungarian and the tobacconist, this phrase book is full of incorrect translations intended to cause confusion and possibly bodily injury. As we later learn in a courtroom scene, the Hungarian phrase for "Can you direct me to the station?" is translated by the English phrase, "Please fondle my bum." So, we shall grant the Austrian player the power of confusion and miscommunication. Once during the game, Austria may order an enemy unit to hold. Not only will that unit hold (instead of whatever it had been ordered to do) but any supports given to that unit during that season are also null and void. (This cutting of support really only matters if the unit had been ordered to hold originally). This should be ordered as: "Austria Fondles the Bum of Italian Army Venice."

England: One of the longer early Python bits concerned the Funniest Joke in the World. Arthur Scribbler, a joke writer, creates the joke and then dies laughing. Once his wife, neighbors, and police officials also die after reading the joke, the military realizes the joke could have powerful wartime uses. Eventually they translate the joke into German, a form the enemy would understand (and be affected by) but their own troops would not.



With that in mind, England is given the power to have any army (not a fleet) read the joke to any enemy army in a neighboring province, rather than conducting a typical move or support. The English army moves into that province, and the enemy army is forced to retreat as normal (as if the province had been successfully attacked in a Spring or Fall turn). Fleets are immune from this attack (and also cannot be used to initiate the attack) due to the noise of the ships interfering with the delivery and hearing of the joke. Orders to read the joke should be given using Joke or J, as in Army Munich Joke Army Berlin.



France: In another early Python bit, sheep on a farm are found to be attempting to nest in trees, and to teach their young to fly like birds. This is because Harold, a clever sheep, has realized a sheep's life is standing around for a while until it is killed and eaten, and he has seized upon the possibility of escape. Two Frenchmen (sharing a single mustache which they move from one to the other depending on who is speaking) then explain the benefits of sheep aviation.

Because of this, the French player may use the power of Sheep Aviation one time in a game to move a single

army up to three spaces in a Spring or Fall movement phase. This power could be used for movement or for support of another unit. Fleets cannot be given this ability, but the army in question MAY attack or support an attack on a fleet (or support an attack by a fleet or support a fleet in place) provided the fleet in question is in a coastal province. The Sheep Aviation army MAY fly over sea provinces. The unit remains in its original province at the end of the turn if it was used for support, and while the support cannot be cut by moving into that province, the unit CAN be forced to retreat if the original province is successfully attacked by normal rules. Orders should be written as: Army Paris Support Fleet North Sea – London via Sheep Aviation.



Germany: Hitler is Alive. In one Python bit, Adolph Hitler and some of his top men are alive and living in an English boarding house under assumed names. Hitler is now known as Mr. Hilter, and is organizing support for an attempt to enter local politics.

With this in mind, Germany may create a normal German army in ANY empty land province on the map, either after a Spring turn or during Summer retreats. The placement of this army is announced publicly by the GM prior to any Fall orders being written or collected. Mr. Hilter's army becomes part of the normal German forces and requires a supply center for support like any other unit. However, the German player is not required to remove this particular army during Winter if a removal is needed and may simply choose another unit for removal. Once placed the Hilter army operates like a normal army. If the German player attempts to build the Hilter Army in a province which is not empty, the build fails and the power is lost. If the German player attempts to build the Hilter Army in an empty province that another unit attempts to retreat into at the same time, the Hilter Army AND the retreating unit and both

destroyed (the same as if two units attempt to retreat into the same province). Orders for this are to be written: Build Mr. Hilter's Army in Ukraine.



Italy: Aside from some Roman-era things, the most obvious Python bit involving Italy is the class for Beginning Italian...populated by one German, and a number of Italian-born individuals who speak the language better than the instructor. So because of their wonderful language prowess, Italy may submit an order for any opposing unit one time during the game, and that Italian order will be followed instead of the one submitted by the controlling player. This can only be used in a Spring or Fall turn, not for builds, retreats, or removals. It should be submitted as: Italy via Beginners' Italian orders Russian A Warsaw – Moscow.



Russia: Russia derives its special power from the television show World Forum, with guests Karl Marx and

Lenin alongside Che Guevara and Mao Tse-Tung. Of course, this is Monty Python, so instead of debating politics these historical figures are asked to answer questions about the Eurovision song contest, the FA Cup, and what football team sports the nickname "The Hammers" in an attempt to win a lounge suite. However, since Karl Marx does manage to get a few political questions thrown his way, we'll let him ask questions of his own. One time during the game, Russia may wait and submit a final order for one unit AFTER all the other orders have been revealed. This delay should be submitted as: Russia has Karl Marx Ponder Fleet Black Sea.



Turkey: Honestly, I think Turkey was mentioned twice in all of Monty Python history. To even attempt to explain the setting and the joke in either case would be silly. Yes, very very silly. So, instead of dealing with that, Turkey will be given a special power from one of my favorite early Python bits. On "It's the Arts" an interviewer begins to question "one of the world's leading modern composers, Arthur 'Two-Sheds' Jackson." However, instead of discussing his new symphony, all of the question center around the conductor's nickname of "Two-Sheds" (much to his dismay). Therefore, once during any Spring or Fall turn Turkey may order a unit to move with double-strength (as a unit receiving one uncut support). The unit is still eligible to receive additional supports for its move as normal. This should be submitted as "Turkey: Army Constantinople Two-Sheds to Bulgaria."

Now, I wonder how long it would take me to come up with a variant based on Monty Python and the Holy Grail?

Diplomacy: A Father/Son Event and the Rise of the World War 1 Trench Coat

By Jason Regnier

This is a short story of my son, my trench coat, my Diplomacy game efforts, and a bit of history and artistry. My son is not just a fantastic 16-year-old, but also a budding Diplomacy player and part time artist. Here is a brief story from last year after a series of sound beatings in Diplomacy, because as you know old age and treachery overcomes youth and enthusiasm almost every time.

One fine summer day he came to me after yet another beating in our favorite two player game, Cold War, and asked to look over my right shoulder and open my mouth as far as possible. He held perfectly still, and looked at me for about 20 seconds. He thanked me kindly and left the room. No explanation.

A brief tangent about the variant website and specifically Diplomacy: Cold War

The Cold War is a two player variant of Diplomacy hosted over on www.vDiplomacy.com and is a personal favorite of mine as it gives a chance to play the game and for me to discuss the history of the Cold War as I remember it, and the nation states and strategic interests around the world at the time. Also, it was a chance to teach him a bit about how spies sent coded messages, how technical encryption works, and the fact that the Cold War was really about proxy wars, spies, and skullduggery instead of a global World War III. For instance, instead of olde-tyme one-time-pads, we tried a modern free encryption app and had remarkably good results. On this screenshot you can see a bit of the encrypted messages.



Back to the story: Thirty minutes later my son came back with a drawing of me, wearing a trench coat, a ridiculous expression, and a symbol of the warfare the Diplomacy game abstracts so well. A decent drawing to be sure you can see at the end of the article, with an ulterior motive. Please note the detail of the fabric he drew and the spent rounds falling from an imaginary gun – quite good detail if I do say so.

Fundamentally, he was just making fun of me as any brave teenager does to their parent on occasion. What he was really doing is poking fun at big “new” WWI style trench coat I had recently acquired from my Dad. My father, a child of World War 2, had acquired it in 1959, the same year Allen Calhmer released our favorite game, Diplomacy, on the commercial market. Over the years my Dad took great care of the coat and I was

fortunate enough to be the only boy in the family of four, and the only one the coat would fit. So, he gave it to me last winter and I proudly wear it in the winter on occasion, much to the natural embarrassment of my teenager. But then, everything I do embarrasses him (as it should be).

As I have actually succeeded in pulling him from his X-Box "Battlefield One" and "Call of Duty" to play Diplomacy now and then, I have sparked his interest into the history and causes of World War 1. We often talk about the impact of the politics and the war on the actual design of Allan's Diplomacy game itself. So, based on his silly drawing, we had a little chat about the horrors of trench warfare, French/German stalemate lines in Belgium and France, combat across Galicia, Turkey, northern Italy, and Russia. I taught him why the "trench coat" came about, what and who it was for, and why it survived to the 1950s, 1960s, and even now 2018. I used this article I found online to help him get a picture of how it got to my closet.



An excerpt from Smithsonian Magazine Online:

"World War I brought with it a broad array of societal changes, including men's fashion.

"Warfare through the 1860s was Napoleonic, typically conducted in large fields where two armies faced off and fired or hacked at one another until one fell. In these scenarios, brightly colored uniforms helped commanders identify their infantry troops even through the smoke of battle. But with the technological advancements

in long-range arms in place even by the Crimean War in the 1850s, this kind of warfare had become deeply impractical, not to mention deadly; bright, garish uniforms simply made soldiers easier targets.



"Military tactics needed to adapt to this new reality and so too did uniforms. The color khaki, which came to dominate British military uniforms, was the result of lessons learned in India; the word "khaki" means "dust" in Hindi. The first experiments at dyeing uniforms to blend in with the landscape began in 1840; during the Indian Rebellion of 1857, several British regiments dyed their uniforms drab colors.

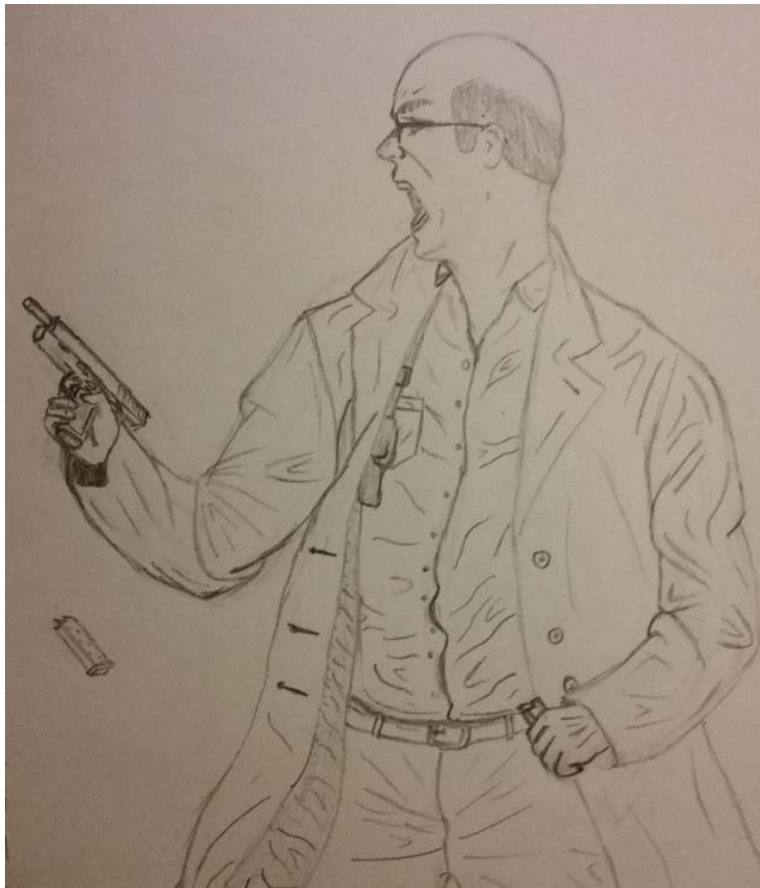


"By the 1890s, khaki and camouflage had spread to the rest of the British military; in the Boer War in 1899, the utility of khaki uniforms had proven itself by allowing soldiers dealing with guerilla warfare to blend more easily with their surroundings. The British military was in some ways slow to change – bizarrely,

mustaches for officers were compulsory until 1916 – but by World War I, there was an increasing recognition that uniforms needed to disappear into the landscape, allow for fluid, unencumbered movement, be adaptable to the fighting terrain, and be easily produced in mass quantities.”

After the war, and even through today the trench coat remains a statement, though many are unaware of the 100 year historical anniversary.





The Perfect Con

By Stanley Rench

I have to say I was very touched by the outpouring of appreciation for my previous effort in the pages of Diplomacy World, "The External Power System." I wrote it as a corrective to the empty-headed pronouncements from the Manipulator from Maine. When I began to write that strategy article, trust me, there were skeptics here in Biloxi. "Is the outside world ready for such advanced stratagems?" one asked. More pointedly, another inquired, "Do you really think those Yankees can handle this?" Thankfully, you all proved them wrong and now the External Powers System has been embraced nationwide. More importantly, the fraudulent "Central Powers System" has been exposed and relegated to the dustbin of history, or as we say it down here, "Bangor."

However, our Diplomacy think tank, the Biloxi and Larger Delta Area Strategic Studies Essential for Diplomacy (in the interest of good taste and gentility, I will permit you to work out the acronym for yourselves), set about solving yet another hobby problem. As the largest undiscovered Diplomacy group in the country, we seem perfectly positioned to solve major problems. After all, who wants to feud with us?

The issue? Dipcon itself! We have made a few observations and are offering solutions. Unlike some players, we don't just grumble. Those who merely complain are like a riverboat running at full power upriver with no wheel—a lot of wasted energy and no progress. After our best and brightest proposed their ideas, we kicked the tires and tried them out at a few of our massive monthly gaming sessions. We think they're ready for prime-time.

Team Rounds

These team rounds have become a bit of a joke, haven't they? The problem of cross-gaming with seven-player teams was "solved" by cutting the teams to three. We understand it's no fun to have the results of one game influence the results of another. However, we politely ask: 3-player teams are a solution? If your wife buys too much at the Winn-Dixie, do you send the kids out hunting skunks with pitchforks?

Can you imagine addressing complaints about the MLB All-Star game by reducing the number of players on the field? "Let's try six defensive players! That will drive up interest in the game!" No, it won't. It will just make all those Major League players look incompetent. Now, I'm not saying going to three players was a bad idea . . . well, actually, I suppose I am.

So, what's our solution? As always is the case in Mississippi, we prefer elegant answers to big problems. The system had to address the major flaws of the three-player "team." Those problems are the potential imbalance of countries played, and the fact that three-players is hardly a "team" in a seven-player game.

To be candid, our solution is so simple you all ought to be embarrassed for not figuring it out. Then again, it took you nearly four years to win the War of Northern Aggression, so you folks above the Mason-Dixon line do tend to be a bit slow.

Without further ado: we propose there should be seven players on each team, but the teams are not announced until AFTER the round is played.

I can read your faces—yes, even from across the computer screen. You don't get it. Well then, do pay attention whilst I illuminate. The players don't choose the teams. The teams are assigned by a computer program and not revealed before the round. No one knows who the teams are until after the round.

That feeling you have? It's called "shame." And, it's okay. Some say it's healthy. We river-folk resolved a seemingly insoluble issue! Cross-gaming is rendered impossible and each team plays every country. It is, without question, representative and fair.

What's that? You want to know what kind of "team event" that is—since you don't know who is on your team until AFTER the event? With all possible respect, you are placing an incalculable strain upon my legendary patience! Just as professional sports teams are drafted, so are these teams. In fact, a tournament director may even rate the players to try and balance the "teams." The fact that you don't know who is on your team is what makes it fair! And, what better way to make new friends than by sharing awards with them? There is one additional upside: if your team gets throttled (and it probably will, let us speak candidly), you can blame players you don't even know! Imagine the fun after the round. You meet your teammates for the first time, they tell you how well their games went and then you confess you were eliminated in 1903! "Thanks for carrying me, suckas! The drinks are on you!" And yet, you get to carry the hardware home too!

Free tip: we Biloxians similarly conceal the scoring system until we are ready to announce the winner. "But, that's not fair!" someone will shout. Actually, it's quite

fair. Play your best and the scoring will take care of itself. But, I don't want to overwhelm y'all with common sense.

Prizes

Quite honestly, we are surprised and saddened to hear that some tournaments give out oddly inapt prizes. Our leadership took a long lunch and discussed some of the rumors we have heard.

It seems inexplicable that a championship-level event would give out awards that seem to have been picked up at the checkout line at Wal-Mart. It grates against our core Southern hospitality. In short, what is wrong with you folk? Why would you treat someone who travelled hundreds of miles with a "reward" that would seem more appropriate if Atlanta were giving a "best country" to Sherman?

We didn't even get to open the delicious shrimp po'boys we had ordered before Miss Linda (our current President-for-Life) said, "It's simple. The awards should reflect something unique about the locale, yet also say something about Diplomacy."

We nodded, almost in unison. Our awards are always magnolia-based. Listen, you come to Mississippi, you expect to see magnolias, don't you? Of course! Our best country awards are, I solemnly assure you, second to none, and always have a magnolia wood base. And, when you see them, you know they are "best country" awards.

Country Assignments

This is the easiest of "problems" to solve. First, we have recorded hundreds of games. We have noticed some minimal trends in terms of some countries appearing to have an advantage. However, once we adjusted our ratings for the skill of the players, we found there was little difference in terms of doing well. Oh, sure, Austria is eliminated a little more often, but she also wins a little more often. You say "yam" and I say "sweet potato."

In every one of our 23 annual club championships, dubbed "Rebel Rallies," we have had 8 rounds over 5 days. Players are permitted to play in each of the rounds, but only their top 7 will count—and each country has to be represented in their, ah, "portfolio." What kind of champion would we be crowning if they didn't have the opportunity to play each power? To us, such an achievement would ring hollow.

Now, you might well find yourself pondering how we keep everyone alert and ready to play. Two words: sweet tea! (I also have a stash of Monster drinks and Mello Yellow, but I don't want to let that out just yet).

Few Groups Want to Bid

We have read, but can scarcely believe, that some of y'all do not want to host Dipcon? Apparently, doing this is not an honor, but some kind of "burden?"

We find this perplexing. We would view hosting a Dipcon as quite an honor—and an opportunity to show y'all a good time while we teach y'all some of the finer points of the game we all love.

Perhaps we will have to venture forth and introduce ourselves. After the "hurricane in Maine" we understand y'all might be a little skittish about some unknown corner of the hobby claiming to have scores of players. We know something about dishonorable characters in Biloxi, but we aren't polecats boasting about our litterbox, if you know what I mean. If you don't know what I mean, then let me speak as plainly as a blind huntin' dog in a thunderstorm: we would be honored and delighted to host a Dipcon. We'll make y'all feel at home, outside of taking all your supply centers.

We have heard reports that the recent World Diplomacy Championship was quite successful. We understand it was held on the campus of an English college in Oxford, and yet things went smoothly. Indeed, it appears several of you Yankees managed to make it over there. Now, the English are not eminently known for their hospitality and no one lived in Oxford—at least not the host, Dan Lester.

How did Mr. Lester, fine world champion that he is purported to be, manage to pull this off? Apparently, he offered a nice locale, took a bit of time to use social media, brought his delightful wife, Sinead, and spent some of his time to organize the event.

Given that the United States has several local groups, this does not seem an insurmountable problem. Surely, we have a few Dan Lesters?

If not, we in Biloxi are at your service!

[[Mr. Rench is a new contributor to Diplomacy World, but apparently a long-time respected community member.]]

Xenogogic Spring 2018: Book Reviews

By Larry Peery



"SO YOU WANT TO PLAY DIP WITH THE BAD BOYS --
- THE REALLY BAD BOYS?" --- You know, the ones
who cheat at solitaire, those real dippers who 'read other
gentlemen's mail', or, worst of all, read other Dipper's
orders after they're in the box.

"THE WAR OF WORDS GONES ON --- DIPLOMACY IS
A GAME OF WAR, WORDS AND SEMANTICS ---
RIGHT?

How many words are there in the English language? Do
you know? I didn't either. According to the Second
Edition of the 20-volume Oxford English Dictionary there
are 171,476 words in current use that receive full entries,
and 47,156 obsolete words. To this may be added
around 9,500 derivative words included as subentries.
So now you know.

Other sources say there are about 250,000 words in use
and one puts the number at one million or more!

But let's go with the 171,476 words that Oxford
recognizes and, that Mr. Dan Lester knows so well. But
keep in mind that one needs to know only 42 of them to
have mastered the Game of Diplomacy, as Doug Moore
demonstrated at the 2017 WDC Championship held,
appropriately enough, at Oxford University, in the UK.
Why do I say that? Because Mr. Moore needed only 42
words (e.g. supply centers) from Round 1 (Russia, 9
centers), Round 3 (Austria, 10 centers), Round 4
(Germany, 11 centers) and Round 5 (Italy, 12 centers) to
claim his WDC title.

In this essay I plan to use only thirty or so of those
171,476 words as key words or concepts. Here's a list.

By reading them you'll get a quick introduction to what is
to come: Semantics, Consistency/Inconsistency,
Predictability/Unpredictability, Dictator Literature/The
Infernal Library, Kalder's Unique Contribution, Dictator
(Roman) ("good" or "bad"), Autocrat (Greek), Tyrant
(Greek), President-for-Life (Contemporary),
Authoritarian, Totalitarian, Nationalism, Demagogue,
Popular Leader (man on horseback, caudillo, personalist
leader), Nom de .../Nomenclature, Triumvirate,
Triumvirates I, II, III, IV, V, VI, and VII, Triumvirates in
Diplomacy, Dictators in Diplomacy, The Zahn
Triumvirate, The Troika Wien '13 Syndrome, and The
Time Factor. Most of those are words you know but
some of them may represent concepts that are new to
you. Good.

Diplomacy, war, game, words and semantics seems like
a simple enough progression but we'll find that it isn't
necessarily so, so let's begin with the word "semantics"
which is a noun and defined as "the branch of linguistics
and logic concerned with meaning". Logic isn't a word
we often use in discussing Diplomacy and illogical might
be a better choice.

Take another word, "Dictator". Early on the term dictator
was not a bad word. That changed with time. Today we
think in terms of "good dictators" (Caesar, Napoleon,
etc.) and bad dictators (Mussolini, Hitler, etc.). Add the
word "Diplomacy" and suddenly we have a group of
names that includes Bartalone, Martin and Grinnell), but
more on that later.

INTRODUCTION

Like Caesar's Gaul or Stalin's troika (Note that the
temptation to resist the urge to mention Gorbachev's
peeristroyka was impossible, although no one has ever
called Gorbachev a dictator as far as I know.) this essay
is divided into three parts: a triumvirate of ideas that
don't at first appear to belong together, but let's see
where our ride takes us:

The first part is a discussion of a new book by Daniel
Kalder entitled "The Infernal Library", a discussion of the
writing of recent dictators.

The second part applies some of the lessons from the
first part to four different triumvirates: two from the days
of ancient Rome; and two from recent history and
current events.

The last part builds on the first two parts and looks at
three triumvirates from the world of Diplomacy including
two from the First and Second Golden Ages of

Diplomacy and a third possible triumvirate waiting in the wings of today's hobby events.

TEASERS

"Written with tongue in cheek, or perhaps knife in back -- take your pick (literally)."

"Humor with a bit of bite. OK, it goes straight for the jugular by way of the funny bone."

"This is the kind of book that Henry Kissinger, Graham Allison or Niall Ferguson could have written if they had had a sense of humor."

"I guess you'd have to be a little strange to write a book like The Infernal Library. If so, than Daniel Kalder is well qualified. I don't mean that in a mean way, it's just that anybody who was born in Scotland, lived in Russia for ten years, and now lives in central Texas has to be a bit strange --- don't you think?"

After reading a very positive book review did you ever say to yourself, "I've got to buy and read this book now. Really!" Or have you ever said to your book-reading friends (Do you still have any?), "If you only read one book this year, make it this one!!" This is that kind of book. I promise.

A note on the term "dictator literature": After seeing the term in some of these reviews and many others I decided to check it out with a Google search. Amazingly perhaps and perhaps not, I found that every reference they listed for "dictator literature" went back to a review or mention of Kalder's book. Apparently it's a term he coined or certainly popularized. More power to him.

I'm sure you'd learn a lot reading the works of the authors Kalder has picked out. The lessons they could teach you in the areas of strategy, tactics and diplomacy would, no doubt, be invaluable to you as a Dipper. Still, unless you've got a lot of extra time on your hands or you just enjoy reading really terrible books by really horrible authors --- why bother when Kalder has already done the hard work for you?

Anyone who is interested in history, international affairs, politics and diplomacy --- and plays Diplomacy --- has probably noticed that some "dictators" would make great Diplomacy players and, not surprisingly, there are some Diplomacy players who would probably make great dictators if given the chance. Can you "name names" in either group? I've written on this subject elsewhere although I can't, for the life of me, remember if it was ever published or where? Any one recall?

TWO IMPORTANT QUESTIONS:

1) What's the difference between a dictator and a president-for-life?

2) Can you tell from their writings?

Even though they were (or are) dictators and horrible writers (or perhaps writers about horrible things)...

"The return of **authoritarianism** will be accompanied by a revival of prickly **nationalism**, which **presidents-for-life** always need to sustain their **power**. So the chances of ASEAN evolving into a comprehensive market and political entity are next-to-nothing at the moment." – Jonathan Manthorpe

TRIUMVIRATES: THE CONCEPT

"It would be too simplistic and neat to pair off the First and Second; and then the Third and Fourth Triumvirates; and then compare the pairs of the pairs. But being simple and neat doesn't necessarily mean that something is wrong."

Triumvirate is a Latin word for a political regime ruled or dominated by three powerful individuals. It can be a formal or informal arrangement. Although the three are supposed to be equals, that is rarely the case in reality. The term is also sometimes used to describe a group of three military leaders, each of whom claims to be the sole leader.

In this essay the first two triumvirates we'll briefly mention are the First and Second of Roman history. The third and fourth are of recent history and current events. And the fifth through seventh pertain to the Diplomacy hobby.

However, history is full of other examples of triumvirates. The Soviet Union's history is filled with so-called "troikas" consisting of three equal leaders which in fact were usually solo dictatorships under various strongman leaders.



Chinese history also has examples of triumvirates dating back to the third century BCE. These triumvirates usually consisted of the holders of the three key officials in the

government: the Chancellor, Imperial Secretary, and sometimes the Grand Commander. The Emperor would spend much of his time juggling the three to preserve his own position and the three members would compete with each other to increase or protect their own power.

Modern China has also had its share of triumvirates and perhaps the best known was that of Mao Tse-tung, Zhou En-lai, and Zhu De; all of whom were part of the first generation of China's communist leaders. They were the head of the Party, the head of the government and the head of the legislature. Coincidentally they all died in the same year (1976).

As the institution of the triumvirate evolved over the years it normally came to consist of three individuals representing the key interest groups of the day. Normally that would include a person of wealth, a military leader, and a popular leader representing the masses but usually a member of the higher class. The three would share power while they juggled for position amongst themselves until one clearly became the most powerful and usually established a dictatorship or even a monarchy.

THE FIRST TRIUMVIRATE



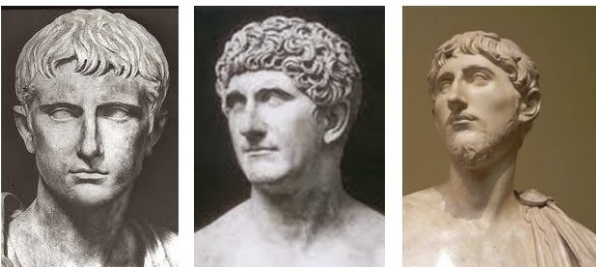
Crassus

Pompey

Caesar

The First Triumvirate consisted of Crassus, Pompey and Julius Caesar. Can you remember which fulfilled which role and how their story played out?

THE SECOND TRIUMVIRATE



Octavian

Antony

Lepidus

The Second Triumvirate came about because of the unstable situation caused by the political assassination of Julius Caesar. It consisted of Octavian, Antony and

Lepidus. Can you recall what became of Lepidus? Octavian, as we all known, parlayed his position as Caesar's relative and heir to become the leader of the trio and went on to become Rome's first emperor.

THE THIRD TRIUMVIRATE



For our purposes the Third Triumvirate maintains the basic idea of the triumvirate but moves it into the modern era and cast the three competing members as the rulers of different nation-states. It also represents the arrival of the term "dictator" as a bad guy on the international power scene. The classic example consists of Mussolini, from Italy; Hitler from Austria and Germany; and Stalin from the Soviet Union. It's important to keep in mind that in the beginning Hitler actually played second fiddle to Mussolini and actually deferred to him until Mussolini's debacle in Ethiopia and the Balkans. Hitler, on the other hand, came out of roots planted in Austria, not Germany, and without the early support of Austrians his new political order might never have gotten off the ground. Stalin's origins, like those of many early leaders of the Communist Party, were not Russian and he never forgot that. It's one of the main reasons he emphasized the concept of the Soviet Union over the traditional Russian empire. But times change and sometimes they change very quickly.

THE FOURTH TRIUMVIRATE



Today we have what I call the Fourth Triumvirate, even though the make-up of its three members is not fixed in place or time. Although it has the same basic concept as the first two triumvirates and some things in common with the third the Fourth Triumvirate is very much its own

creation and a product of its own time. I don't think anyone would argue with the idea that Putin, of Russia, and Xi, of China, are the two key members of the group, but the third represents a bit of a challenge. Originally I would have included Erdogan as the third and weakest member, playing the traditional Mussolini role. However, recent events in the United States suggest to me, at least, that Trump has all the makings of becoming the third member of the Fourth Triumvirate.

Having defined what a triumvirate is, when and where they have existed, and what historical figures compose them I want to move onto my next subject, dictators as a product of the triumvirates.

Where do dictators come from, you may ask yourself? New dictators do not just happen. They evolve from the world around them and the factors that bring them to power are usually worldwide --- that may explain why dictators tend to happen in clusters, not as isolated individuals. Mussolini, Hitler, Franco, Stalin and today's batch of Putin, Erdogan, Xi and perhaps Trump all fit into that mold.

Whether they call themselves a president, a president-for-life or something else the fact is that these men are dictators, even if they don't like to use the term. They tend to share certain characteristics and behavior patterns. They are, usually, totalitarian, authoritarian and demagogues. Their words, usually spoken in person or via the media in recent times, or occasionally written, identify and define them. In our time we've got from public speeches, newspapers, radio, television, the internet, and social media as the vehicles of delivery but their common link are their words.

The role of the popular leader today is little different than it was in the day of Caesar. He's still the anti-hero in the triumvirate that challenges the other members until he either assumes complete power or falls by the wayside. Here's a historical example;

The centennial of WWI's ending brings to mind this story. After the Armistice was signed and continuing to the actual signing of the treaty ending the war(s) in some cases years later, victory parades were held all over the Allied nations. Many of those can be seen in old news videos and documentaries on You Tube. Watching them can be revealing. For instance take the example of General John J. Pershing, the commander of the American Expeditionary Force that went to the aid of the anti-German coalition in 1917-1919. After the fighting was done Pershing was honored, along with his troops in a series of grand victory parades and celebrations in Paris, New York and Washington. In Paris he rode his favorite chestnut horse at the head of the American troops in the parade, looking every bit the conquering hero. In New York he rode for much of the parade in an

auto, although he claimed to hate them, and only climbed on a different horse (his personal favorite was under quarantine by government health officials in case it might be bringing some dangerous foreign disease home) long enough to ride by the reviewing stand, again looking very much like the conquering hero. His men, the soldiers of the First Division, the 42nd Division, and others would have followed him anywhere. And they did. Right down to Pennsylvania Avenue and another victory parade that passed before a tired, old, sick and dying President Wilson. Again, Pershing was on his favorite horse looking this time, very much like a leader on horseback on his way to the seat of power.

Popular leader (man on horseback (In ancient times kings and generals wore golden armor and rode on white horses for a practical reason --- so their troops could see them on the battlefield. The practicality may have changed in recent years but the symbolism is still the same. I was vividly reminded of this not long ago when I was watching some vintage Soviet-era film of the Victory Day parade in Moscow's Red Square that was held just after V-Day. With Stalin and his cronies looking on from atop Lenin's tomb, tens of thousands of Russian troops passed in review and riding at the head of the parade in all his glory and medals astride a magnificent white horse was Marshal Zhukov and his number one general riding behind him on a dark horse. I'm sure Stalin, as a historian, noted the significance of their entrance and the fact that the Army's cheers for Zhukov were far greater than they were when Stalin arrived. However, it would have taken a real expert in military and Russian traditions to note that when Stalin paused his ride in front of the mausoleum to salute the leader and troops lined up across Red Square, his first salute was to the troops, and then he turned the horse without using the bridle or reins but just his knees, to face the reviewing stand. There was a slight pause before he raised his arm in salute and again he did it in a slow, sweeping motion that passed from left to right across the gathered leaders of the nation --- not just directed at Stalin. By the end of the day Stalin had given orders that Zhukov had to go.

Today things are a bit different. Putin loves to get on or in any and all kinds of military equipment from jet fighters to tanks to submarines, etc. He looks very much like he's enjoying his role as commander-in-chief. It took Xi several years after taking command of China's military to finally get up the courage to appear in public wearing a camouflage uniform while addressing a crowd of adoring senior officers and generals. He looked very uncomfortable. Trump, on the other hand, is still trying to learn how to salute and conduct an honor guard inspection. He uses troops and military equipment as props as if he were putting on another reality television show. He looks like he's enjoying playing at being a

soldier, but it is hard to imagine him in the role of man on horseback. Well, maybe in a comedy on SNL.

DICTATOR OR DICTATOR-FOR-LIFE

From a distance and a historical perspective we know that most dictators were, for at least a part of their lives, brilliant strategists, tacticians and diplomats. The ones who were survived. The ones who weren't didn't.

We also know that the conceptual framework, subject matter and style of their dictatorships were as diverse as their personalities and backgrounds.

And finally we know that the only things that dictators who write have in common is: 1) an autocratic style, 2) a taste for blood, 3) a need for self-justification, 4) a thirst for self-aggrandizement, and 5) a desire for immortality. Perhaps it is that last one that accounts for the adoption of a "president-for-life" title or role by many current dictators.

Be that as it may, in traditional Roman politics according to Roman historians the office of a dictator evolved when it was needed to deal with an emergency crisis (e.g. when a consul dared to bring his army with him across the Rubicon) that the two man consular system could not cope with. As I've noted the title dictator eventually got a bad rap although historians continue to differentiate between good dictators like Caesar and Napoleon and bad dictators like Hitler and Stalin. How future historians will judge Putin, Erdogan, Xi and Trump is anybody's guess, but if it depends on who writes what in the history books it would seem that Xi is way ahead of the others.

But what is a dictator? Generally historians and political scientists agree that a dictator is a political leader who possesses and exercises absolute power. As I've noted, the term comes from the Latin and a Roman political office in emergency times. It's important to keep that in mind since the office of a dictator was designed for emergencies and it was assumed that when the emergency was over the dictator would give up the office and the power. Obviously, that has happened less and less over the years.

The characteristics of a dictator are: abuse of extraordinary personal power; suspension of elections and civil liberties; proclamation of a state of emergency; rule by decree; and the repression of political opponents without due process of law. Translating those into their Diplomacy hobby equivalents is a task I leave to the reader.

Today we write about dictators and dictatorships; free, partly free, and not free countries; and democracies and undemocratic states --- all without commonly accepted definitions of any of those terms.

PRESIDENT OR PRESIDENT-FOR-LIFE

When the term dictator fell out of favor, especially with unpopular dictators, they began to adopt the term "president for life" as a substitute although in reality there wasn't much difference between the two.

President-for-Life is a title assumed by or graced to a leader to get around term limits and remove future challenges to their authority and legitimacy. It's something like a monarch in the powers it confers but still maintains the theoretical democracy of the state.

This has become a big deal recently in China where the Congress has approved removing a two-term limit on the offices of president and vice-president making them theoretically eligible to serve for life. North Korea went one step further and proclaimed Kim Il-sung as their "Eternal President" and abolished the office of president in the future.

Other presidents-for-life and commonly recognized as dictators in recent years have been: Sukarno, of Indonesia; Tito, of Yugoslavia; Amin of Uganda; and Niyazov of Turkmenistan (who died in 2006).

Totalitarian dictators recognize no limits on their authority and try to regulate every element of public and private life in their countries. The term was developed in the Weimar Republic of Germany and strongly influenced the theory and practice of dictators like Mussolini and Hitler. Later the term was frequently used to describe the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union.

As I mentioned dictators are often pre-occupied with their own immortality as well as the survival of their dictatorship. Hitler often proclaimed that his Reich would last a thousand years and was building a capital to go with it when WWII interrupted his plans. Stalin, was constantly looking for new ways to expand and prolong his powers and supported many scientific quacks who promised everything from immortality to cows that would never run out of milk.

One question that came up while I was researching this project was, "How do dictators deal with the evil they create?" Specifically, I was curious to know if Mussolini, Hitler or Stalin ever visited any of their concentration or slave labor camps. Mussolini did not. Hitler not only did not, he even avoided meeting with the men who created and maintained the camps for him and avoided signing any documents having to do with them. In other words, as much as possible, he tried to avoid leaving a paper trail linking him to the camps. Stalin is a different case. He actually was a prisoner in one of the Russian camps when he was young and later on visited one of the labor camps that were building one of his canal projects. There is no record of Mao ever visiting one of the "reeducation camps" that held tens of millions of Chinese

and where millions of them died. Nor is there any record of any of the Kims in North Korea visiting any of the camps, although some of their relatives may have spent time in them.

KALDER'S BOOK

Everything you've read so far has really been in the way of background to bring us to this point --- an encounter with Daniel Kalder's new book, "The Infernal Library" (in the USA) or "Dictator Literature" (in the UK).

The important thing about Kalder's book isn't that it's a great book on a great subject --- it's that it is a thought-provoking work on a new subject we all need to know and think more about. Equally important, perhaps, it gives old historians, literary critics and writers a new way to look at some old materials and ideas.

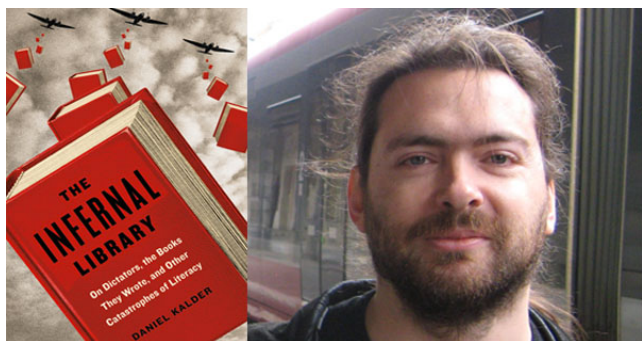
Let's begin with the press release that Kalder wrote himself for his publisher as part of the promotion of the book. I'm going to include it in total because it provides a good over-view of the work and an introduction to the author's style. Besides that, it's a fun read.

The book everybody is talking about, but nobody is buying."

10 Things I Learned From Reading Terrible Books Written by Dictators

By Daniel Kalder |

Mar 16, 2018



The 20th century's most infamous dictators were also authors, often prolific ones, complementing the atrocities they visited on humanity with crimes against literature. For his new book, The Infernal Library: On Dictators, the Books They Wrote, and other Catastrophes of Literacy, Daniel Kalder read the significant works from this benighted subgenre, from the vast theoretical corpus of Lenin, through Stalin's *The Foundations of Leninism*, Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, Mussolini's *My Life*, and Mao's *Little Red Book*. Here's what he found.

From Mussolini to Mao, many are the dictators who have inflicted atrocious books upon their subjects. Yet though these tomes are revered as sacred texts while their authors are alive, they vanish almost as soon as their regimes fall. Fascinated by this phenomenon, I set out to read my way through the dictatorial canon. I wanted to know what was really inside these diabolical books, and to understand what the poetry, political theory and (yes) romance novels of the world's worst tyrants could tell us about their authors and the relationship between the word and the world. The fruit of my suffering is called *The Infernal Library: On Dictators, the Books They Wrote, and Other Catastrophes of Literacy*. And here, for your reading pleasure, are just a few of the things I uncovered on my odyssey through the long dark night of the dictatorial soul.

1. Hitler knew he wasn't any good as a writer.

Although generally not known for his modesty, and despite the fact that he forced two volumes of *Mein Kampf* on the German people (including a Braille edition and a luxury "wedding edition" for newlyweds), the Fuhrer seems to have suffered self-doubt regarding the quality of his magnum opus. Years after *Mein Kampf* was published he confessed to his lawyer that he would not have written the book had he known he would become chancellor. He also admitted, with startling frankness: "Ich bin kein Schriftsteller"-- "I am not a writer."

2. In northern Iraq, man-bear love is a thing. Or at least that's what Saddam Hussein claims in his romance novel, *Zabiba and the King*. The good news is that female bears (who are the instigators of these interspecies trysts) are tender lovers who seek to please the herdsmen they desire before they possess them. How? By stuffing them with nuts, cheese, and "even raisins," says the dictator.

3. While still a teenager in the Tiflis seminary, Stalin published verse in a prestigious literary journal, *Iveria*. One poem was so admired that it was anthologized in a school textbook long before its author had attained notoriety as the supreme leader-genius of the Soviet Union. This indicates that he probably had real talent, although Stalin abruptly abandoned his poetic career for that of a professional revolutionary and mass killer. And yet decades later, the "Gardener of Human Happiness" remained active as the supreme editor of the USSR. Running a vast, transnational totalitarian state did not prevent him from performing meticulous line edits on *The History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Short Course)* when it landed on his desk for review.

4. We have the Central Asian republic of Turkmenistan to thank for the invention of the wheel. I made this discovery in the pages of *The Rukhnama*, a

rambling collection of autobiography, poetry, genealogy, myth, and outright fabrication written by Saparmurat Niyazov, a former Soviet apparatchik turned "Father of All Turkmen." Niyazov developed a grandiose personality cult to rival that of any North Korean dictator and *The Rukhnama* was central to that cult. Thanks to Niyazov, a generation of Turkmen schoolchildren also discovered that they were direct descendants of Noah (he of the ark). *The Rukhnama* was also blasted into space, presumably for the benefit of extraterrestrials.

5. Mussolini's war diary is actually good. True, it gets off to a shaky start as Mussolini commences his account of the First World War with all the narcissism and self-aggrandizement you'd expect of *Il Duce*. But as the carnage drags on, the future warlord of Italian Fascism sinks deeper and deeper into a despair that he confronts more or less directly. The book is never completely free of blustering Mussolini-isms, but when he steps outside of his persona to describe the miserable reality of cold, hunger, and death in prose miniatures, the effects are powerful.

6. "According to gynecologists, women menstruate every month or so, while men, being male, do not menstruate or suffer during the monthly period. A woman, being a female, is naturally subject to monthly bleeding. When a woman does not menstruate, she is pregnant. If she is pregnant, she becomes, due to pregnancy, less active for about a year, which means that all her natural activities are seriously reduced until she delivers her baby." - Muammar Gaddafi, *The Green Book*.

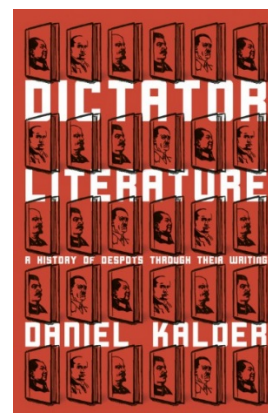
7. Fidel Castro was a great admirer of Ernest Hemingway. He met the hard living, Nobel Prize winning author twice, and kept a signed photo of "Papa" on his desk. Unlike Hemingway, however, Castro was not known for his brevity and could ramble on for hours. Famously, his 1960 speech at the United Nations clocked in at 4 hours and 29 minutes, and he subjected his domestic audience to even longer performances. So what was it that drew this incorrigible bore to the master of the terse sentence? In his autobiography, the Cuban dictator revealed all. He enjoyed Hemingway's monologues, "when his characters talk to themselves."

8. I should have bought Vladimir Putin's judo manual when it came out. Nowadays you can't get a used copy for less than \$130 and there's no way I'm spending that kind of money on pictures of the Russian president in his pajamas. Maybe I'll see if I can "borrow" Steven Seagal's copy.

9. Chairman Mao was responsible for a number of chart-topping pop hits in the late 1960s. As the rebellious youth of the West were irritating their parents by listening to "Sympathy for the Devil" and "I am the

Walrus," their counterparts in Red China were getting down to Mao quotations set to music, including "The Force at the Core Leading Our Cause Forward is the Chinese Communist Party" and the classic "Ensure that Literature and Art Operate as Powerful Weapons for Exterminating the Enemy." No backward messages for Mao; he just came out and said it.

10. Exceedingly obscure writers adhering to fantastical political beliefs can take over your country--and you won't see it coming until it's too late. Their works doesn't have to be readable; in fact, impenetrable prose can conceal absurdities and fallacies while creating an illusion of depth (if you do it right). Thus, Lenin went from being the graphomaniac boss of an obscure political sect to leader of the largest country on earth almost overnight in 1917. Mao took a bit longer to go from contributing articles on physical fitness to a nationalist journal to being worshiped as a godlike genius in China--but he got there in the end. It's not enough to write a bad book, of course. The historical conditions have to be right, and it helps a lot if you're thoroughly ruthless. But beware! The marginal intellectuals you deride today may be your overlords tomorrow--and such revenges they will have upon us all"



"The Infernal Library: On Dictators, the Books They Wrote, and Other Catastrophes of Literacy", by Daniel Kalder was published on 6 March, 2018 by Henry Holt, in the USA, in a 420 page hardback edition, a Kindle edition, an audiobook format, and published in the UK under the title, "Dictator Literature".

What the publisher said:

A harrowing tour of "dictator literature" in the twentieth-century, featuring the soul-killing prose and poetry of Hitler, Mao, and many more, which shows how books have sometimes shaped the world for the worse.

Since the days of the Roman Empire dictators have written books. But in the twentieth-century despots

enjoyed unprecedented print runs to (literally) captive audiences. The titans of the genre—Stalin, Mussolini, and Khomeini among them—produced theoretical works, spiritual manifestos, poetry, memoirs, and even the occasional romance novel and established a literary tradition of boundless tedium that continues to this day.

How did the production of literature become central to the running of regimes? What do these books reveal about the dictatorial soul? And how can books and literacy, most often viewed as inherently positive, cause immense and lasting harm? Putting daunting research to revelatory use, Daniel Kalder asks and brilliantly answers these questions.

Marshaled upon the beleaguered shelves of The Infernal Library are the books and commissioned works of the century's most notorious figures. Their words led to the deaths of millions. Their conviction in the significance of their own thoughts brooked no argument. It is perhaps no wonder then, as Kalder argues, that many dictators began their careers as writers.

So what has been the reaction to "The Infernal Library"?

A note on why I go into so much detail about what Amazon is saying. It's simple, because it is important. I have told this story before but I think it is as relevant today as it was in 1962 when the incident happened in my first journalism class in high school. The teacher, a professional newspaper reporter and editor for thirty years, assigned each of us to come up with a list of the important magazines and newspapers that we read regularly. Most of the students had long lists filled with impressive titles of magazines like and newspapers like; which they had never read in their lives. On the other hand, I only had three titles on my list: TV Guide, Readers' Digest, and Life. The teacher seemed a bit surprised when I explained why I had only listed them. "Because these are the titles the average American family reads regularly. They are what's important to them because their content is what they want to read and they trusted their publishers (sometimes mistakenly): Readers Digest (1922), DeWitt and Lila Acheson Wallace; Time, Fortune & Life, (1923, 1930 and 1936), Henry Luce and Clare Boothe Luce; TV Guide (1953), Walter Annenburg; They defined the meaning of the term "Conservative Republicans." Their impact on the nation in the last century was amazing. Uncle Lyle as an example: his library, his reading and listening habits, he was the quintessential self-taught man unlike those (HAK) who went to Harvard on the GI Bill. Today only Amazon.com, Google News, FB, Twitter and a few others have that kind of influence on younger people.)

What Others have written about "The Infernal Library".

Amazon.com: "Kalder's dry humor makes The Infernal Library a fun tour de force..."

The Washington Post: "The deadliest books the world has ever known. ... Far from it, as we learn when Daniel Kalder takes us on a tour of what he calls "*The Infernal Library*": books written by (or ghostwritten for) tyrants of the past century (and a few from our current one). ... Kalder begins with famous ...(*and ends with the infamous*)."

Publisher's Weekly: (excerpted in this review) "The 20th century's most infamous dictators were also authors, often prolific ones, complementing the atrocities they visited on humanity with crimes against literature. Kalder, a journalist with a nimble style and an eye for leaden prose, read the significant works from this benighted group."

Kirkus Reviews "A singular look at how dictators have gained control through literature."

Barnes and Noble: "The Hardcover of the Infernal Library: On Dictators, the Books They Wrote, and Other Catastrophes of Literacy by Daniel Kalder." (Yes, *that's what they wrote. No wonder B&N is failing.*)

American Empire Project: "This is a book about dictator literature—that is to say, it is a book about the canon of works written by or attributed to dictators. As such, it is a book about some of the worst books ever written, and so was excruciatingly painful to research. This is why I did ...(the author says)."

BookPage: The Infernal Library. Murder they wrote. BookPage review by Keith Herrell. How can a dictator hide in plain sight, telegraphing evil intentions years or even decades after their demise? Daniel Kalder posits that it's simple: Many of them left behind a body of literature. Kalder, a journalist who lived in Moscow..."

Indiebound: A harrowing tour of "dictator literature" in the twentieth-century, featuring the soul-killing prose and poetry of Hitler, Mao, and many more, which shows how books have sometimes shaped the world for the worse. Since the days of the Roman Empire dictators have written books. But in the twentieth-century..."

Goodreads: "Margaret said: I first encountered dictator lit in a history of the epic of Gilgamesh, since Saddam Hussein...."

What specific works by these dictator authors does Kalder discuss? Here's a partial list:

Adolf Hitler's Mein Kampf

Saddam Hussein's Zabiba and the King

Josef Stalin's History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Saparmurat Niyazov's The Rukhnama

Benito Mussolini's WWI Diary

Muammar Gaddafi's The Green Book

Fidel Castro Autobiography

Vladimir Putin's "judo book"

Chairman Mao's Little Red Book

+Juan Domingo Peron's Presidential Messages

+Idi Amin Many films, television, documentaries and books about him --- but nothing by him

+Sukarno's Autobiography and To My People

THE FOURTH TRIUMVIRATE MEETS THE WRITTEN WORD

"A Conclusion I didn't want to have to write: We were duped."

The members of the Fourth Triumvirate (Putin, Erdogan, Xi, and Trump) have all generated a lot of written words, both by them and about them. Here are some stats, some highlights, and a few observations on each of them.

PUTIN as De Facto or De Jure PRESIDENT FOR LIFE

Putin's 4TH term election victory was in March, 2018 with 77% of the vote (e.g. 55M votes). The rules for future elections were not changed to eliminate the two consecutive terms limitation, but there is little doubt that would be done if Putin wishes it.

His 3rd term election was in 2012 with 64% of the vote (term increased to 6 years, 2 terms max)

(1st term election was in 2008 for Medvedev with 71% of the vote (4 year term). (Note that Putin turned over the office of president to Medvedev but did not turn over the real power to him. For example, Putin continued to have his own equivalent to the Russian "Football" that carries the launch codes for their nuclear weapons.)

Putin's 2nd term was in 2004 with 72% of the vote (4 year term)

Putin's first term was in 2000 with 53% of the vote (#2 had 30%, #3 had 6%.

Assuming Putin completes his current term he will have been de jure or de facto ruler of Russia for 24 years with potentially no future limits in sight. In other words, president-for-life

Economic problems, domestic social unrest and foreign "threats" (even if they are internal) justify a "strong ruler" or dictator, no matter what the title (e.g. father figure). The same applies to Erdogan and Xi and, increasingly, to Trump.

Xi as De Facto PRESIDENT FOR LIFE

Since the recent National Congress's change of the Constitution's rules against more than two five-year consecutive terms, Xi appears, at least according to the Chinese media and other sources, to be set to be a president for life if he so wishes. No doubt he'll be watching closely what Putin decides to do and how it is received domestically and by foreign governments.

In the meantime the Chinese party controlled (one way or another) media is filled with articles such as "Does Xi Jinping really want to be Chinese president for life?"

<http://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/2138439/does-xi-jinping-really-want-be-chinese-president-life>

"Senior officials insist the term limit was scrapped for consistency, but critics believe Xi is in no rush to put power transition back on the agenda

"Xi still operates within a well-institutionalised party system. High-level officials, while loyal, rose through the party apparatus, where competence remains an important criterion for promotion," they wrote. "Research shows that when a leader rises up through an existing political party as Xi did, the party is more resilient to a leader's attempts to control the system."

For the record, Xi has been China's seventh president since 2013 and he was just re-elected by a vote of 2,952 to 1 against. Although the limit on two terms was unanimously (e.g. even Xi voted for the proposal --- considered a gross violation of Chinese electoral etiquette) removed by the National Congress it should also be noted that Xi could still be removed from office by a simple majority vote. Not likely but a lot can happen in five years.

Bottom line: Xi is committed to the maintenance of order in China and believes that only the Party can guarantee that and only he can achieve it. Xi is a workaholic who didn't make waves but used the system to gain power and is now using that power to reform, if not destroy, the old system --- as long as the Party and PLA back him.

Xi has one eye on the past and the other on the future and both his hands on the wheel as China moves ahead. He knows the key to the future is happiness and success of China's young people, a lesson that Putin has also learned. (Note: events in Washington recently suggest that Trump has not learned this lesson at all.) Articles like "Reading, Writing and Xi Jinping Thought: China's Students Learn Leader's Philosophy" are even appearing in the Western media.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/reading-writing-and-xi-jinping-thought-chinas-students-learn-leaders-philosophy-1521797406>

"BEIJING—While President Xi Jinping extends his influence over the Chinese government, his signature political philosophy is becoming standard fare in the country's classrooms.

Dozens of universities have founded centers devoted to studying the doctrine known as Xi Jinping Thought since October, when the Communist Party inscribed it in its charter alongside Mao Zedong Thought and Deng Xiaoping Theory. "

For more on what's going on in China and with President for Life candidate Xi, check out Chris Buckley's New York Times article "Five Important Takeaways From China's National People's Congress" published on 19 March 2018. Sorry, I don't have a link.

In the meantime, hold this thought from Chairman Xi: "Not one black dot of the territory of the great motherland will be carved off." (I'd love to hear Edi and Fang discuss that quote!)

ERDOGAN: A SULTAN FOR LIFE OR WOULD A WIZAR BE ENOUGH?

Turkey's once vibrant and free press is dying, like so many of its other democratic institutions in Turkey's version of the same battle that is waging in Russia, China and the USA: the struggle between the conservative countryside and more liberal urban areas. All you have to do is look at the election results maps or social media postings to see that.

The question in Turkey is simple, "Does Erdogan want to be President for Life or a Sultan/Wazir for Life?" Abroad the question is equally simple, "At what point does Erdogan cease being Prime Minister or President and become a dictator?"

Perhaps the answer can be found in the headlines of some recent news reports:

"Turkey's Elected Dictator"
https://www.huffingtonpost.com/alon.../turkeys-elected-dictator_b_11093160.html

"Turkish dictator' Erdogan banana picture causes rumpus at ..." www.dw.com/en/turkish-dictator-erdogan-banana-picture-causes.../a-42720075

"Erdogan: The Dictator's Republic:
www.imdb.com/title/tt7054718/

"Erdogan says Turkish reforms don't make him a dictator"

<https://www.cnn.com/2017/04/18/europe/erdogan-turkey-interview/index.html>

TRUMP: PRESIDENT FOR LIFE OR AMERICA'S WHIRLING DERVISH?

It's difficult to know what to make of Trump's presidency, just as it is difficult to know what to make of Trump the man. Perhaps that is because Americans as a whole no longer know what we are collectively or individually.

One headline says "Trump aides are 'at their wits end' Andrew Restuccia for Politico, but so is the rest of the political establishment, the concerned citizenry and the public at large --- not to say those overseas who watch amazed as America suffers a massive nervous breakdown.

Looking at their records (from where they came from to where they are now and where they want to go) and comparing them with Trump --- it suddenly becomes clear why Trump has so much in common with Putin and Xi and so little in common with Obama, Clinton and the rest of US political establishment. Trump is a "president for life" or dictator candidate....Everything he's said and done points to this. It's just that that "political establishment" that he hates so badly has not responded to him words and actions and thus has made themselves look weak and himself look strong. A primary lesson from the Putin-Xi book.

This isn't "fake news" --- it's an alternative reality.

If you read the writings of the "presidents for life" and dictators and then read the writings of DJTIII and compare them and then read the writings of key letters (presidents, secretaries of state, secretaries of defense) of the US "political establishment" (both parties) and then compare those with the P4L- DJT writings I think you'll agree that Trump's writings read and sound a lot more like the P4L writings than the "political establishment's". Put simply I suggest that DJKT has more in common with Putin and Xi than he does with Obama, Clintons, Bushes, et all. He's an outsider, just like Putin was and Xi appears to be.

Perhaps nothing says more about DJT's belief in his own righteous certitude than his preparing

for his next “term” as his first one had barely begun and, no matter how poorly his first term has gone he still believes it is inevitable that a second term, or more, will his.

Another primary lesson that DJT has learned from Putin and Xi (PX) is that the only Rules of The Great Game that he is interested in are the ones that help keep him in power.

SEGWAY TO DJTIII



As we prepare to move on to a discussion of dictators in Diplomacy let me offer a revised list of the books written by Donald J. Trump III, the nom de diplomatie et politique of a famous Diplomacy hobbyist who prefers to remain anonymous in an age when Big Brother is no longer just watching and listening, he's even reading your emails and your mind.

Trump: The Art of the Steal

Trump: How to Get Dots and Keep Them (The secret is a five letter word that starts with “C” and ends with “T”).)

Trump: Think Like a WDC Champ: Everything You Need to Know About Success, Dots, and Life

The Birsan Touch: Why Some Dippers Get Trophies & Awards – And Why Most Don't

Think Like a Champion: An Informal Education in Diplomacy and Life

Trump 101: The Way to a WDC Championship

Time to Get Tough: Making Brooklyn #1 Again

Trump: Never Give Up: How I Turned My Worst Stabs Into Success

Trump: The Art of the Comeback

Trump: The Way to the Top: The Best Hobby Advice I Ever Received

Trump: The Best Dot-Snatching Advice I Ever Received: Hundred Top Experts Share Their Strategies

Trump: Surviving at the Top and Flourishing at the Bottom

Trump: dip&DIP University: Dot Collecting and Rating Building From E-1 to O-10: Your First 50 Years on the Road to Diplomacy Immortality

DJTIII: Make Diplomacy Great Again: On Crooked Tournaments, Phony Rating Systems, Clocks That Can't Count, Arbitrary Deadlines and Other Unmentionables I'll Discuss In Detail

Make Diplomacy's Literature Great Again: The Limericks of Donald J. Trump by Donald J. Trump III

Three Master Secrets of Dot-Snatching Success

How to Build a Tip Diplomacy Database Rating

Trump: The Best Diplomacy Advice I Ever Received

Start With What's Left: How to Launch a Great Hobby Career

Play to Win At Diplomacy and Life

Get That Dot: Your Total Plan to Land the Dot of Your Dreams

Think BIG, Kick XXX and Grab XXXXX in Diplomacy and Life

Career Success: Playing Diplomacy the DJTIII Way: Lie, Cheat and Steal

DJTIII: 60 Top Diplomacy and LifeLessons

Why We Want You To Be a Winner: Two Stabbers, One Message

Diplomacy: How to Make America Great Again

Tongue in cheek and foot in mouth aside, it is easy to see how many of the titles and themes of Trump's books readily fit into the Diplomacy lexicon.

The importance of a free press and the public media in general to a hobby like Diplomacy is just as important as it is to a country's well-being. That is why it concerns me that over the last twenty years or so the health of our hobby press has withered and in many cases died. Perhaps that is because the old timers who used to produce the hobby's traditional press have also died. And, unfortunately, the younger, technically savvy generation that seemed so promising to the future of the

hobby has discovered; once it found out how much work producing an online publication, a pod cast, a FB page that people will actually read, a web page, or a viable on-line Diplomacy game site was; that it was easier to take up a less demanding hobby.

That it is why it is so important that those of us left work not only to keep our publications, events and projects going but also actively recruit new people to take up the challenge of keeping the hobby alive and well. As I looked over the results of last year's nine FTF Diplomacy events as reported on Laurent Joly's (and others as well) magnificent resource, the World Diplomacy Database <http://world-diplomacy-database.com/php/commun/index.php> I was saddened to see that only nine names of the twenty-seven on my combined top three list, were names I recognized. The rest were all strangers. Then I realized that perhaps that was a good thing. It shows that new people are taking up the hobby out there, somewhere, beyond. And, after all, no Dipper is really a stranger to another Dipper --- just a dot snatcher bro'.

THE FIFTH AND SIXTH DIPLOMACY TRIUMVIRATES

The importance of triumvirates in Diplomacy is based on the same concept as the RAT or Western Triple (EFG) Alliances: 3 players with a solid alliance can whip the other four players on the board most of the time, partially because they can bring more of their forces into the line or because one of the four (usually Turkey) will be isolated behind the other three powers and thus not of much use in the fight.

In Diplomacy events it is usually the top three individual players, the best players for the seven powers, and some "honorific" awards for various special achievements but, as you may have noticed, the best players may tout their winning a particular event but players rarely brag about coming in second or third.

In my opinion and that is all it is, my opinion, the hobby has had two great "Golden Ages". The first was in the last half of the 1960s and the second was in the last years of the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s. I've discussed all that elsewhere so I won't bother doing so again. Instead I want to move on to a discussion of dictators in Diplomacy and particularly what I've called the Seventh Diplomacy Triumvirate.

DICTATORS IN DIPLOMACY

We, especially those of us in the West, tend to think of dictators as individuals who accumulate a lot of power and use it to do bad things. Fair enough. However, if we look back in history we see that some of the greatest dictators (e.g. Julius Caesar and Napoleon) used their accumulated power to do good things, even great things. So, the word dictator can be either bad or good, but rarely in between.

In the early history of the hobby devoted to Diplomacy we can, if we try, find examples of both kinds of dictators. Among the bad I would include (and keep in mind that this is a very subjective subject) : Boardman, Beshara (even to the point that he called his Dip control 'zine "Wazir") and Lakofka. Among the good I would include: Miller, Moot, Naus, Buchanan and, once he escaped from Brooklyn, Birsan.

DIPCON hosts and tournament directors are a group occasionally known for their "dictatorial" powers (usually consisting of "The TD's decisions are final!" yelled as loudly as possible to an audience that's not even listening to him) and behavior. Some are loud and noisy in using them. Others prefer to use the "velvet hammer" approach. And there are some who managed to keep things running without resorting to dictatorial means. I'll avoid the temptation to "name names" in recent events memory to avoid stepping on anyone's toes. Actually I think today we have a pretty universally accepted idea of what the roles of a host, TD or players are without using dictatorial powers; although you will occasionally see a contra temps flare-up when a player or, more rarely, a TD oversteps his bounds. Others present will usually find a way to resolve the problem and end it.

Two hundred years ago the United States was divided between the North and the South. That continued for quite a while. By the time the Diplomacy hobby was getting organized, if it ever did, it was divided between the East and the West. Fifty years ago I found the East Coast crowd, as we called them, obnoxious and rude; and that was even before I'd met any of them. Today I find the Easterners have somewhat mellowed ☺ That, however, does not apply to Edi Birsan who left Brooklyn for the Bay Area in California in the early 1970s and, slowly but surely, has mellowed a bit. However, wave a black dot under his nose and that Brooklyn Bomber reappears. The question on my mind now is, "Will Adam Silverman become the next Edi Birsan?" Ask me in another twenty years and I'll let you know.

THE NUMBER ONE REQUIREMENT TO BE A SUCCESSFUL DIPLOMACY DICTATOR IS.....CONSISTENCY.

Whether you're great, good, average, poor or bad in strategy, tactics, or diplomacy; the thing other Dippers are looking for most in you is consistency. Even if you're consistently inconsistent that's better than being the unpredictable, loose cannon in the game.

However, don't confuse consistent with predictable. A reputation for being unpredictable can be useful and even beneficial. A reputation for being too predictable can be a handicap and dangerous.

If you're interested I'll leave it to you to look up the meanings of consistency, inconsistency, predictability and unpredictability. Yesterday that seemed very important to this essay. Today, after typing some 24 pages in 7 hours, it doesn't seem quite as important.

THE LISTS

Ever since I was in high school I've been fascinated by lists, statistics and the measurement of power. When most normal boys were keeping track of the rankings of their favorite baseball, basketball and football teams I was figuring who the most powerful people in the US Congress and the Soviet Politburo were. Strange, but true.

Proving you can't take the boy out of the old man I'm still fascinated by such things. Hence my work on the Seventh Triumvirate; which is nothing less than a method to predict the future dictators of the hobby. Remember, that doesn't mean they're bad guys, it means their "movers and doers" who want to keep on going until their batteries go dead.

It would take eight pages to list all the numbers I used in my calculations but I won't subject myself to typing that, Doug to editing it, or you to reading it. Instead, I'll just summarize my methodology and offer the results with a few comments.

First, using the World Diplomacy Database I gathered the stats for all the available FTF Diplomacy events in 2017. Then I eliminated all the events that attracted fewer than 20 participants. As it turned out there were none with exactly 20, so the cut-off was 21, a total of three boards at one sitting in theory.

Then I took the top seven players in each event's rating/scoring system. Since the way events were scored varied the results could also vary for various reasons. From that list I took the top three, whether they came from a top board or the entire roster of players.

By then I had discovered the Zahns, three players on the list with the same last name. I knew nothing about them but I figured it was a father and two sons. I decided they were worthy of being their own little mini-Triumvirate and added them to the roster.

When I did an alpha sort of the list of 29 players (3 x 9 + 2) I was VERY surprised to see two things: 1) No name appeared more than once and 2) A lot of well-known players did not make the list. I can think of various reasons for that (they weren't going to as many cons, they weren't playing as many games, they weren't playing their best, etc. etc.) but the bottom line was, each name stood up once.

Yet yet again I went to the WDD and checked the number of events each of the players on my list had played in according to Laurent's records. The numbers ranged from a low of 2 to a high of 98. With the one exception the entire list all had at least 10 events. Three were over the sixty mark.

Only two of the players were foreigners, one Brit and one French.

Finally, as is the designer's prerogative, I arbitrarily added two names the nine although the formula I used wouldn't have included them. I felt, for a variety of reasons, that both were eminently qualified for a variety of reasons to be on the list.

There is no ranking of the eleven names so don't try to figure out who was at the top or bottom of the list. All that matters is that they made the list.

Drumroll please:

McNeil, Prem, Moore, French, Jeannin, Bartalone, O'Kelley, Jaxon, Jamieson, Grinnell, and C. Martin.

Ah, but I'm not quite done.

What if I combined my list of Diplomacy triumvirate candidates with list of real time, real world real powerful leaders? I found such a list on Bloomberg, the highly respected financial news source. You can check out at: "How Long Will the World's Most Powerful Leaders Last?" <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2018-03-16/how-long-will-world-leaders-last>

From the Bloomberg list I selected the names that had appeared in my earlier research and Kalder's list. That meant the following names were dropped: Modi, Khamenei, Macron, Maduro, Buhari, Netanyahu, Abe, Merkel, May and Temer. I did use: Xi, Putin, Erdogan, and Trump.

I would suggest you could make a pretty good players' roster for a Dip game from those names or, perhaps, a good list of future Diplomacy dictators. Combined you have the makings of a good Molotov cocktail or perhaps a great Birsan diptale.

NOTE: It's hard to imagine but if you didn't get enough out of this edited version of this essay you can email me and request a copy of the complete 85 page version.

Credits: Most of the illustrations are from Wiki or Amazon.com. The Kalder press release is in the public domain. The WDD was a big help in compiling the last sections.

Diplomacy World Demo Game

“Eclipse” – 2017A

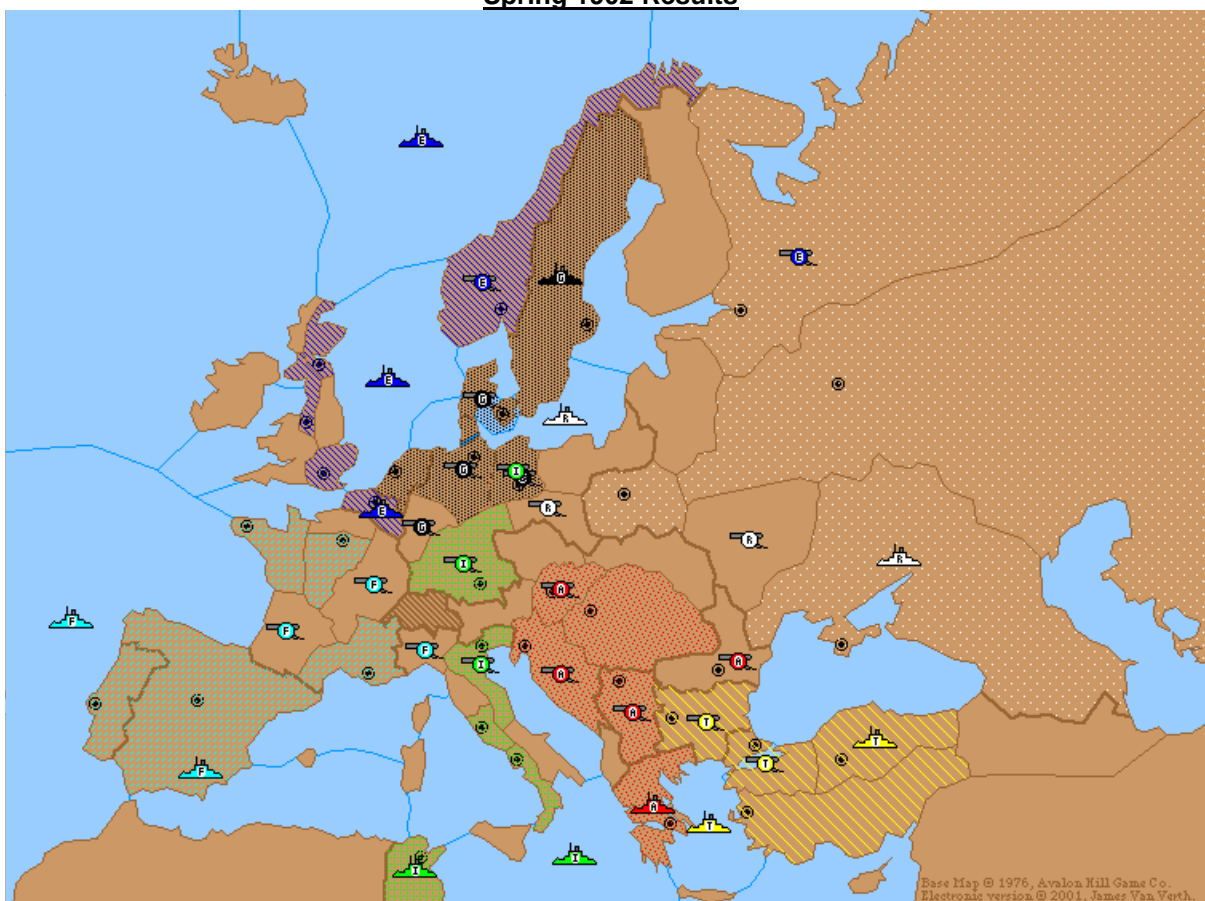
The Players:

Austria: Nicolas Sahuguet
England: Edi Birsan
France: Andrew Goff
Germany: Conrad Woodring
Italy: Chris Brand
Russia: Doug Moore
Turkey: Tanya Gill

Commentators by Typeface:

Rick Desper
Christopher Martin
Jack McHugh

Spring 1902 Results



Austria: A Budapest – Rumania, F Greece Hold, A Serbia Supports A Budapest – Rumania, A Trieste Hold, A Vienna Supports A Trieste.

England: F Belgium Supports F London - North Sea, A Edinburgh – Norway, F London - North Sea, A Norway - St Petersburg, F Norwegian Sea Convoys A Edinburgh - Norway.

France: F Brest - Mid-Atlantic Ocean, A Gascony – Burgundy, A Marseilles – Piedmont, F Portugal - Spain(sc), A Spain - Gascony.

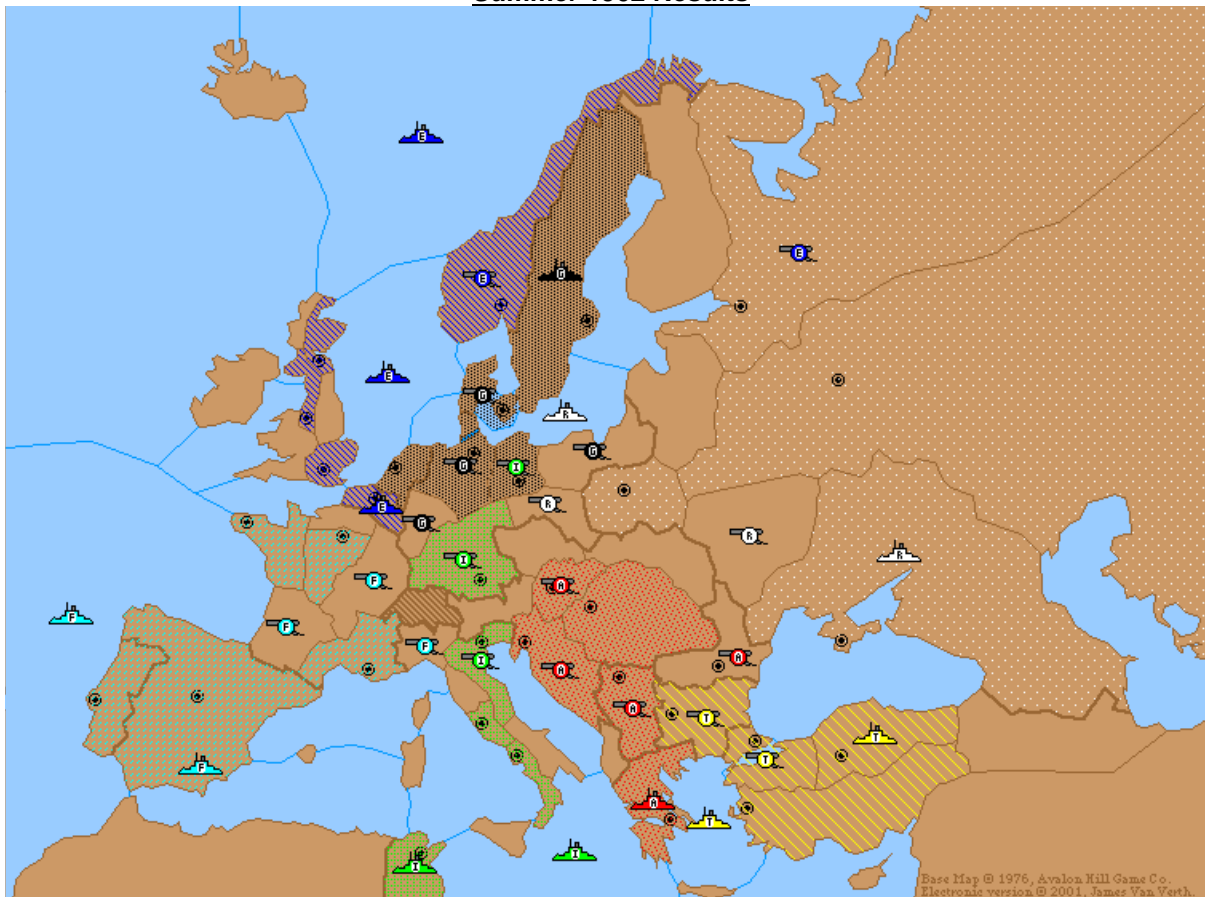
Germany: ~~A Berlin – Munich~~ (*Dislodged*, can retreat to Prussia or OTB),
A Denmark Supports A Kiel, A Holland – Ruhr, A Kiel Supports A Berlin - Munich (*Cut*), F Sweden - Baltic Sea (*Fails*).

Italy: A Munich – Berlin, F Naples - Ionian Sea, F Tunis Supports F Naples - Ionian Sea,
A Tyrolia – Munich, A Venice Supports A Trieste.

Russia: F Baltic Sea - Kiel (*Fails*), F Sevastopol - Black Sea (*Bounce*),
A Silesia Supports A Munich – Berlin, A Ukraine - Rumania (*Fails*).

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

Summer 1902 Results



Austria: Has F Greece, A Rumania, A Serbia, A Trieste, A Vienna.

England: Has F Belgium, F North Sea, A Norway, F Norwegian Sea, A St Petersburg.

France: Has A Burgundy, A Gascony, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, A Piedmont, F Spain(sc).

Germany: Retreat A Berlin - Prussia... Has A Denmark, A Kiel, A Prussia, A Ruhr, F Sweden.

Italy: Has A Berlin, F Ionian Sea, A Munich, F Tunis, A Venice.

Russia: Has F Baltic Sea, F Sevastopol, A Silesia, A Ukraine.

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

Spring and Summer 1902 Commentary:

Commentators by Typeface: Rick Desper, Christopher Martin, Jack McHugh

Interesting turn of events--moving from West to East--looks like we have a full on E/F alliance with Germany abandoned to her fate, to be ground into the dust by Italy and Russia, Italy is doing well in Germany but looks like she might be caught in a

Franco-Austrian vice if she isn't careful. Russia does well in the center, not so much in north and south while Turkey continues to grind her way westward.

Not for more detailed commentary on each country. First let's see how the French are doing. Moving armies to backstop Germany as well as put pressure on Italy while their fleets sail into the Mediterranean while all is quiet vis-a-vis England. It doesn't get much better than that for France, a wealth of strategic options as Andrew moves eastward.

Edi's England also has very little to be unhappy with--another army lands in Scandinavia. This as Edi takes St. Pete from Doug, one of England's top strategic objectives--taking out home centers on the Atlantic. Holland is waiting to be picked and the perhaps Denmark at that point it becomes a question of how long England wants to stay allies with the French.

Germany continues to be a battle ground--right now the fact that Germany is on the stalemate line is Conrad's best reason for continuing to fight hard. As long as he holds any of his home centers he is relevant to this game. It is also still early enough to mount a comeback. England is pressuring Russia from the north so that should take the wind out of Doug's attack on Germany. Likewise Italy will soon be facing an attack from the West which will help considerably with getting Chris to shift his focus south. I would talk to Austria, right now Nicholas is clearly in the best position to help Conrad with three armies facing West.

Russia continues to be a tale of three different fronts--collapse in the north, success in the center and stalemate in the south. Let's go from north to south, first, I think Doug is going to have to divert units to try and slow up Edi's advance, under no circumstances can Russia allow an enemy army in Mos. It makes it impossible to build new units as you'll have to keep War and Sev garrisoned at all times.

In the center, Russia is a supporting player to Italy's attack on Germany but I think that is over with for now--at least Doug has to consider seriously peeling away an army and moving it back to fend off England.

In the south, I see more stalemate although I suspect that Austria is now in position to work with Turkey in the East and France in the West which

spells trouble for Russia and Italy as we will likely soon see. The best news for Russia is an Austrian Army is going to have trouble working with a Turkish Army.

Austria is in the best position in the East. Nicholas can move on Italy, Turkey or Russia or support any or all three. Meanwhile no country is threatening any of Austria's home centers and no one has two units on any of Austria's holdings. Not crazy about holding Austria though--one should not leave units in home centers unless they are threatened with capture as it makes builds problematic and now that Austria is a poor position to do much in the Fall turn.

Tanya continues Turkey's slow growth which, as I pointed out before has more to do with geography and board design than any Turkish game play. She is getting her armies and fleets deployed from the early box that the Turkey starts the game stuck in and she has managed to avoid getting Austria to mobilize against her so she is fairly decent shape, especially with both Italy and Russia facing existential threats from other parts of the board.

E/F solidify, as Edi rolls over the top and Goff swings against Chris Brand. At the same time Army Burgundy will either prop Conrad up or at least staunch the bleeding. A very fast opening game by Brand's Italy is about to run into the classic problem of the Northern Opening - its very bad for Germany, but very hard for Italy to hold anything.

If Edi's advance were less expeditious, I'd think Tanya might be in trouble here - just looking at the board position, that could very easily be a Turk that would never get past Bulgaria. However, given the support to Nicholas, this could be an actual A/T, with Aegean advancing to the Ionian in the fall. The real question to my mind is would Nicholas take support from Goff for Trieste -> Venice? Would Goff offer it? He might, rabbit, he might.

Doug and Conrad are going to continue to suffer here - very little chance that either of them will come out of this year with a strong enough position to be anything but a roadbump as the major powers rush towards each other. That said - early days, and don't count either of them out!

I have to wonder what happened in negotiations between Doug and Conrad. Doug knows that his

moves against Conrad are essentially suicidal. I don't expect him to let Edi walk into Moscow, but I also wouldn't be surprised to see Edi slow roll his position. If Doug is doing things in the South that Edi likes, Edi will care less about fast growth than about the larger diplomatic picture. Keeping Turkey and Austria in check might be a goal of Edi's, for example.

Similarly, the Italian move into Germany isn't for growth so much as it is for influence. Chris and Doug, at least, appear to be working together. Seems like Conrad is just the front right now. The West looks like a triple, except that it's by necessity for Germany more than anything else. It's essentially impossible for Germany to recover from the loss of both Munich and Berlin - one loss can be dealt with (esp. if it's Munich) but losing both would mean Conrad's future is as little more than a janissary, and even that would be a lot.

My question at the moment is whether Nicolas is with Doug and Chris or if he's with Tanya. Yes, Tanya gave the support to Rumania, but that doesn't really mean all that much. Nicolas is positioned more to take Turkish centers than Russian, and he has little incentive to destabilize Russia more than Edi is already doing. OTOH, killing the Turk in the cradle is always a valid goal for any Austrian.

The French position is intriguing. Clearly he'll be propping up the German while moving into Italy. If my guess about the AIR triple is correct, then Goff will want to make quick advances into Italy. If it's not correct, Italy is in deep, deep trouble.

Italy is such a tough power to play when Germany and Russia are in an early war. Such a war means there will be no check on Austria or Turkey and if England gets sucked into Russia, a French move into the Med is also likely. I've seen this scenario countless times when R/G fight - both as part of a Western Triple and more generally.

If both Russia and Italy are compromised, we may well see A/T cooperation, which naturally happens on any board with a Western Triple.

All of these long-term strategic tendencies are well known to the players here. This path will probably determine the early game, but I expect major changes as we transition to a mid-game. The big question is whether the players want a fast game or if anybody wants to put in the effort for a long game with soloing possibilities.

I'm getting ahead of myself.

Fall 1902

Austria: ~~F Greece Supports F Aegean Sea - Ionian Sea~~ (*Dislodged*, retreat to Albania or OTB),
A Rumania Hold, A Serbia Supports A Rumania, ~~A Trieste - Venice~~ (*Fails*), A Vienna - Trieste (*Bounce*).

England: ~~F Belgium - North Sea~~ (*Fails*), F North Sea - Denmark (*Bounce*),
~~A Norway - St Petersburg~~ (*Fails*), F Norwegian Sea - Norway (*Fails*), A St Petersburg - Moscow (*Bounce*).

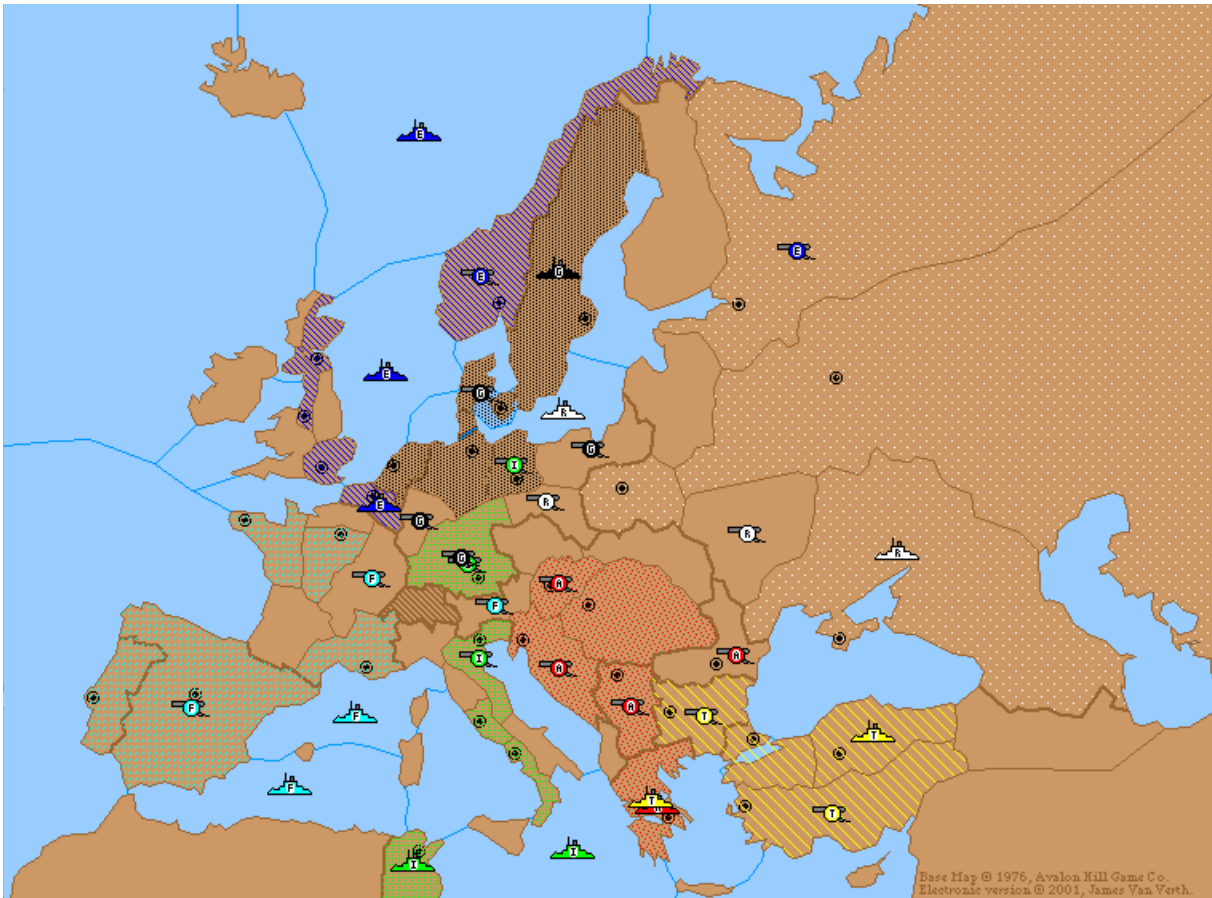
France: A Burgundy Supports A Kiel - Munich, A Gascony - Spain,
F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - Western Mediterranean, A Piedmont - Tyrolia, F Spain(sc) - Gulf of Lyon.

Germany: A Denmark - Kiel (*Bounce*), A Kiel - Munich, A Prussia - Berlin (*Bounce*),
A Ruhr Supports A Kiel - Munich, F Sweden - Denmark (*Bounce*).

Italy: A Berlin - Kiel (*Bounce*), F Ionian Sea Supports F Aegean Sea - Greece,
~~A Munich Supports A Berlin - Kiel~~ (*Dislodged*, retreat to Bohemia or OTB),
F Tunis Supports F Ionian Sea, A Venice - Trieste (*Bounce*).

Russia: F Baltic Sea - Berlin (*Bounce*), F Sevastopol - Black Sea (*Bounce*),
A Silesia Supports A Munich, A Ukraine - Moscow (*Bounce*).

Turkey: F Aegean Sea - Greece, F Ankara - Black Sea (*Bounce*),
A Bulgaria Supports F Aegean Sea - Greece, A Constantinople - Smyrna.



PRESS

[To Observers]

There is no press.

[To All]

"Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more,
Men were deceivers ever -
One foot in sea and one on shore,
To one thing constant? Never."

Autumn 1902 Results

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

England: Has F Belgium, F North Sea, A Norway, F Norwegian Sea, A St Petersburg.

France: Has A Burgundy, F Gulf of Lyon, A Spain, A Tyrolia, F Western Mediterranean.

Germany: Has A Denmark, A Munich, A Prussia, A Ruhr, F Sweden.

Italy: Retreat A Munich - Bohemia..Has A Berlin, A Bohemia, F Ionian Sea, F Tunis, A Venice.

Russia: Has F Baltic Sea, F Sevastopol, A Silesia, A Ukraine.

Turkey: Has F Ankara, A Bulgaria, F Greece, A Smyrna.



Supply Center Chart

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

Fall and Autumn 1902 Commentary:

Commentators by Typeface: Rick Desper, *Christopher Martin*, Jack McHugh

Interesting turn. The middle continues to be a mess and we have some clarity in the South about who is working with whom. The witches (England, Turkey) are the only ones growing - always a sign of a high-level game. (*eyeroll*)

The tactics of the German situation are neat. Germany took Munich with the help of France, as he cut any possible support from Berlin and got two supports from the uncuttable units in Burgundy in Ruhr. Still, he might have lost a unit had R/G guessed correctly and let Den - Kie go through. Russia could not have taken Sweden, but he could have supported the English into Denmark. Such an

order would have required incredible guesswork. The perfect set of orders would have had supported attacks on Kiel and Berlin (Bal S Ber - Kie, Sil S Mun - Ber). Not sure what Bal - Ber was supposed to accomplish.

So Conrad stays even by trading Munich for Berlin. I expect to see Edi build another army and go straight for the heart of Russia. With only two armies to defend Moscow, Doug is going to be in trouble.

In the South, we see Goff moving on Italy with force. And in an interesting decision, Chris has decided to

side with Tanya in her attack on Nicolas. I feel like Italy will be badly beleaguered quickly.

I could call this a Western Triple, but Germany seems to only be a half-partner. Is it a 2.5-tuple? Both Russia and Italy are in deep trouble, while Turkey has attacked Austria. This bodes very well for the Western alliance, whatever we call it.

Tanya had an interesting choice. She could have played the patient Turk, waiting for the Western alliance to break before getting greedy. But instead she's striking out now. Probably she needed to get some kind of SC growth, though the continued bouncing of the Black Sea isn't inspiring confidence. She might end up slugging her way to 6-7 SCs by herself, but where will that leave her?

If Nicolas had disbanded his fleet, to replace it with a needed army, I'd suspect the transition in Greece were arranged. But since it wasn't, I don't really see any way for Tanya to invade Austria proper. If she builds a fleet she can force the Black Sea, but then what? Probably can take Sevastopol, but given where the Germans and French armies are, she's going to lose the race to the Austrian home SCs.

Now the other shoes have dropped as people are forced to choose their long term allies over their short term allies. Let's move from west to east.

Andrew continues to make progress as things continue to go well for France. Andrew helps Conrad's Germany back into Munich and Chris' A Mun has to find accommodations elsewhere. The move A Pie-Tyr suggests an Franco-Italian entente as well as A Gas-Spa. Although it is wasted move now, the unit can easily be convoyed into Italy even if France fails to get F Tys—although F Tys would be better as the unit could land anywhere on Italy's west coast.

Notice that France, despite supporting Italy's kicking Germany out of Mun has yet to do anything else anti-German. I guess we'll find out when we see what A Bur and A Gas are up to. The only thing I can say for sure is there will continue to be an E/F alliance. Whether or not there is a third member of that alliance and who it is—it remains to be seen.

Edi's England had a bit of set back with no advance anywhere along the line although I suspect that was the point. There is no way Edi thought his A StP-Mos

move was going to work and his F Nth-Den has to be done to cut A Den support should it stayed in place to support another unit into Kie. Kie would be left vacant by a successful retaking of Mun.

England's next move is to get a fleet into Ska to disrupt F Swe support for Den. England would probably like another army in Scandinavia as well, the problem becomes where to get a build for that army.

Continuing east we come to Germany. Conrad is probably doing as well as expected under the circumstances. He's still a viable power despite his loss of a home center and he is still on the stalemate line between the two alliances, which while in the real world is less than ideal, it guarantees ones survival in Diplomacy as long as the alliances are balanced. As soon as one side starts to eliminate you the other side will jump into support you to avoid losing the stalemate line.

To south we have Italy and I have to say I've been impressed with Andrew's diplomatic skills. He went from being part of an Eastern Triple to being part of Western Triple without even missing a beat or losing a dot. He got France to swerve into Tyr from Pie at the last minute and is working with Turkey to grow her center count still with only a minor border skirmish with Austria—that's fairly hard to do.

As for Italy's strategic position—I would say is mixed. While no one is threatening his centers yet, I don't see where Italy picks up any centers down the road. Andrew must be careful not collapse Austria without picking up most of Austria's dots because if he doesn't Italy will be next.

Next we come to Austria and we see why Austria is such a weak and difficult power to play in Diplomacy. You can do everything right as Nicholas has and still end up doing poorly. The problem for Austria is Russia's collapse up north and France's rapid move to the east means that Italy needs to work with Turkey more than Austria since he will need Turkey's help in the Med and Russia cannot help A/I take out Turkey.

Nicholas best option here is to get out of Turkey's way in the Med and work with Doug to hold the line in the Balkans against Turkey coming north. Austria should sit tight and see how the situation develops, right now no one really needs him but that could change should the stalemate line be broken or some other countries make a comeback like Germany or Russia.

Russia has similar issues as Austria but main problem for Doug is the Western Triple meant that England and Germany were undistracted by France and able to move everything north, in England's case, and east, in Germany's case. This has resulted in the loss of three of the six centers Russia usually starts out with—her four home centers plus Rum and Swe.

At this point Russia's goal is merely to survive, working with anyone who will work with him. It looks like Doug has a new ally in the south as Nicholas is the odd man out between him, Tanya and Andrew. Up north, as I said, earlier in my comments, the situation is murky since we don't know which way France will go. In any event the odd man out will likely work with Russia, the question is will it be too late for the Tsar?

Finally we come to Tanya's Turkey and I still think this one of the strongest powers in this game, after France and England. No matter who France supports she will gain an ally—if France supports Germany and attacks Italy, then she gets France as an ally (and probably Austria as well, at least over the short term) or conversely, she could gain Italy as an ally, if she chooses to support Italy against France in the Mediterranean and concentrate on Austria with Italy. If France supports Italy and attacks Germany than Turkey gains Austria and Germany as allies.

Turkey also stands to gain if either Austria or Russia collapse although Turkey probably doesn't want to see

either collapse just yet. She would not pick up that many centers yet. In another year or two, different story.

As the last to comment here I will say that I agree with much of what Rick and Jack have said above. Goff continues to play a slow, patient game, which is what we expect from him in this position. Edi secures St Pete, and can decide where to go next with his build. Having the center in turmoil is good for him, as it gives him time to develop, something England desperately needs. Much depends on what Army Munich does as it retreats - Bohemia, or off the board. One might argue for a push into Austrian home centers and abandoning the German attack, the other would mean a new fleet and contesting France in the Med.

I was only a bit surprised that Doug didn't support Silesia into Berlin - that seemed like a solid short-term play to make up for the loss of St Pete - What do you remove here and remain viable? Similarly I might have supported myself to Rumania, accepting the short-term loss of the Black Sea, and trying to put another army on the table to help stabilize. Doug makes the longer-term decision to work with partners, but he may, as Dr. Beloc once noted, have chosen the wrong friends.

Tanya and Chris force Greece, giving Turkey the important 5th build. Doug has a removal here, and while Con is open for a fleet I could see a negotiated removal of Sev and another army. Who am I kidding? She builds another fleet, forces the Black Sea, and then forces an army into Armenia. It's slow, but it will eventually net her Rum and Sev. She's got nothing but time from here. The risk - the small risk - is that she loses Bulgaria for a year, but there's really no stopping a Turk who has a fleet in the Black Sea and zero pressure from Italy. It's the proverbial high ground.

So why did Chris go that way? It looks like negotiations fell apart between our three Canadians, as Nicolas was supporting Tanya to the Ionian. Given that, offering Tanya Greece seems like a simple decision. Nicolas remains even or +1 if he removes the fleet, but I'll bet he fights it out. He's got Russia on board and Chris now has his hands full with Goff in the Med.

Winter 1902 Results

Austria: Has F Albania, A Rumania, A Serbia, A Trieste, A Vienna.

England: Build A Edinburgh..Has F Belgium, A Edinburgh, F North Sea, A Norway, F Norwegian Sea, A St Petersburg.

France: Has A Burgundy, F Gulf of Lyon, A Spain, A Tyrolia, F Western Mediterranean.

Germany: Has A Denmark, A Munich, A Prussia, A Ruhr, F Sweden.

Italy: Has A Berlin, A Bohemia, F Ionian Sea, F Tunis, A Venice.

Russia: Remove F Sevastopol..Has F Baltic Sea, A Silesia, A Ukraine.

Turkey: Build F Constantinople..Has F Ankara, A Bulgaria, F Constantinople, F Greece, A Smyrna.



Winter 1902 Commentary:

Commentators by Typeface: Rick Desper, *Christopher Martin*, Jack McHugh

Not much to add here: Edi lines up another army to head to Scandinavia, while Tanya puts a fleet down to ensure she takes the Black sea - which turns out to not be necessary, as Doug removes F Sev.

I like that removal, FWIW, Sev was a loss if Tanya kept pushing for it - with the threat removed, she might be persuaded to go fry other fish and allow Doug to fight in the North.

I agree with what Christopher said. I was a bit surprised to see England build another army; rarely does one see England have an equal number of armies and fleets as Edi does now.

Edi's army build makes complete sense and can be seen as an indication he has the game well in hand. Many players of England build too many fleets. I always ask: just where do you need all those fleets? Edi knows he has enough fleets to control all the seas around England. France has sent his fleets south and neither Germany nor Russia has built a second northern fleet. The army can go to Scandinavia or the Low Countries. The result sought here is that England has better ability to extend his influence inland. That's a necessary step for any player of England who might want to solo at some point.

The Black Sea situation played out as expected: Doug's Sev fleet was useless and Tanya can now both take the Black and move another fleet into the Med.