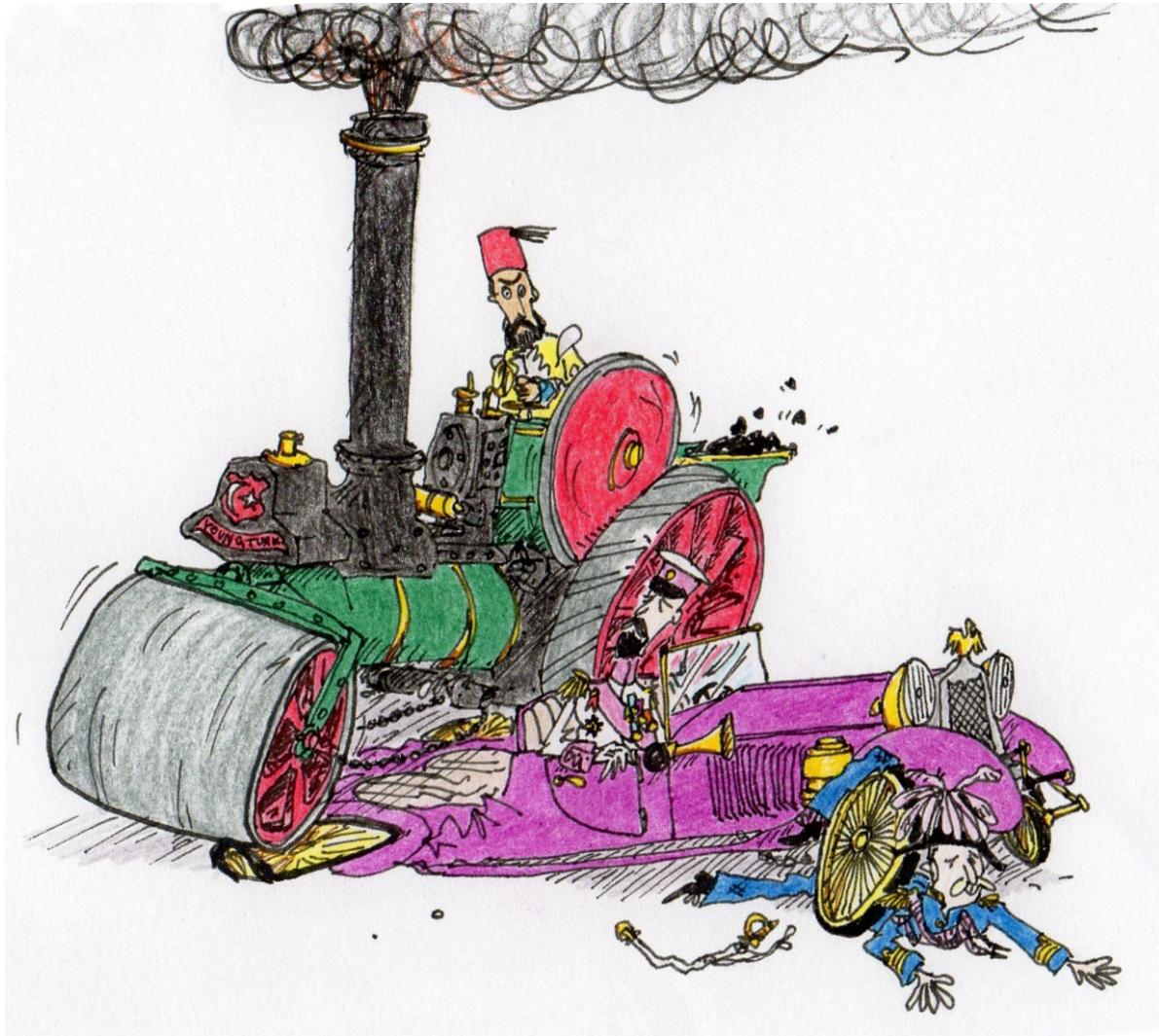


# Diplomacy World #154



**Summer 2021 Issue**  
**[www.diplomacyworld.net](http://www.diplomacyworld.net)**

## Notes from the Editor

Welcome to the latest issue of **Diplomacy World**, the Summer 2021 issue. Here in Texas, I had just started thinking “Wow, we may get a mild summer after all. It hasn’t been that hot yet.” Clearly, I jinxed myself (and the rest of the U.S. southwest), as the last few weeks have been filled with hundred-degree days. Honestly, I don’t mind the heat during the day so much anymore. What I hate it how if I go outside at 10:30 at night, I can still feel heat radiating off the pavement, bricks, and sidewalk. Call me crazy, but when it’s dark outside I think it should be cooler than when the sun is blazing on me. I guess after more than 25 years down here I should be used to it.

In hobby news, I was very sad to learn of the passing of Lee Kendter, Sr. on February 12<sup>th</sup>. Lee had a long history within the postal Diplomacy hobby. He served terms as both Boardman Number Custodian and Miller Number Custodian. He also published the popular postal zine **Why Me?**, and was a familiar player name throughout numerous zines. His son Lee Kendter, Jr. (himself a Miller Number Custodian for a time) notified me after the publication of **Diplomacy World** #153. Our condolences to Lee and the entire Kendter family.

I would also like to mention that Conrad von Metzke has announced that he will be folding his zine – or more properly running it down to a fold with game reports only - which is currently called **Zargonia**. Prior to that it was most recently entitled **Where is My Mind?** While there has been no Diplomacy content in his zines for a good while now, Conrad started the first San Francisco-based Diplomacy zine **Costaguana** in 1965 (after attempting to organize a game in 1962 before John Boardman’s **Graustark** was ever published), and since then has spent 57 years publishing a variety of Diplomacy, railroad, and other gaming zines. That’s a lifetime. And he did so much more. He organized the first Orphan service to rehouse and continue games abandoned by their GMs. He served as both Boardman Number Custodian and Miller Number Custodian. He helped put together a few of the more famous “fake” zines in hobby history, a practice long-missed in the hobby. In brief, Conrad has been here for the entire history of the Diplomacy hobby, from its very beginnings. It’s a sad day when you hear he’s finally hanging up his keyboard. If you’d like to see some of his classic publishing work, browse through the Postal Diplomacy Zine Archive (<http://www.whiningkentpigs.com/DW/kent/diplomacyzinearchive.htm> ).

On a happier note, I wanted to take a moment to extend my thanks to Jonathan Frank. Jonathan made a generous donation to Diplomacy World recently which I used to cover most of the annual hosting and domain fees. As most of you know, **Diplomacy World** is entirely free, and the Staff and article submitters receive nothing in compensation...other than eternal fame, and the thanks of the rest of the Diplomacy hobby. So, a donation like Jonathan’s really helps me out a lot. Thank you sincerely, Jonathan.

As the current Demo Game moves along towards its inevitable end, some of us have been discussing the way many of these games turn out, and some of the difficulties we have recruiting players to participate. We seem to be slowly coming to the conclusion that, at the very least, it is time to take a break from Demo Games. Much of the live commentary on Twitch and YouTube that analyzes tournament games serves some of the same purpose. Granted, those commentaries don’t offer the in-depth coverage that the Demo Games do, but they are also compressed into a short amount of time, which seems to fit the preferences of much of the hobby better. We’re still talking it through. We may resume Demo Games in the future, or we may decide to change the format and instead of running a fresh game, offer detailed Demo Game commentary on a fully completed game (either recent or classic). If you’d like to weigh in with your opinion, I’d love to hear what you think.

I continue to search for candidates to fill our open Diplomacy World Staff positions. While I would like to fill them all quickly, it’s probably more important to find the right people even if that takes a bit more time. If you’re interested in any of the vacant positions, please get in touch with me so I can provide details of what each position requires and what the commitment entails. And, of course, please spread the word, and pass along these openings to anyone you believe might be a good fit for a particular spot.

***I’ll close by reminding you the next deadline for Diplomacy World submissions is October 1, 2021.*** 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](mailto:diplomacyworld@yahoo.com)! See you in the fall, and happy stabbing!

# Knives and Daggers - The Diplomacy World Letter Column



**Baron Powell** – To Bob Durf:

I read your review of 1600 as the worst variant with interest. Even before I started, I thought it would be easy to find a worse variant, as 1600 actually looked rather interesting. It seems you agree.

I appreciated the mention of Ambition & Empire. The introduction of armed neutrals and Diplomacy Points may end up being the single biggest contribution Jeff Kase and I make to the Hobby. I noted you did mention "other issues." I am curious what you may have heard. I suspect I have heard it all before, but perhaps not. I do think the variant is more layered than it first appears. Players are often genuinely surprised by how some of the Powers perform when put to the test.

There was a time when I regularly received submissions from variant designers for comment. Some were quite interesting. Others... let us just say there is a reason no one has heard of them.

I look forward to the next installment.



**Bob Durf** – (in reply to Baron Powell) I think the elephant in the room vis-a-vis Ambition and Empire is Poland-Saxony. I have been able to run four separate 1900 games in my zine, but I just cannot get A&E out the door because of players' fears of playing that country. I know you worked to assuage those fears, but that is a tough pill to sell players looking at a months-long game that they have a high chance of doing poorly in (I believe you were the one that wrote a whole strategy article on Poland).

Diplomacy variant design is interesting when it comes to balancing--because of the enormous impact player negotiations have on the game. Balance can be thought more of as a rubber band that can stretch to allow even poorly designed variants to be player balanced. I think with your design of Poland, you stretched that band very far. Did it snap? Not in my opinion. But it's my players that need convincing, not me.

I could go on about tempo in 1900 and A&E, but I suppose at some point this morning I have to work! Thanks for the reply, and at some point, I have to give you the stats on the other two finished games of 1900 from my zine last year.



**Mark Nelson** – I have to confess that 19 times out of 20 that I don't bother looking at **Diplomacy World**. However, given that there was

a period of my life when I was \*really\* into Diplomacy variants (1986 to 1993?) I was very intrigued by the title of the first article. Unfortunately, every time I tried to connect to the web page, I received an Internal server error message so I was not able to read Bob's article.

***[[You and a few other people (mostly in the UK and Europe) fell victim to a server outage on my hosting service which lasted about three hours early on April 7. I even got a warning saying my site may have been compromised because they were unable to scan some files for malware, despite the fact that the "error" was "site unavailable" and it was their server that was down.]]***

It's quite likely that the "worst variant" is one that has never been played. As for the ones that have been played, I might claim tongue-in-cheek that Gunboat is the worst variant ever since, how can you have a Diplomacy variant that removes diplomacy?!

***[[Many have made that argument, but aside from the various ways you can at least inject a small amount of diplomacy into the variant – through press (if permitted) or support orders – if nothing else it serves as a welcome tool for players to learn the tactical side.]]***

I was very surprised that Fred C. Davis Jr. included Diadochi V in his list of best variants since it was played a couple of times in the UK. I played it twice I think and found it to have stalemate lines running down the middle of the map. Perhaps that is the worst variant ever to be included in a list of good variants! I asked Fred about this - perhaps it was at WDC in 1988 (you could check the transcript of my interview with him) - and he said something like "well, I remember it having a good reputation" but I wonder if it was ever run in the US hobby. Maybe Fred was 'seduced' by the fact that the rules allow three different historical variants to be played on the same map? (I also played in one of the other two variants and that wasn't very good either).

***[[It never gained much popularity in the U.S. I ran Diadochi V in Maniac's Paradise but only once, which wasn't enough for players to get accustomed to the map.]]***

One might claim - again tongue-in-cheek - that the worst variant to have been played multiple times is Youngstown. The British experience in playing this variant led to the development of Mercator which, at least on one side of the 'pond', was considered to be

\*the\* world variant. From memory I believe that Mercator had three things going for it. The first two of these do help eliminate stalemate lines: the use of A/F units, which I think originated with Fred, and the `Key' rule, which originated with Jeff Key - in the 1960s (?). They key rules eliminates some dynamic stalemate line tricks. This rule states that "If a unit is ordered to move and fails to do so, it is dislodged by an unsupported attack."

***[[You are correct, Fred did in fact create the A/F rules module.]]***

The final thing that Mercator had going for it are the variable 'joint win' criteria. I do not remember the details of what these are. But they are something along the lines of two-players can declare a win if they have a certain number of SC between then, three-players can declare a win if they have a different number of SC between them, and ditto (I think) four-players.

***[[In global variants, I have always had a soft spot for Colonia VII despite its flaws. And Youngstown XII was another worldwide variant (no off-board-boxes) which I found very interesting, but never played enough to figure out the biggest areas for improvement. I want to say Jeff Suchard developed that one but I can't find my copy at the moment to be sure.]]***

Now, a more serious suggestion for the worst Diplomacy variant. In the 1970s there was a British postal diplomacy player/publisher with the name of Mike Sherrad. He designed a variant... I don't remember if I ever had the rules for it, but I saw it described somewhere. I think it must have been called "Future War" since it's the only variant of his that is the NAVB catalogue. I don't remember the ins and outs. But I think the crux of the matter was something along the following lines. It was a variant that included nuclear weapons. The winning criteria for at least one country specified that they had to capture a certain province. That province could be nuked on the first turn of the game. So that power could never win the game. So, that's my suggestion for the worst variant ever!

***[[I'm not familiar with that one, although I will check my box of variants to see if it is in there. I played some games of Tom Swider's Final Conflict, which while not perfect was a fun way to add nukes to the game.]]***

Now that your site is back up, I had a flick through the article. Not what I was expecting. It will take a large number of issues to go through every variant in forensic detail.

***[[I doubt he'll get through every variant ever made. But with luck there will be many future issues!]]***

I had a quick flick through the issue. Lew's suggestion of only allowing negotiation over the board rings a bell with me as something that I've seen before, but not the idea of having tokens. His mention of a version where the tokens are associated with pre-defined negotiating phrases put me in mind of a variant suggested on-line, perhaps circa 1994, by I think Dan Shoham (I forget the name). It was called "Star Wars Diplomacy". It was a straightforward pbem diplomacy game, but the players could only communicate using dialogue from the Star Wars movie. (Not sure if it was restricted to the original movie, or if dialogue could be used from any of the franchise). I also don't remember if this game was ever run or if it was thrown out as a joke.

Perhaps instead of the `worst' variant it would be more constructive to try and find the least `playable' variant. A strong contended for this would be `HyperEconomic Diplomacy', through perhaps with modern software it would not be so difficult to GM as it was when it was first devised. Though you'd have to write the software first. Another line of exploration is to examine those variants that take the idea of diplomacy - seven players playing on one map - to a `logical' conclusion and have them play on seven `parallel' boards.

***[[I've already mentioned to Bob what I consider to be the most difficult variant to GM: Deviant Diplomacy II, which I ran most recently in Eternal Sunshine beginning with issue #28 (all issues can be found at <http://www.whiningkentpigs.com/DW/kent/eternal%20sunshine.htm> ). With all the insane rules players come up with, it is a complete nightmare to adjudicate properly. I think mine was only the second game of the variant ever run to completion. The parallel board idea is similar to a Gunboat 7x7 Round Robin tournament, although that has no negotiation at all.]]***

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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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# Diplomacy World Does (Poorly) Whipping 2021

By Bob Durf

Well, I managed to finally get back into a little tournament action with the second round of Whipping 2021. Now as soon as I signed up for Whipping, my wife's work schedule changed, and suddenly I had baby duty during game time. Hopeful though I was that my son would fall asleep, he stayed up way past his bed time laughing and talking my ear off throughout my game.

I had forgotten what most stresses me out about these tournament games—the thought that the players in the game with me have past relationships, putting me way behind the ball in negotiations. It certainly was true in round one of Dixiecon 2020, and since then I have been paranoid about that (even when it has not been the case in any game since that first game). Here, in fact, everyone seemed to start off on fairly even ground.<sup>1</sup> But right off the bat, everyone went off to talk and left me in the cold. Then France and England, after chatting a good bit alone, came to me and asked me about a Western Triple. Talking to both at once, I wasn't going to reject it, but it was fishy from the start. Indeed, England was already playing games, and he had one exceptionally useful stooge that seemed to do as he required hook-line-and-sinker repeatedly—Eric S. as Russia. Despite me assuring Russia I did not plan on attacking him and would not plan on bouncing him in Sweden, Russia still opened to Silesia, Italy to Tyrolia. Immediately I was in hot sh--. England, by spreading rumors, managed to get the rest of the board to act against me as if we were in a Western Triple...leading me to rely on a Western Triple for survival.

Fall 1901 and I tell Russia to back off, that he's been conned. I played the entire game straight up and I did with him—he moved ultra-aggressively to Silesia, leaving me no choice but to bounce him in Sweden. France, mercifully, actually did what they said they would do, and gave me some breathing room. Italy backed off as well, correctly guessing that England was pulling strings as well.

The Western Triple developed for one more year, but England then stabbed me, taking Sweden and pulling back from Russia. I expected a stab from the one obvious liar on the board, but I did think he would wait a

year until he had snagged St. Petes and built another fleet. I think he expected France to play along with him, despite him openly violating agreements between the three of us. France moved against him and surprisingly got into the Channel. Russia, in what was becoming a frustratingly silly pattern, chose to attack me with England, giving England *all* of Scandinavia and getting very little out of the alliance. I do not understand why he would side with the player that had so obviously tricked him right out of the gate (Then again, England's Scottish accent was exceptionally charming).

So, even facing Germany and Russia, I still thought a hold was possible. France was with me (barely). Italy was recognizing England as a problem for him later. Austria was friendly (if a little ineffectual). And then I received the worst betrayal of all. Backstabbr somehow inducted my moves as all holds. Game over for Germany. I have to admit, I lost my temper slightly. I have played many games on Backstabbr and have never had it act up in this way. I had put in moves and instead I received an all holds NMR. It would be nice for gamemasters in tournaments to double check issues with backstabbr, but (a) it isn't necessarily their job and (b) I'm not sure if it is even possible with the backstabbr interface and (c) I'm clearly still bitter and looking to lash out. Such is the emotion that Diplomacy causes.

In all seriousness, I really enjoyed meeting each and every one of the players in my game. I love getting to talk to different Diplomats from across the world, and I'll say it until I am out of breath from it—using real names and voice chats really makes the experience of virtual 'face-to-face' games that much more enjoyable.

The one amusing coda to the end of my Whipping experience was offering France as much of my territory as possible (France and Austria had been the two powers most friendly and on the up-and-up with me, sadly Austria was in just as poor a position as I was). France refused, saying I could still defend—then backstabbed me at the end to eliminate me. Why tell a lie for no reason at the end? I had to laugh. And guess what? So did my kid, three hours past his bedtime. At me, unfortunately.

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<sup>1</sup>In my game was Chris M. playing Austria, John J. playing England, Sabi A. playing France, Wes K. playing Italy,

Eric S. playing Russia, and Steven H. playing Turkey.

# Ask the Hobby Historian: Press in Diplomacy

By David W. Hood

Sometimes the meaning of a word changes over time, or begins to mean something totally different than it used to. The word "awful" used to mean something like awe-ful, such as worthy of awe. A bit like we now use the word "awesome." "Brave" used to mean "showy" instead of what it means today, etc.

I had a discussion recently online with some hobbyists who were telling me that a "Key" opening refers to any 1901 move where the Italians go to Trieste with the consent of Italy. Well, I'm old enough to know that is not the original meaning. Jeff Key's idea was for the Italian army to go to Trieste in Spring 1901 and then move to Serbia in the Fall. The intent was to put that otherwise troublesome Italian army to use against the Turks or Russians by putting it on the front line instead of leaving it behind the Austrian lines. So, the Key Opening moniker would not have accurately described any loaning of Trieste to Italy as you often see today.

Does that matter? Language evolves over time. Perhaps it's ok for all such AI strategies to be called "Key" openings. It's still important, though, to understand how and why language about Diplomacy has evolved over time so as to avoid confusion, and to allow us to read written content from the past without misinterpretation.

So, let's talk about "press" then, shall we? When I first heard folk talking about negotiation through "press" in online Dip games I could not figure out just what in Hades they were talking about. Then I realized - the usage of the word press was garbled when extended deadline Diplomacy play transferred from the postal world to online back in the 1990s. When we played Diplomacy by mail through zines, press did not refer to direct private communication between players but instead referred to written content intended to be published next to the game report for everyone to see. It was a shortened version of the phrase "press release", like a communication from a country's government. It was primarily used for fun, not really intended to influence the game per se. Many Dippers in the old days enjoyed the role-playing aspect of the game, so press was used to allow the player to more fully express the role being played, such as the Sultan of Turkey or the Tsar of Russia, that sort of thing. Other hobbyists were bigtime writers, so they used press to tell stories which may or may not have had anything to do with the game being played.

Have you ever heard the terms "white" or "gray" or "black" as it relates to press? These developed a

particular meaning online but originally these words had to do with the "dateline" for the press item. For actual press releases, a dateline refers in part to the location from which the story is released. So, in the postal days, when a game required white press only, that meant that your press releases could only have a dateline for the actual power you were playing - so if you were Italy, your press could say it was from "Italy" or "Rome" or even "Florence" but not from a non-Italian place. So, if you read a press item from such places, you knew it came from the Italian player. If the GM allowed gray press, that meant the dateline could be a neutral location, like Switzerland or Persia or Timbuktu, or whatever - but press from a Power on the board was guaranteed to really be from that Power. Black press meant that anybody could write a press release and put Italy on it, for example, not just the Italian player.

So, what was all this about? Honestly, folk just thought it was fun writing things for others to read, and sometimes pretending it came from someone else. Of course, back in the day, we actually did things like fake entire issues of other folks' zines, and then sending the fakes to the zines readership to make them think moves were different from they were ordered, that liberals would say conservative things in their letter columns, and all other kinds of goofy stuff. So...we were just weird.

Or, maybe we were just trying to build community. Zines were the backbone of the hobby in the pre-internet days. They were not just vehicles to run games (although we did have that kind of publication, which was called a "warehouse zine.") Zines did in fact have letter columns, which discussed gaming, politics, sports, movies, all sorts of things. We ran other games in the zines, like word games or other board games adapted for postal play. We did polls, and ranking systems, and tournament reports, and other written content. Heck, we even had zines ABOUT other zines, which ranked and reviewed the hobby's zines on a yearly basis as well as telling folk which ones had game openings for Diplomacy, Gunboat, variants, and other games. In the July edition of my news show Deadline, on the Diplomacy Broadcast Network, I will feature an interview with a hobbyist who has spent a lot of time looking at the older zines recently, mining useful and fun things for us to remember about the days of postal Diplomacy.

I'll end by saying that for a long time in the hobby, we missed the community-building which emanated from the publication of the zines. We had Diplomacy World, but that was about it. Now, websites such as PlayDip, WebDip and VDip have filled this void to some

degree. The face-to-face crowd is also back in the community-building business, first by using Webex Teams and now on Discord. The Nexus Discord server connects Dipfans from various online platforms and Diplomacy apps, providing not only a place to play games together but also to make friends with other hobbyists. The North American Diplomacy Federation website describes the game and hobby to newbies, and

directs them to the resources they need to participate in the fun. We now have the ability to create a wider, deeper and richer Diplomacy community than we ever have before, with wonderful content being created daily on websites, on YouTube, and in other fora. It's basically a great time to be alive in the world of Diplomacy.

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## Deconstructing Diplomacy

By Lewis Pulsipher

The following is edited and modified from a transcription of a video I made for an audiovisual class I'm creating for Udemy.com. It was created for aspiring game designers, not for hobby *Diplomacy* players. But you may learn something from it.

I think this one of the greatest games ever made so as you might expect I'll talk a lot about it.

What's a deconstruction? We're trying to discern the inner workings of a game. What makes the game work or not work from a design point of view? The purpose is to help designers understand how the game works and why it is successful or not, so they can apply those lessons to their own games.

I've a lot history with this game. It was my favorite game from 1970 to 1975. I played a lot by mail, and as there was no email the games took several years to complete. I was quite successful as a player, and I published two *Diplomacy* fanzines. These were the days of printed fanzines, mimeo or ditto printed. I also wrote quite a few articles about the game.

My series of articles about playing the game well was on the Avalon Hill website for decades, and was cited on the boardgamegeek page for *Diplomacy* until their recent redesign stopped citing articles. I also designed a lot of *Diplomacy* variants, and to this day I'm probably the most prolific designer of published *Diplomacy* variants, though I gave it up when I started to design standalone games in the late 70s.

### What is It?

So, what is *Diplomacy*? *Diplomacy* was originally published in 1959, the same year as *Risk* in the United States. It requires exactly seven players, a very unusual requirement. It roughly represents World War I and the era before it. It's a very long game when played to a conclusion, which is often a draw, 4 to 8 hours. Almost all the activity is interaction amongst the players,

especially via secret negotiation, and it is the secret negotiation that "makes the game" while also making it such a long game.

Moreover, it's a zero-sum game. The only way to gain something is to take it from someone else, and that's part of what makes it such an aggressive game. There's no way to progress without "regressing" somebody else. It's a heavily psychological game because much of it goes on in the players' minds, though there is a tactical system and strategic system.

This is something that struck me only recently: it's actually a co-operative game. *Diplomacy* is known as a cutthroat boardgame full of lies and deceit, but it is one of the most co-operative games in existence that can still produce a single winner, though often it doesn't. It's not like a standard co-op game where all the players win or none of them win. Also, you're not playing against the game, not playing against programmed instructions. Nonetheless, it's very co-operative, because you can't go it alone. You have to work with other players to succeed because you're outnumbered six to one, at least at first.

Even more important, one of the fundamental mechanics of the game is a support order that lets you directly assist another player, or be assisted, and that's a rarity in games. That's possible because we have simultaneous movement adjudication in *Diplomacy*, which is also quite rare in tabletop games.

So, we have a game where strategy, in the sense of military grand strategy, is very important. It's a game of negotiation, but you need to negotiate with the right objectives in mind, so understanding the strategy of the entire game is vital. A good strategist will beat a good tactician, again because you're outnumbered 6-1. At the game start there are seven players, but you only have three or four neighbors at that juncture. Yet you have to see and try to influence the entire board for the entire game to maximize your chances to win. It is an epitome

of strategy, both of military strategy and of “strategy games” more generally, as you have to use your mind to succeed.

While many play the game with the short term in mind (owing to the possibilities for surprise and betrayal), those who think in the long term are more likely to succeed.

Part of the fascination with the game is a fascination with maps and with the shapes of geography with geopolitics, so it's unsurprising that there are hundreds of *Diplomacy* variants, frequently with a new map, sometimes not.

There is a conference map which the players take with them when they go away from the board to secret negotiations. It shows the map of the game and the 75 areas on the board. There are just two kinds of units, armies and fleets. The fleets can move in coastal areas, and only 8 of 34 supply centers (23.5%) are landlocked. Armies and fleets are about equally useful, especially given the geography of Europe and some of the Mediterranean littoral depicted on the board.

The tactical system uses simultaneous movement/adjudication. There cannot be more than 34 pieces, but players have to write orders for each of their pieces, something that wouldn't work today except for niche markets. (In 2006 Fantasy Flight Games published the second edition of my game *Britannia*; they refused to include a scoresheet, feeling that writing down scores was unacceptable to the market! They included scoring chits instead.) It's possible to help another player in the tactical phase of the game as well as to hinder others. There's no overt chance in resolution of conflicts, no cards, no dice. But because of simultaneous movement sometimes there is guesswork. Sometimes there's Yomi involved, reading the enemy's intentions. You can play a Game Theory minimax style most of the time tactically, but as in real warfare, the best generals are successful via Yomi.

In the larger sense Yomi is very important to the strategy of the game, because if somebody's going to stab you in the back, or someone is lying to you, you've got to figure that out in time to do something about it.

## My Ten Subsystems of Games

I'm going to go through my 10 subsystems of all games and describe what we see in *Diplomacy*. These subsystems are a framework designers can use to help them conceive new designs.

For the first one, **model-theme-atmosphere-image** and so on. The game loosely represents World War I. **Loosely**. The seven players are roughly equal in

strength. We have 75 areas on the board and only armies and fleets. The technology is more 1900 than 1914, though the map is from 1914.

**Player interaction rules.** This is a game of very strong player interaction via negotiation. Lying and even cheating is encouraged in the rules. Surprise is common owing to simultaneous movement.

**Objective/victory conditions.** Players need to control a majority of the 34 supply centers, so usually there is player elimination. But at the end of the game, there may be three to four or even more players, and often nobody can achieve a majority of supply centers and you end up with a draw. One of the fascinations of play is that some players value second place over most draws, while others value any draw over second place (partial win versus outright loss). There is nothing in the rules to require or force a draw, so theoretically the game could go on forever.

Number four is **data storage**. There's an area board. Armies and fleets of seven colors are supplied, and players use a paper and pen for writing orders. Everything else is in the player's minds.

**Sequencing** is a negotiation session followed by order writing and then simultaneous adjudication.

**Movement/Placement** is one unit per area. Units move one area maximum in a turn. Fleets can occupy coastal provinces. The sea areas and the areas along the edges of the board are larger so that you can move just as quickly **around** the board as across the center of the board to get to the other side.

**Information availability.** Only the player's intentions and his orders are hidden from the other players, until the simultaneous adjudication.

**Conflict resolution** is simultaneous and deterministic, a majority wins, ties to defender, no loss in combat unless a unit cannot retreat. For a wargame, deterministic combat with no loss is rare.

The **economy** is zero-sum. 34 centers; to gain a unit you must take the center from somebody else. Players at start occupy 22 of 34 supply centers (65%).

The **user interface** is a boardgame. Players talk with other players frequently in secret, leaving the table. They write orders for their units.

## Some Evaluation Questions

I also have some evaluation questions I try to use with a deconstruction.

### What is the essence or vision of the game?

Negotiation, followed by strategic and tactical action in a very rough representational World War I, that's diceless and uses simultaneous adjudication. ("*Gunboat*" *Diplomacy*, while a popular variant, makes nonsense of the game's essence.)

**Who is it marketed to?** Hard-core psychological game players. It's kind of the opposite of *Chess* in many ways. It can also be seen as a strange combination of poker and chess. It's poker psychologically but retaining the determinism of chess.

**Players' primary activity** is negotiating. If you don't negotiate, you lose.

**What are the major challenges?** Reading opponents' intentions while disguising yours is a great deal of it, and military grand strategy.

**The actions the players can take to overcome the challenges.** They can negotiate offensive oriented alliances, negotiate nonaggression agreements, make war, make peace, expand, capturing supply centers with superior force or guile, and **outthink** the other players. As I said, there are lots and lots of variations of *Diplomacy*.

What about the **play balance**? The inner three powers (Austria, Germany, Italy) are at a clear positional disadvantage, and as far as I know this translates to a disadvantage in results compared with England, France, Russia, and Turkey. Keep in mind, the actual strengths of nations in this time period have nothing to do with their strength in *Diplomacy*.

### What is and isn't a variation?

(I am repeating some of the following from *Diplomacy World* #100)

This brings me to the question, **what characterizes Dip, what makes someone look at a game and say "that's a variant of Diplomacy"?**

I have made two lists at various times. The first is very short:

- Simultaneous movement
- Units directly related to territory controlled [zero-sum]
- The support mechanism
- No overt chance mechanism in combat resolution

But this leaves out negotiation! But it allows *Gunboat* to

qualify.

Another try is less terse:

- Secret Negotiation
- Always, simultaneous movement (but some people call *Game of Thrones: the Boardgame* a Dipvariant, and it isn't exactly simultaneous movement; it uses a mechanism to avoid the need to write orders).
- Always, the support mechanism.
- Always, no overt chance mechanism in combat.
- Usually, centers maintain units in a **zero-sum** fashion--and while some games give economic points to spend in various ways, players still must pay maintenance for existing units.
- Usually, no-holds-barred negotiation.
- Usually, an area board and one unit per area.

Most of these elements appear in other games - I'm using the support mechanism in a couple prototypes - but the appearance of most or all of these is likely to be in a Dipvariant. One could try to use the same list and make a game that doesn't derive from *Diplomacy*, of course.

### If Released Today?

A final question. **If Diplomacy and its variants did not exist, and it was released today, what would be the result?**

It would probably fall flat on its face - like most older games, it must be admitted - not because they're not good but because tastes and players have changed drastically to favor puzzles and shorter experiences. Even *Chess* wouldn't amount to much if similarly treated.

Briefly in *Diplomacy's* case:

- way too long
- you don't know how long it's going to take (unpredictable length)
- player elimination (frowned upon nowadays)
- requires exactly seven players (inflexible)
- requires a very large number of players (often impractical)
- very direct-conflict driven in a tabletop game world that **values lack of conflict**
- it makes people write things down
- there are far too many draws

Any commercial variant that aims at a market outside current *Diplomacy* players must address those problems. I have designed one, "Scramble for Africa", that addresses those problems (except direct conflict and writing things down), and when we get back to a situation where we can playtest games in person, we'll

see what happens.

My apprenticeship in game design was partly with *Diplomacy* variants. The game is a niche taste, but it's the epitome of this kind of game. Because of the nature of the game those whose feelings are easily hurt should not play. It's an extreme example of a game where you have to earn what you get, and that's out of fashion these days. I regard it as one of the great games in the world, and I rarely call a game great. It's instructive in how a psychological game can be so different from poker, which is very much a psychological game, and also how a chess-like game can be so different from *Chess*.

Nowadays the game is often played by email, with software judges, and some variants are played by email as well. There are *Diplomacy* conventions. But it's not that easy to get seven people together to play the game, especially because it takes so long. There have been commercial *Diplomacy* playing video games, but they have been a **disaster**, just horrible. Video games are rarely (never?) good at grand strategy.

It's a game at an extreme, more than 60 years after publication. It doesn't suit most modern tastes, but still has lots of fans.

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## Reflecting on Center-Count Carnage

By Jonathan Frank

So, the virtual eCarnage Spring Edition tournament (held April 30<sup>th</sup>) was played under a new scoring system, referred to as Center-Count Carnage scoring. In this system, board results were scored as follows:

In every game, 45028 points are awarded, split between the 7 players as detailed below.

If a game ends with no player winning, each player receives 500 points per supply center owned, plus bonus points based on their board rank:

1st place	7007 points
2nd place	6006 points
3rd place	5005 points
4th place	4004 points
5th place	3003 points
6th place	2002 points
7th place	1001 points

Eliminated players are ranked by year of elimination, with players eliminated later ranking higher. Players tied on center count or tied on elimination year split the total rank bonus that would be awarded to their ranks evenly.

If a game is ended by a player's victory, that player receives 39028 points and each losing player receives 1000 points, regardless of previous center count or elimination year rank.

I created this as an intellectual exercise in adapting principles from the primarily rank-based Carnage scoring system to emphasize center acquisition. I believe this to be more indicative of performance relative to the stated goal of the game – although board rank does, imperfectly, reflect a real element of what the game of *Diplomacy* was originally designed to simulate. In any

event, I was honored to have David Maletsky offer to trial the system at his event, and he also provided a valuable corrective in adjusting my initial arcane scoring values towards something usable.

The Spring eCarnage event turned out to be quite a small affair – seven boards played – and so I would expect the results at this point to be of minimal value in informing necessary modifications. I saw few open complaints and received none directly. However, it was also evident from player comments that few had made themselves familiar with the scoring system beforehand.

It is evident that I owe a belated apology to the developers of the Tribute scoring system – not for my theoretical objections having to do with the excessively high number of points awarded in that system for topping a board, but for assuming that was a primary motivation for various split tops in early Tribute-scored events. The same thing featured heavily in the first rounds of this event, and I now suspect it's likely to be a caution-driven response to any new system.

The most common reaction witnessed was that players seemed bemused by the high point totals resulting from scoring centers on a scale calibrated to Carnage's rank-based point awards that count by 1000s. I am not sure if this reflects simple unfamiliarity with the new system, or a liability of the system in that those not trained to work with numbers find large ones difficult to comprehend easily.

This also applies to small numbers, apparently – shared ranks resulted in several scores ending in 0.5, which had evidently not been anticipated by most, including Maletsky and the Diplomacy Broadcast Network crew.

The decimals could be addressed by using even numbers for the ranks, although this results in awkward base values: 7014, 6012, 5010, etc. I would prefer to utilize the decimal point for “balance” and address the large number size: treat centers as 50 each, and ranks as 700.7, 600.6, 500.5, etc. This has the benefit of clearly differentiating between base point value and the

points being used as tie-breakers. On the other hand, several players – and Maletsky – stated a strong dislike for involving decimal points at all.

The results of both adjustments are displayed below, using eCarnage Round 2 Game A as a sample:

As Scored	Even Numbers	Decimal Split
12007.0	12014	1200.70
10506.0	10512	1050.60
8505.0	8510	850.50
6504.0	6508	650.40
4503.0	4506	450.30
1501.5	1503	150.15
1501.5	1503	150.15

It may be observed that using the even numbers, while it makes the base scoring less elegant, does require fewer total digits for each actual score.

The other question of interest is how the new system may have affected play. This is difficult to estimate from such a small event. Only eight players played all three rounds, and those eight all finished as the **top** eight. The final standings as scored would have resulted in identical tournament placement under the standard Carnage system (results listed best first, not by round).

Assuming the system continues in use, one adjustment or the other should be made. As the designer I prefer, as mentioned, the decimals, but public comment is likely the best way to determine which modification is most likely to lead to improved player understanding of scoring.

Player	Results	Score	Carnage
1. Katie Gray	14C (1st), 11C (2nd), 7C (3rd)	34018.0	18032
2. Ed Sullivan	12C (1st), 11 C (2nd), 7C (3rd)	33018.0	18030
3. Jason Mastbaum	11C (2nd), 9C (2nd), 5C (3rd)	29517.0	17025
4. Andrei Gribakov	12C (1st), 11C (2nd), 2C (6th)	28515.0	15025
5. Ben Kellman	11C (2nd), 1C (4th), 0C (5th)	19013.0	13012
6. JJ Raymond	9C (2nd), 5C (T3rd/4th), 0C (7th)	18511.5	12514
7. Liam Stokes	11C (2nd), 1C (4th), 0C (7th)	17011.0	11012
8. Hunter Katcher	11C (2nd), 2C (5th), 0C (7th)	16510.0	10013

Of the seven 11 center 2nd place finishes, it is worth pointing out that tournament winner Katie Gray’s was the only one earned honestly; each of the other players’ came as the result of arranging an 11-11-11-1 result. One can therefore clearly attribute her victory to karma as well as outstanding play.

remaining nearest competitors. A larger event would almost certainly feature a finer gradation with more boards to draw from. It would also provide more insight to how scoring is affected in comparison to the established Carnage system, as I think there would be at least minor shifts resulting from weight of centers compared to simple rankings.

The only notable feature in the table above is the large gap between the top four and the 5th-8th places. Scoring by centers makes it clear that each of the top four players collected nearly twice – in some places more – centers over the course of the event than the

I certainly would welcome additional feedback. The easiest way, other than writing letters to or articles for the ‘zine yourself, is to track me down on most any of the numerous Diplomacy-related Discord servers.

# My Virtual Whipping

By Douglas Kent

It's hard for many people to believe, but until April of this year I had never participated in a Diplomacy tournament. My higher profile as Lead Editor of **Diplomacy World** for a total of eighteen years (over two periods) naturally causes people to assume I'm more active – and a much better player – than a closer examination would reveal.

The fact is, the whole reason I originally got involved with Postal Diplomacy was because my first wife had a lot of physical and mental issues. I was searching for a hobby I could become thoroughly involved with, but which didn't require a lot of money or much time away from home. Mara would tolerate my spending time playing the game or writing letters, but she didn't want me spending a lot of time away from home. The postal hobby seemed to fit the bill perfectly. And once I started publishing zines of my own, my remote immersion was complete.

In later years, if there had ever been a large Diplomacy tournament in my general vicinity, I probably would have attended. But that never happened. I even tried to host one at a Dallas-area convention and wound up with zero players (despite having a full board sign up). In 2012 I was scheduled to drive to Chicago for World DipCon, but our dog got sick and my wife at the time cancelled the whole trip. So, it just never worked out.

Virtual Whipping in April presented my second opportunity to attend a virtual tournament. I had signed up for one previously, but as the weekend approached, work dumped a whole pile of crap in my lap to the point where I had to drop out days before the event. Whipping was being held on one day – Saturday, April 10 – with two rounds. I figured I could handle that even if work was an issue; I'd just push the work stuff into Sunday. By coincidence the deadline for my Dipzine **Eternal Sunshine** was scheduled to fall on April 10, but with enough notice I was able to move that to a day earlier and publish the zine on Friday night instead of the usual Saturday morning. All the stars were in alignment. I was actually going to attend. I even popped in to the Friday night welcome Zoom get-together, although I didn't have much to offer in terms of conversation. Mostly it was folks talking about San Francisco Whipping history and things that happened in prior years. Fun to listen, but not anything I could contribute to.

Saturday morning rolled around, and after some general chat and silliness we were off. For the benefit of newcomers (like me), let me explain the way Whipping (and many other virtual tournaments) work. It's a combination of two things. First for the movement of the

pieces, the board, and the adjudication we have Backstabbr ([www.backstabbr.com](http://www.backstabbr.com)). I've played a few games on that website before, and the simple point and click order system is a little clunky but easy enough to use. If you make mistakes, they're usually obvious and can be corrected before you hit Submit. My only major stumbling block is with when I change orders. Once I apparently didn't hit Submit after I changed things, so I was stuck with my original orders. And another time I suddenly got internet lag and had to wait for the screen to refresh, which meant I ran out of time before I was able to submit my changes. Still, mistakes often happen in face-to-face tournaments, so I tried to consider these issues as the trade-off. Backstabbr won't allow you to build where you can't, or retreat where you can't, so in the end it saves you from potential mistakes too. Besides, all the players are using the same website, and that's all that really matters: an even playing field.

For the negotiation side of things, Whipping uses Discord. This is where I expected to have the greatest difficulty. I have a Discord account, but I don't really use it for anything. It looks like a mess of hashtags and servers, a maze it's easy to get lost in. But Discord is easy enough to navigate for the tournament. You click on the Roll Call group and type your name (when instructed) to show you're there and ready to play. You click on a voice chat roll call group as well, and attendance is taken to make sure all the players were counted and that everyone counted is still around. When you get assigned a game, you join that area. Each nation has its own "room" designated for negotiation, plus there's a lobby. You go into the lobby and – for example – say "Austria, do you want to talk?" The avatar for whoever speaks lights up a bit, and if you don't know who is talking, you just ask "who said that?" Then you and Austria go into their room or your room and talk. Avatars move on the screen based on where people go, so you know if Russia and Turkey have been in a room alone for five minutes. It takes a little getting used to, but after a bit the only complication is clicking back and forth between the Discord and the game board. Some people may use their phone for one and their computer for the other to avoid that issue. I didn't; I used my laptop for both. Now and then I'd lose my place but if a moron like me can handle all this, so can you. And nobody is perfect, so all the players were always there to help each other out by reminding someone to click on something or move to a certain room.

My goal for this tournament was simple: get at least one survival out of the two rounds. I wasn't kidding myself: between my generally weak mid-game, my lack of

tournament experience, and the target I figured would be on my back because of my association with Diplomacy World, I figured I'd be lucky to get even that far. But that was my goal, and barring that, I hoped to last as long as possible. I wanted to use this experience as a building block for future tournaments, while not putting on too bad a show in the process.

When the first-round boards were announced, I found myself with Italy. I know that in the hands of skilled players Italy can be quite powerful (I watched Peter McNamara win the DNB Invitational with Italy on the Top Board). In my hands? Probably not too much. However, Italy is not an easy nation to quickly eliminate. I figured my fleeting daydreams about sweeping a board were not to be, but at least I could hang around.

The player and nation line-up for my board was set like this:

Austria: JP Grouly  
England: Katie Gray  
France: Bryan Illana  
Germany: Wes Ketchum  
Italy: Me  
Russia: Matt Lynch  
Turkey: Jonathan Frank

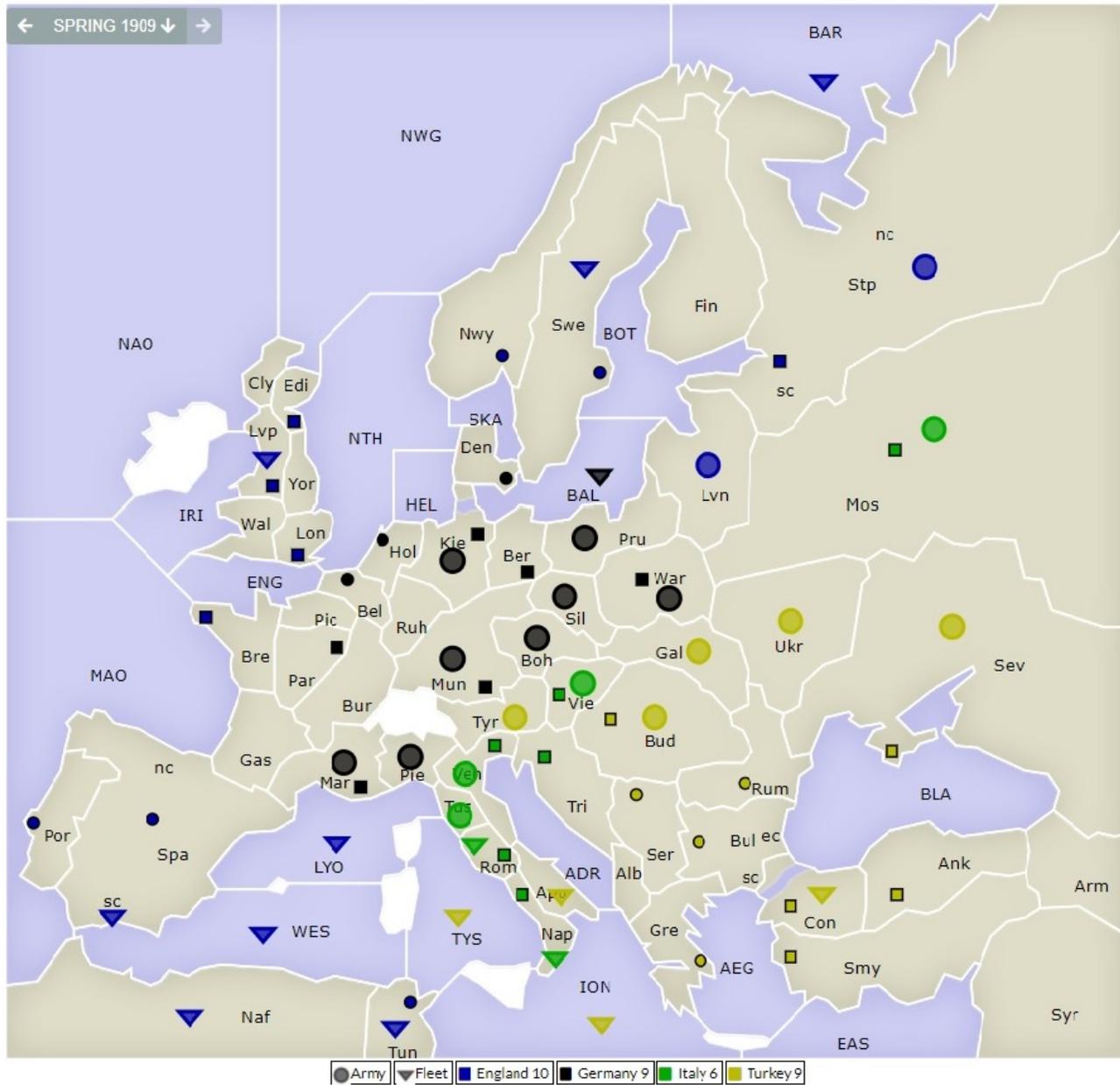
During Spring 1901 negotiations, Austria told me this was also his first tournament, and that he was only going to play the firsts round. Turkey and Russia were both supposedly interested in carving up Austria and wanted my assistance. France and I quickly agreed to leave Pie and Lyo empty, and to no fleet builds in Mar. Assuming Bryan was being honest, I would be focusing east. But I was undecided about whether I wanted to help Austria meet an early end.

I opened with Ven-Tyr and Rom-Ven, and the usual Nap-Ion. Austria had bounced in Gal and moved Tri-Alb and Bud-Ser, a standard opening. Trieste was sitting there, ripe for the picking. Alternately, I could try sneaking into Munich (Germany and I hadn't found any time to talk at length), but there was no way I would be able to hold it. I thought about how Austria only had this round to play, and like me was a newcomer to tournaments. And in the back of my mind, I saw David Hood sitting on Youtube later that night commenting on games on DBN. Why not give him something unusual to talk about?

So instead of taking Trieste or moving on Munich, I took Tunis and ordered Tyr-Boh and Ven-Tyr. It seemed Austria and Turkey were not going to be complete mortal enemies yet, so I figured, what the hell? Let me get Austria's back and make sure he lasts for a while too. With my insane Italian armies marching all over Europe without a firm plan or set direction, I would be the center of chaos. I even told a few players that my goal was to finish the game with one center – Tunis – and one unit, A Finland.

Here is where I made my first technical error. When Winter 1901 came up I entered a preliminary build of A Ven. It was just to avoid an NMR. But when I went to the lobby, I was informed that tournaments don't allow negotiation during retreat or build phases. I suppose nobody could have stopped me from talking to someone, but it was the way things were done, so I stuck around and made small talk. I completely forgot that I'd built a third army. Italy with only one fleet is pretty much useless. My casual attitude cost me.

I won't bore you with all the specifics of the game. Austria and Turkey and I took southern Russia, and he was the first to be eliminated. England and Germany were teaming up on Bryan's France, and it seemed clear to me that they were the power alliance on the board. I had to grow, and fast, so once Russia was on his way out, I had to stab Austria. Turkey had already started moving that way anyway, and I needed fleets to slow him (and to try and help Bryan, or at least block up the Med). Pretty soon Turkey saw the board for what it was, and we ceased all hostilities and marched to build a line. It worked, too. My 1907 we were down to the four of us and a 9-9-9-7 center count (me being the 7). Turkey couldn't afford to stab me, and England and Germany had built the entire game to avoid a stab; England had almost no armies, and Germany had almost no fleets. I proposed a draw, which Germany vetoed. After some discussion we came to this agreement: a three-way tie to top a board is sort of throwing the game away. I hadn't bothered to look at the scoring system, not expecting to do well anyway but Wes was pretty adamant that someone should have 10. I'd already told Katie that if Turkey stabbed me, I'd be throwing all my centers specifically to her; Wes's negotiating style wasn't a match for mine, and she'd never lied to me. So, to end the game, I would cede Tunis to England (Turkey felt pretty strongly we'd have lost Tunis if the game continued anyway; I wasn't sure but didn't really care). Once England had the most centers, we'd draw with 10-9-9-6. Done, and done.



After a break of a few hours, it was time for Round 2. I should mention that while I remained willfully ignorant of the scoring system being used, it was at this point that I realized the tournament had made a decision not to publish the Round 1 results. Players would be going into Round 2 effectively blind – minus rumor and unreliable reports from other players – about who was where in the tournament standings. I see positives and negatives to this approach, but I figured given my 0% chance of being anywhere near the top of the standings it wouldn't affect my play or my games. As it turned out, I think it probably did.

I was hoping to get a western power for the second round, but instead my name was announced as the proud leader of the Austrian nation. First Italy, now Austria. Whoopee. So be it. The player and nation line-up for my Round 2 board was set like this:

- Austria: Me
- England: Christopher Ward
- France: Jason Mastbaum
- Germany: Matthew Crill
- Italy: Craig Mayr
- Russia: Jaromir Sulja
- Turkey: Karl Ronneburg

I knew Jason and Matthew by reputation – especially Jason – so I was committed to keeping an eye on the west. Besides, I didn't want a repeat of my first game where a western alliance grew fast and eventually tried to sweep the board. Other than that, I just wanted to avoid being crushed by I/R/T, or a combination of two out of three.

As is happened, Italy and Russia were fully focused on taking Turkey out. My gentle warnings about the east becoming too self-involved were ignored as being premature. I opened Vie-Tri, Tri-Alb, and Bud-Ser. Italy had Ven hold, and Russia left Gal empty as we had agreed. I felt I could trust Russia more than Italy, as Craig was pressing the idea of me "loaning" him Trieste. I actually wasn't fully against the idea if he was passing up Tunis in 1901, but my eyes kept wondering over to the other wide of the board. France and Germany spent a lot of time talking before the Spring results were adjudicated, and it looked like England was first on their menu. At the same time, Russia was talking as if he considered Sweden to be more of a German center than his own. I already had a sinking feeling in my stomach.

Italy decided to convoy to Tunis, so at least I was able to skip continuing the Trieste conversations. Turkey was fully under the impression that he and I were allied, to the point that even with Alb-Gre and the Italian convoy to Tunis, he chose to build F Ank in the winter, leaving his southern flank completely exposed. But now I was left with a decision to make. If I continued against Turkey, he would certainly be crushed, but could I legitimately expect to get more than Bulgaria out of the deal? And once the Sultan was gone, what then? Italy and Russia would probably target me next. Besides, my warnings about the obvious F/G alliance continued to call on deaf ears. With zero interference from Russia or Italy, England was already in the fetal position.

So, I decided to change direction. Instead of marching into Bulgaria and moving Gre-Aeg, I took Rumania, moved into Gal, and bounced the Italian F Nap from moving into the Ionian Sea. I figured I could at least quickly get my armies into Boh and perhaps Sil to put a little pressure on Germany. It didn't take long to take War and Sev from Russia, and between banging his head against the Turkish wall and a French fleet sailing into Wme, Italy saw the light and began to move west. But Turkey was slow to get units into position, meaning my armies were the only forces putting real pressure on Germany, and the Italian fleets on France. I kept dropping hints to Turkey that as long as he stuck with our alliance, we could keep F/G from sweeping the board, but if he got greedy, I'd simply make my remaining armies surrogate German armies and do whatever I could to see they topped the board with a 17/17 draw.

I put everything I could into the plan to stop F/G, including ceding Trieste to Italy to get him another fleet build. During a spare moment, I was talking to France about long-term strategy. I asked him about whether he'd have an issue with Germany taking Norway and Sweden (two of the three remaining Russian centers) and growing faster than he did; I couldn't see much of a reason for the F/G alliance to keep Russia around any longer, Jason said "We've probably reached the point in this game where it's best to reduce the number of survivors, in order to increase the final score for the rest of us." Suddenly I knew; Turkey was about to stab me. And there was nothing I could do to stop him, if that's what he wanted to do. In my opinion it was suicide, but slow suicide. My units were fully engaged with the Germans, and I had very little back in my home centers.

The thing was, both Jason and Matthew had done well in Round 1, but nobody was willing to say exactly how well. This is where the secrecy of those results came into play. If everybody knew exactly how all the Round 1 games had ended, there might be the chance that France and Germany would stab each other in an attempt to grab the top spot (or closer to the top) in the tournament. But with no way to know exactly what had happened, it was in their best interests to stick with the alliance and just let things play out. With that in mind, I didn't see how we could possibly succeed without keeping the A/I/T cooperation going. Even my warnings about throwing my centers to Germany were holding no sway over him. Karl decided to roll the dice and hope to get large enough to survive, perhaps in a 3-way draw. I knew that would never happen. Jason and Matthew were perfectly willing to keep going as long as necessary to split the board. As Matthew pointed out when it hit 11pm on my clock: "Jason and I are both on the west coast. It's only nine here."

So yes, Karl stabbed me, and I removed as many units as possible on the German line. My two remaining armies pulled back to Bud and Vie, and I explained to Matthew that I had no delusions of survival. He could ask me to make any moves, and I would almost certainly comply. My goal was to ensure as many of my centers as possible fell into his hands instead of Karl's. In short order, Joramir and I were down to one center each (me in Vie, he in Sev) but the position made it easier to keep us around rather than weaken the line and eliminate us quickly. But by 1912 or so the time had come, and we were both removed, leaving the board with the F/G alliance, a third-wheel Turkey, and a one-center Italy fated to follow us into oblivion.

During the later portions of Round 1, once I was down to one center, I passed the time watching some of the live DBN coverage of the tournament. It reminded me that sometimes it is very difficult to know what's going on in a

game just by watching the board. My insane Italian moves in Round 1 were given more credit than I thought they deserved. And the shift in the Italian position in Round 2, going from enemy to ally, went completely unnoticed for over a year. (Even my ceding of Trieste was seen as a surprise attack by Italy). It isn't a simple thing to do, whether live or in the Demo Game reports.

I cut out and went to bed at that point, waking up to discover that – yes – the game had ended in a 17-17 France/Germany draw. Turkey's stab of me accomplished nothing. Still, if I had been in his shoes, I might have done the same thing. I don't think the results would have been any different, but sometimes you just throw caution to the wind and take a chance. Unfortunately, alliance play was the name of the game

here, and the only way to successfully combat that is with an alliance of your own.

Overall, despite my mediocre results, I had a good time participating in Whipping. I take some solace in seeing that the top three finishers for the tournament as a whole were all on my boards: Jason Mastbaum took the top spot, with Matthew Crill second, and Katie Gray third. When Round 1 was nearing completion, I told Katie I predicted she'd finish fourth, so I call that a rather prescient prognostication. When the three top players in the tournament come from your own boards, at least you know you were defeated by skilled opponents.

Now the only question is: did I do well enough - and enjoy myself enough - to sign up for DixieCon over Memorial Day weekend? Stay tuned.

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## Naming Alliances

By Jonathan Frank

*To name board alliance is not a deep matter -  
It's just color commentary layer'd over the game...*

The advent of coverage of Diplomacy tournaments, with commentary, has brought a renewed interest in nicknames for the various alliances that exist in play. Most alliances have not had universally acknowledged monikers to begin with, so this has largely been an exercise in creation or experimentation – and the quality of the names proposed varies wildly. Let's wander around the board and see what some of them *should* be:

**Russia** and **Turkey** together are the *Juggernaut*. While the derivation may be suspect, the name is a classic, entrenched in the Hobby tradition for generations now, and entirely indicative of its strength if left unchecked.

**England** and **France** have recently been dubbed the *Leviathan*, and this is quite good – the best may not have been English originally, but the nod to Hobbes works out and this provides a nice Western counterpart to the *Juggernaut*.

**Austria** and **Italy**: oppose the *Juggernaut*, but lack a convincing styling of their own. When I was learning to play, I found this referred to as referred to as “the Superpower” – meaning, both opened most successfully if treating their six centers as a single exquisitely tuned machine, six centers being even more than four and a good start towards board domination if potential victims couldn't coordinate themselves, or strong defensively if the *Juggernaut* was on.

But the term seems to have lost cachet; and trying to reference the Holy Roman Empire (in one form of wordplay or another) doesn't, to my mind, quite work out. I quite like the *Superpower*, but if that seems overdone (thanks Hollywood!) I'd go with the *Double Double*. Austria-Hungary was, famously, the Dual Monarchy, and the Italian state at the time period in question was successor to the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies.

If the East breaks down differently, **Russia** and **Italy** may form the *Wintergreen*, which is nearly as cemented in Hobby lore as the *Juggernaut*, though with mainly wordplay to recommend it. **Russia** and **Austria** together are best known as the *A(u)stronaut*, a good name; and while it shows a certain lack of inventiveness, there's nothing wrong with the tradition of calling **Austria** and **Turkey** the *A(u)stroturk*, just to line things up nicely.

A recent appellation which should be rejected labeling Italy and Turkey the *Kraken*. The *kraken* is of course a northern legend: it's certainly fearsome enough but its origins should keep it out of the Mediterranean (it's probably too large to pass the straits, anyway). Let's reserve that one for those two powers with the most direct Viking influence: I mean, of course, that the *Kraken* is a good name for the rarely seen **England-Russia** team-up.

In the meantime, **Italy** and **Turkey** will feel left out if they don't get a nickname, and I'd suggest the *Evergreen*. I'm riffing on the *Wintergreen*, evidently, but students of history may prefer to consider it the “Enver”green – even if the Young Turks weren't actually in power in 1900.

Elsewhere on the board, **Germany** and **Austria's** opening detente is the well-known and appropriate *Anschluss*: supposing it became an active alliance it might need a more imposing signifier, but it almost never does. **Germany** and **Russia** might be the *Triple Eagle* or *Black Bear*. (Which latter, if Russian power predominates, become the *Great Bear*?) **Germany** and **France** are quite well set up as *the Continental*, but I'll acknowledge not everybody finds it as euphonious as I do. The not-uncommon non-aggression between **France** and **Italy** might be the *Trans-Alpine (Pact)*.

As for those who aren't neighbors, we can note here that, while hardly an alliance, **England** and **Turkey** are well known as the *Witches* (as in, *Wicked*, both East and West). And of course, cooperation between **France** and **Turkey** seems unlikely on the board, whatever the historical precedents, but really would be an *Unholy Alliance*. Other improbable partners can be labeled as you see fit.

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## Airstrip One: Better Late Than Never?

By Jon Hills

Hello. And welcome back to Airstrip One.

Fans of this column (if there are any) may recall a piece I wrote some time ago, inspired by the FIFA World Cup Soccer Tournament and which appeared in *DW#142*.

Looking back, I note that England's national team outperformed my prediction by finishing a creditable 4<sup>th</sup> overall. As you'll imagine, this was something of a surprise at the time, although I was completely right to warn against backing them to win the competition outright.

Scrolling on a few years and the Finals of another major football competition – the UEFA European Championships (Euro 2020) – started recently. At the time of publication, the competition is actually just over half-way through.

As with the World Cup in 2018, there are several participating nations whose names and relative positions will be familiar from the Classic *Diplomacy* board. Of the neutral countries Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Holland (more correctly, The Netherlands) and Sweden had all qualified and of the named provinces, Wales, Ukraine, Switzerland and Finland are there too. This is actually Finland's debut appearance in the competition.

In fact, of the 24 teams taking part there are only a handful that the ardent Diplomat might struggle to place on the Classic board. Scotland would be easy enough (Clyde/Edinburgh) and probably Poland too (Warsaw) but the "newer" countries of Croatia, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and North Macedonia might be more difficult. Have a go. I've put the answers at the end.

All eight Great Powers are also present.

Eight, you say? But surely there are only seven?

Well, yes, you're right. I've counted Austria and Hungary separately as both made it through qualifying, just like they did in Euro 2016.

[As an aside, in that 2016 tournament, Austria and Hungary were actually drawn in the same group – the contest starts with eight groups of four teams playing round-robin games, the top two from each group going into a straight knock-out competition. Hungary won their group and so went forward, whereupon they were promptly eliminated. Austria, true to *Diplomacy* lore, was eliminated at that first stage.

This time their roles have reversed. Although drawn in separate groups, only Austria managed to progress; their reward being to face Italy – and immediate elimination (although they did put up a good fight).

In football tournaments, as in *Diplomacy*, it seems that neither country finds it easy to reach the end-game.]

As for England's prospects, well, they topped their group without conceding a goal. As a result, they carry odds of 15/2 to win the whole tournament – actually third-favourites after France and Italy.

However, for the avoidance of any misunderstanding, this still means that if you put £10 on England to win... you'll lose £10!

But enough of all that. I didn't really want to write another piece essentially re-hashing something that I had done before as I firmly believe that you, the discerning *Diplomacy World* reader, deserves better. Instead, I want to draw your attention back to the title of the tournament and to share the Diplomatic rabbit-hole that it sent me down.

Have you noticed the discrepancy, hidden in plain sight?

It's called Euro 2020 – and yet here we are in mid-2021!

So, what's that all about?

Well, as all sports competitions were cancelled at the height of the pandemic, the tournament could not be played at its usual time in June last year. However, such are the levels of sponsorship and financial obligation on all the parties involved, UEFA (European football's governing body) opted to try and wait Covid out rather than simply cancel. As a result - rather like the 2020 Tour of Britain which held its second round in June just gone – the competition was delayed for a whole year.

Of course, this delay has caught out some of the marketers seeking to capitalise off the back of the tournament, especially those doing so not under licence. Whereas the official branding has remained 'Euro 2020' I have seen several promotional campaigns referring to 'Euro 2021'. Who knows, perhaps it's deliberate? It could be one way of avoiding a licensing fee!

Similar obligations also affected the Tokyo Olympics, which are due to start on 23 July 2021. Again, the branding is being kept as the Summer Olympics 2020 – despite the change in date.

Coming back to *Diplomacy*, UEFA's decision got me thinking about delays and, in particular, what effects these have on the game. However, in most *Diplomacy* formats - F2F, vF2F or PBEM - delays do not really feature. Sure, timings can be critical and I can appreciate the difficulties that might be caused either by a player arriving late or a tournament round not starting when planned. Generally, though, the GM or Tournament Director sets the start times and deadlines and if you ain't ready then that's too bad. The pressure is on the player to comply.

However, for the online portion of our hobby, delays are a significant bugbear; specifically, delays in confirming orders – aka “readying up”.

I'm sure you are familiar with the situation: negotiations appear done and the players have entered orders but the game doesn't move to adjudication. Instead, you have to wait until the phase time limit expires and the website game engine automatically processes the orders received.

This isn't a flaw in the code but is simply that one or more of the players has not 'confirmed' their orders. Their order set has remained provisional and so – just like a GM – the server waits until their time is up before calling the result.

In games with a phase-length of perhaps a few days or less, this is no big deal. However, once phase-lengths reach a week or more that avoidable delay can seem very long. This can seem especially so when it is a Retreat or Build phase that is being waited on as these typically do not involve all players.

This seems to generate a great deal of ire from the serried ranks of keyboard warriors that occupy the website forums, who consider what they see as “slow play” as unfair, unnecessary and generally very poor form.

To my mind, this generates two questions; firstly, do they have a point; and, secondly, does it matter?

On that first point, as someone who has gone on record as being broadly in favour of anything that reduces game length, I feel obliged to agree with them.

In a game with weekly turns, one game year could comfortably take at least a month, and probably slightly longer. Five phases - Spring Moves, Spring Retreats, Fall Moves, Fall Retreats & Builds/Disbands – at seven days each is 35 calendar days. A game running to 1912, therefore, will easily take at least a year to complete – without allowing for any formal extensions due to either illness, absence or seeking a replacement player.

Against that time commitment, quibbling about a couple of days lost here and there could be regarded as bordering on the petty. However, cutting just two days on each phase would reduce the overall duration of that same game by almost four months - and that is a significant amount of time.

It therefore seems to me good practice to try and file orders at the earliest practical opportunity. Then, if you are not waiting on any further negotiations to conclude, it seems only polite to confirm them so that the game can continue as soon as possible.

However, I can also appreciate that some negotiations take time and that if a game is advertised with a set phase length, then all players should reasonably expect that this is how long phases may take to resolve.

And this brings me to the second question; does such a delay really matter?

Well, on one hand, no, it doesn't! Ultimately, this is only a game and in terms of occupying your spare time, if someone's tardiness in ticking a button on their computer causes you great angst, then perhaps a fairly long-winded game like *Diplomacy* may not be your best choice.

However, whenever I read comments about “slow players” I can sense the frustration behind them. Such is the immediacy of our internet society; it seems that the skill - or should that be gift - of patience has fallen largely into disuse. To my mind, the best players are those who can practice patience in both their negotiations and their strategy.

Good decisions are not born out of frustration, only poor ones. Poor decisions lead to unsatisfactory outcomes in games, those outcomes give rise to even more frustration - and so repeats the vicious circle.

Instead, by taking time to cultivate relationships with the other players and taking care when choosing orders, I firmly believe that our play becomes more effective – and our playing satisfaction increases.

The other thing about delays is that they create opportunities. The delays to Euro 2020 and the Tokyo Olympics mean that the national squads for the competing nations are comprised quite differently than would have been the case last year. Some team members will have missed out through injury or loss of form and some fresh blood will have forced itself into the

reckoning through training, hard work and improved performances.

So, rather than bemoaning those few days waiting for orders to be resolved, perhaps we should be embracing this extra time – giving us the chance to practice that skill of patience and maybe another opportunity to message that potential ally, to consider whether we are actually making our optimal moves or to double-check that we have not missed something?

Let me know what you think. As usual you can reach me by e-mail at [jon.airstip1@gmail.com](mailto:jon.airstip1@gmail.com)

Otherwise, I'll look forward to reading your rebuttal in the next edition of *Diplomacy World*.

In the meantime, stay safe and - if you haven't already – do make sure you've had your Covid vaccination.

That's one stab that none of us should mind receiving!

Jon

\* Their closest equivalent provinces would be Trieste, Galicia, Bohemia and Greece respectively.

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## Report on 2021 Dixiecon - Virtual Again!

By David Hood

Covid struck again. Just like 2020, we had to cancel the in-person Dixiecon for Memorial Day weekend 2021. Instead, we held the second virtual Dixie, although this time I expanded it to include four days of gaming overall and used the Virtual World Diplomacy Community server of Discord as the primary tech vehicle for the event instead of the mixture of technologies we tried in 2020. Let's talk about what happened.

As many will remember, the 2020 Dixiecon was really the hobby's first attempt at holding a virtual tournament. There had been some individual club or league games played virtually before that, as well as a remote presence by one or more players at an otherwise FTF event in Britain, but not whole tournaments per se. I'm happy to say that Dixiecon 2020 was not the last one either - most of the traditional face to face events switched to virtual format after us, up to and including the Whipping tournament this past April. We also saw the creation of several new virtual events which will continue into the future - the Virtual Diplomacy Championship this coming December, the DBN Invitational next February and the eCarnage Spring Edition being examples. As discussed in the most

recent episode of Deadline News on the YouTube channel of the Diplomacy Broadcast Network, virtual face-to-face really appears to be here to stay.

However, this year's Dixiecon is likely to be the last Dixie conducted in the virtual-only format. Just like a regular Dixie, this 35th annual event featured three rounds of Diplomacy - Friday night, Saturday morning and Sunday morning - with no time limits except for the Sunday round. Tournament results were determined under the Dixiecon scoring system, with a player's best two out of three rounds to count. We also had the usual non-Diplomacy gaming event we call the Iron Man.

One totally new feature - we debuted a Speedboat tournament starting with a round on Thursday night and then three rounds on Friday. This culminated in a top board on Saturday evening, with the entire event ably coordinated by Eber Condrell. For those who don't know, Speedboat is just Gunboat with 5-minute deadlines, played virtually. I think it was pretty successful this year, with multiple boards per round and a lot of interest both from regular Dixiecon folk as well as those who prefer Gunboat/Speedboat to the classic

game. One reason I added this tournament was to see how such a thing would work - going forward, my plan is to have a virtual Speedboat event when we resume live FTF next year. That way, folk who cannot come to Dixiecon live can still participate virtually. For next year's final, my plan is to have a big screen set up for folk to observe the game - likely with some players live and some virtual from who knows where!

To try to approximate some of the social parts of Dixiecon, we did Zoom opening ceremonies for both the SB event and the overall tournament, as well as a virtual BBQ on Saturday live from a local game store in Hickory, NC where some of us were playing a "Mini Dixie" of live board games. There was also, of course, the DBN coverage of Dixiecon that Sunday at the end of which I presented the awards and recapped the event from my TD perspective. You can check out that video on the DBN YouTube or Twitch channels.

Speaking of awards, who won? For the regular Diplomacy tournament, top honors go to Karthik Konath who just edged out second-place finisher Ed Sullivan. Johnny Gillam came in third, with the rest of the top seven being Tim Crosby, Evan Swihart, Tommy Anderson and Morgante Pell. The Speedboat event was won by Claes DeGraaff, with Rick Desper winning the Iron Man. Best Country awards were given to Mikalis Kamaritis (A), Peter McNamara (E), Jaromir Sulja (F), Hal Schild (G), Claude Worrell (I), Evan Swihart (R), and

Karthik Konath (T). Other awards are listed at the Dixiecon website 2021 results page.

Here's the big question going forward - how will the face-to-face events like Dixiecon fare once travel restrictions are lifted? And the corollary - will virtual play of Diplomacy exist once these normally live events go back to being in person? Most of the names above have never been to a live Dixiecon (Claude Worrell being a notable exception.) Many active FTFers are not really into virtual or online play, so although we've been missing them during the pandemic, I think they will be roaring back into FTF beginning with Carnage this November.

We will just have to see, but from my perspective I believe the past year+ of virtual play is likely to be a big net gain for hobby participation. Many of these folks who joined the fun during Covid will become live tournament denizens now that they are "hooked" into the Dip circuit. Virtual play will also continue to be its own thing, and cross pollination will no doubt continue. The links between online extended deadline players and the FTF/virtual FTF players have never been stronger. Diplomacy media has exploded (just take a look at the resources of the Media section of the NADF website.) In short, there has never been a time like this in my 37 years of playing Diplomacy, and I'm excited for all of us.

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## An Interview with Alex Maslow

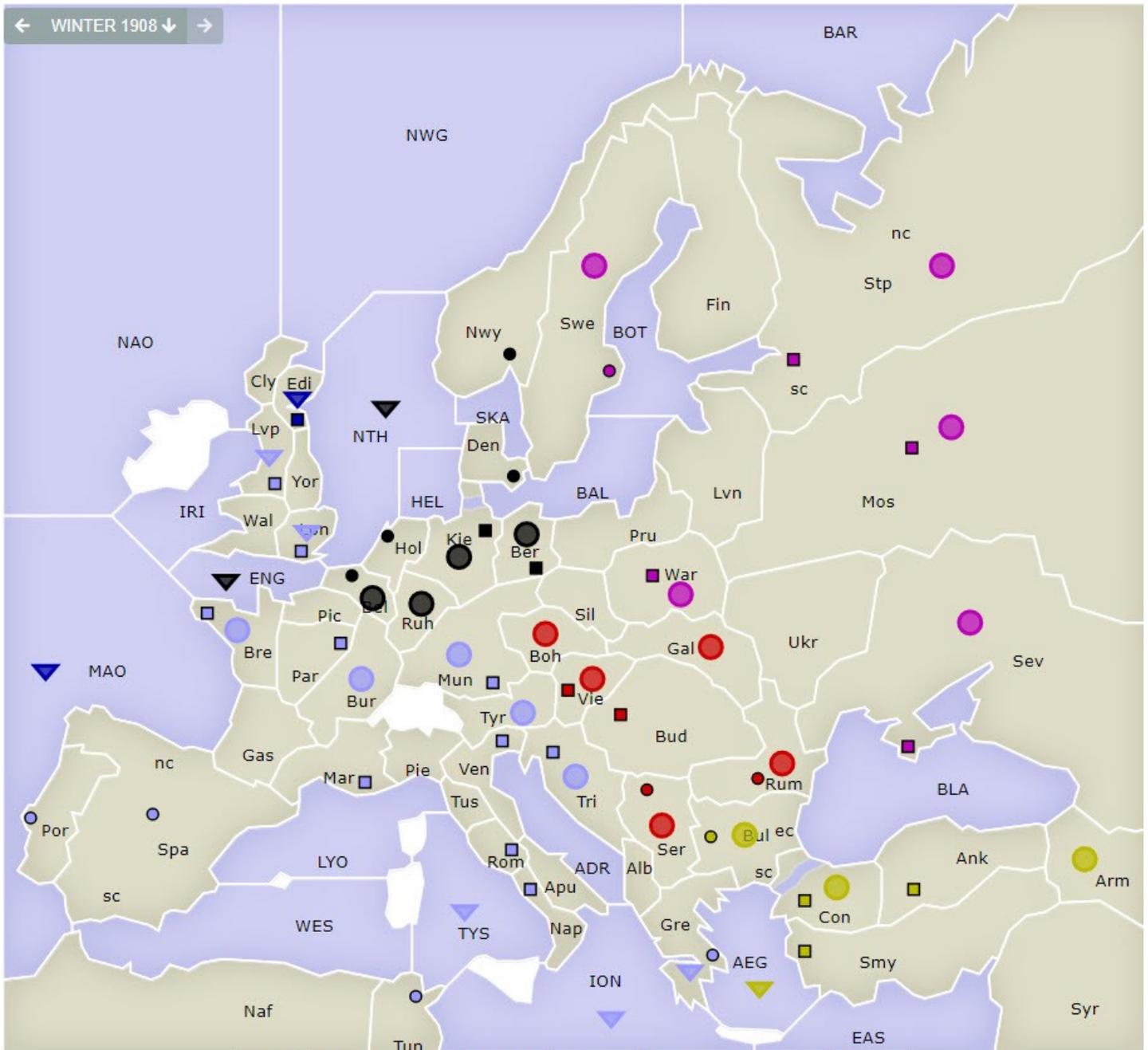
By Randy Lawrence-Hurt

**Randy:** So, how did Boston Massacre 2021 go? Could you tell us about the attendance, some results, any hijinks?

**Alex:** It went smoothly, considering this is my first time running any kind of tournament and I am not a big Discord user. I had a lot of help prepping from Bill Hack and Peter McNamara (assistant TD). Maletsky was also a superb GM for the two rounds he did. Chris Brand's DipTV was also very useful for board seeding. It's a testament to our robust online infrastructure that someone like me can jump in and succeed.

Attendance was good. We had 24 players come, which was lower than our 30+ registration, but it's really easy to get people to sign up for online events and harder to actually get them to show up. But 24 players allowed us to have 3 boards for rounds 2 and 3. We only had one board round 1, which I kind of expected. It began at 4 AM on the US East Coast, which is a wild time to start anything at all, but it lets our friends in the rest of the world have a reasonably timed board.

For results, our one solo is notable in that it was conceded despite the position being easily contestable. Here's the map, it's very far from the guaranteed position I am used to seeing in conceded solos:



Massacre 2021 R3B1 (Winter 1908)

The story, as I understand it, is that someone on the board realized, given she was topping the board, that Farran Jane - France - was going to win the tournament anyway. AND they were frustrated enough with another player that they lobbied other players to concede the solo in order for that player to get ZERO points, an aspect of our scoring system.

The only other hijink was during round 2, the first round I was ever TDing, we had something like 18 players. Having 15 is fine - you just need to persuade one person

to sit and you have 2 boards. Having 20 is fine, you just need to persuade one person to play two games and you have 3 boards. But 18! That's 3 sits or four doubles. Fortunately, we had a few people show up late, and only two players needed to play two boards.

Interestingly, one of them, Ed Sullivan, played Germany and France. His France scored better than his Germany, but his "lesser" Germany ended up winning Best Germany anyway.

**Randy:** A conceded solo, don't see those too often! Was there any discussion or acrimony you heard after the board about that?

**Alex:** Just general astonishment, especially given the actual position. However, if that board had ended as-is, in a draw, Farren still would have won the tourney. If the solo had upended the standings, I would have expected more frustration.

**Randy:** Fair enough, though that raises another question - I think it's pretty rare for a solo not to win the tournament, what scoring system were y'all using?

**Alex:** Detour09. A system of Peter's design. It makes good sense in practice but the calculations are obtuse and very difficult to do in-game if one is looking to maximize scores.

However! Shout out to another Peter, Peter LeBeau, who on his own made an Excel sheet which was able to do the calculations with center counts. He had shared it with me so I distributed it to all the players to even any information asymmetry.

I like how many scoring systems we have in the hobby and I really like how different tournaments have different scoring systems associated with them. At this point some are eponymous: Carnage, Dixie. Weaselmoot uses Sum of Squares. But it can be confusing, especially to new players and especially to anyone who struggles with math. Without some easy calculation available to all players, math-smart people get a bit of an advantage when it comes to squeezing out points. It also lessens players' ability to deceive other players about how the scoring system works. Which for me toes the line between "Everything's fair in love and Diplomacy" and "too far."

**Randy:** I definitely hear that, and my personal preference has always been for simpler scoring systems that allow players to focus on each individual game. But agreed it's definitely valuable to have a variety to choose from. Was there a reason you went with Detour specifically?

**Alex:** Yes; simply put, Peter suggested it. In the past we have used Carnage, or a variation of it. I don't have a particular attachment to that though. I really prefer Sum of Squares. But Peter was doing me a big favor already by running the early round and I figured why not. Plus, I hadn't heard of Detour before and it seemed like a cool chance to see it in action. Also, since it's not a well-known scoring system, it cut out the information advantage tournament veterans may have had if we'd gone with something better known.

**Randy:** Makes sense. I think Detour was used at TempleCon and TotalCon back in the day, when Jim

Burgess ran it, but don't think I've seen it since. Cool to see it dug back up. Did you get any feedback about the scoring system or any other aspects of the tournament that you found helpful, or other new tournament directors might learn from?

**Alex:** Those were some of my first tournaments as a player, so if that's the case NO WONDER I never won. It's a hard scoring system to understand if you're not used to even the idea of tournament scoring.

I haven't really gotten any negative or constructive feedback at all, which is surprising I suppose, but also comforting. Again, if a discord newb like me can succeed, anyone who wants to be a TD can succeed. One thing I'd like to stress is I was very open with the players how likely I was to make a mistake. That probably made them more understanding when issues came up, because I didn't present myself as some old pro. I had joked there was a betting pool on taking the over/under on if I'd make 5 mistakes during the tournament. I ended up making that many just in round 2! I was also communicative with the rest of the TD community about where I would need help. I took time to chat with them about what I needed to learn. I would have had a much harder time if I had tried to front competencies I don't have.

So, my advice to new TDs is this: Expect to make mistakes the first time you run a tournament. Diplomacy is a game where our egos can get involved, and I can imagine that could happen with TDing as well. But while in a game your ego will really only wreck your own chances - and maybe your whole board if you're upset enough - your ego in TDing can ruin the whole experience for everyone. Be gracious when people call you out on mistakes. Expect people to come to you with a level of frustration. If it was an easily solvable problem, they probably would have figured it out already. Focus on providing a good experience for everyone, instead of making yourself look good. If you have a tournament where everyone has a good time that glow will spread to you, personally. But that can't be your priority.

**Randy:** Excellent advice, can definitely relate, having certainly made my share of mistakes when TDing. Do you expect to run Massacre next year, and any thoughts on what might be different/the same?

**Alex:** I do. I hope it will be in person.

**Randy:** I think we all hope in-person tournaments will return soon! Thanks for your time, Alex, and congrats on running your first tournament!

**Alex:** You're welcome, thanks for having me on.

# Diplomacy World Demo Game “Dirty Rotten Scoundrels” – 2019A

## The Players:

**Austria:** Brad Wilson  
**England:** Vick Hall  
**France:** Steve Cooley  
**Germany:** Dick Martin  
**Italy:** Lance Anderson  
**Russia:** Steve Nicewarner  
**Turkey:** Stephen Agar

## The Commentators:

David Hood - Rick Desper - Jack McHugh

Spring 1907



**Austria:** A Moscow Supports A Warsaw.

**England:** F Baltic Sea – Kiel, F Barents Sea Supports A St Petersburg, A Berlin – Prussia, F Gulf of Bothnia - Baltic Sea, A Livonia Supports A Warsaw, A London – Denmark, F North Atlantic Ocean – Liverpool, F North Sea Convoys A London – Denmark, A St Petersburg Supports A Moscow.

**France:** A Burgundy Supports A Munich, F Gulf of Lyon - Western Mediterranean (\*Bounce\*), A Holland – Belgium, A Marseilles - Piedmont (\*Fails\*), F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - Western Mediterranean (\*Bounce\*), A Munich Supports A Silesia, F North Africa Supports F Tunis, A Silesia Supports A Warsaw, F Tunis Hold.

**Germany:** A Warsaw Supports A Moscow.

**Italy:** A Piedmont Supports A Tuscany (\*Cut\*), F Rome Supports F Tyrrhenian Sea, A Trieste Hold,

A Tuscany Supports A Piedmont, A Tyrolia Supports A Bohemia.

**Russia:** A Sevastopol Supports A Ukraine, A Ukraine Supports A Galicia, A Vienna Supports A Galicia.

**Turkey:** F Aegean Sea Supports F Ionian Sea, A Bohemia Supports A Galicia, A Galicia Supports A Bohemia, F Ionian Sea Supports F Tyrrhenian Sea, A Rumania Supports A Galicia, F Tyrrhenian Sea Hold.

**The 7-way draw fails  
Now Proposed: 7-way Draw, Concession to Turkey  
Please vote, NVR=No**

### PRESS

**Queen Vick to the Sultana:** We are not amused! Well actually the sight of the Sultana up in arms is quite amusing. If only he had been more talkative when our diplomats first arrived at the Topkapi Palace all those years ago, but sadly it seems they were thrown into the old water cisterns beneath the city never to be seen or heard from. Such a waste. The Sultana had long wished to see Rome subjugated as part of her Caliphate, but these dreams now look well and truly dashed. Ah well it seems England is content with its new Empire stretching

from olde London to the snowy wastes of St. Pete. At least those unruly Vikings in Scandinavia have been civilised.

**dateline warsaw:** if turkey, the only player with a realistic shot at 18 centers, wants the win he may have to earn it the hard way. i don't think england and france are silly enough to go to war and allow this, but i've been wrong a time or two in the past.... vote for the draw now and save yourselves from my future press releases!

### Spring 1907 Commentary:

David Hood  
Rick Desper  
Jack McHugh

Honestly, still nothing to talk about here.

**would risk a Turkish solo. Given that Turkey only has 6 SCs, that's a risk worth taking.**

**I haven't seen anybody make a significant move in a while. England could stab France and go for a much larger position. Somebody is claiming that doing so**

**Problem is that, once a game has stagnated this fully, it's very hard to get people moving again.**

### Fall 1907

**Austria:** A Moscow Supports A Warsaw.

**England:** F Baltic Sea - Berlin (\*Bounce\*), F Barents Sea Supports A St Petersburg, A Denmark - Kiel (\*Fails\*), F Kiel - Berlin (\*Bounce\*), F Liverpool – Wales, A Livonia Supports A Warsaw, F North Sea Hold, A Prussia Supports A Livonia, A St Petersburg Supports A Moscow.

**France:** A Belgium – Holland, A Burgundy Supports A Munich, F Gulf of Lyon - Tyrrhenian Sea (\*Fails\*), A Marseilles - Piedmont (\*Fails\*), F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - Western Mediterranean, A Munich Supports A Silesia, F North Africa Supports F Tunis, A Silesia Supports A Warsaw, F Tunis Hold.

**Germany:** A Warsaw Supports A Moscow.

**Italy:** A Piedmont Supports A Tuscany (\*Cut\*), F Rome Supports F Tyrrhenian Sea, A Trieste Hold, A Tuscany Supports A Piedmont, A Tyrolia Supports A Bohemia.

**Russia:** A Sevastopol Supports A Ukraine, A Ukraine Supports A Galicia, A Vienna Supports A Galicia.

**Turkey:** F Aegean Sea Supports F Ionian Sea, A Bohemia Supports A Galicia, A Galicia Supports A Bohemia, F Ionian Sea Supports F Tyrrhenian Sea, A Rumania Supports A Galicia, F Tyrrhenian Sea Hold.

**All Proposals Fail  
Now Proposed: 7-way Draw  
Please vote, NVR=No**



### Supply Center Chart

Austria:	Moscow=1	Even
England:	Berlin, Denmark, Edinburgh, Kiel, Liverpool, London, Norway, St Petersburg, Sweden=9	Even
France:	Belgium, Brest, Holland, Marseilles, Munich, Paris, Portugal, Spain, Tunis=9	Even
Germany:	Warsaw=1	Even
Italy:	Greece, Rome, Serbia, Trieste, Venice=5	Even
Russia:	Budapest, Sevastopol, Vienna=3	Even
Turkey:	Ankara, Bulgaria, Constantinople, Naples, Rumania, Smyrna=6	Even

### PRESS

**CROWN PRINCE RUDOLF:** Dammit, left my wonder closet in Bohemia ... could use it now.

Don't forget to submit your orders each turn - it would be terrible if the Entente Miserable were to prosper from an accidental NMR!

**dateline warsaw:** i suspect the end is near...for me if not for you!

Let's prove we have more stamina than them! We won't fight them on the beaches... because we don't need to!

**To:** Other members of the Grand Alliance

### Fall 1907 Commentary:

David Hood  
**Rick Desper**  
 Jack McHugh

Honestly, guys, still nothing to see here in Fall 07. Just Cooley redeploying fleet into the Western Med. Let's see what 1908 brings us, if anything...

This game is making the real WWI look like Blitzkrieg on amphetamines. Other the ponderous French navy which is finally sailing into the Med to try and break the stalemate with the Ottomans over Tys--there is nothing going on.

I've also never seen a game where two one center powers are both still in the game this long.

I will add that the Eastern Alliance is sitting on a mini-stalemate line and are writing orders that ensure the Westies cannot take any provinces from them.

This is the line:

Sev S Ukr  
Rum S Gal  
Vie S Boh  
Tri S Tyrol (the support isn't necessary, but blocking Tyrolia is) Tus S Pie Rom, Ion S TyS

It should be noted that this is a minority stalemate line. It's supported by 14 SCs and only needs 12 units to hold. (Army Trieste and F Aegean are writing supports but they don't need to.)

The Westies cannot break this line. They could, however, rearrange their own SC ownership. If, for example, either France or England wanted to throw the game to the other one, they might be able to pull it off. But I don't think that'll happen.

I think this game is done.

No Winter 1907 Turn Needed

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## Selected Upcoming Conventions

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

Anjou Feu XII – July 10<sup>th</sup> – July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021 - Bellevigne-en-Layon, Maine-et-Loire, France – [https://tdfdiplo.fandom.com/fr/wiki/Anjou\\_Feu\\_XII](https://tdfdiplo.fandom.com/fr/wiki/Anjou_Feu_XII)

vWDC Summer Classic – July 23<sup>rd</sup> – July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – Online - <https://discord.gg/jbdZtRFMTA>

Euro DipCon XXIX – August 27<sup>th</sup> – August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – Hotel Palace, San Marino - <http://www.sanmarinogame.com/>

World Boardgame Championships Diplomacy Tournament – Scheduled to begin September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 – Details at <https://bpadiplomacy.weebly.com/> - Signup by emailing GM Kevin Youells at [kevinyouells@gmail.com](mailto:kevinyouells@gmail.com) before August 28<sup>th</sup>.

**A lot of upcoming events have been cancelled or postponed due to the pandemic; be sure to contact organizers for the latest updates**