

Diplomacy



World



Issue #121 - Spring 2013
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Notes from the Editor

Welcome to the latest issue of **Diplomacy World**, the Spring 2013 issue. This is one of the more melancholy columns I've had to write, but it seems that we're encountering this issue more frequently as the first generation of Diplomacy players reach advanced age.

Many of you have probably heard, but just to make it official, Allan Calhmer – the inventor of Diplomacy – passed away on February 25th at the age of 81.

I never met Mr. Calhmer personally. But his creation, simple on the surface but so special in its design, has touched tens of thousands of lives and continues to do so. Through "The Game" and the hobby which grew around it, lifelong friendships have been born, marriages developed, and hundreds of thousands of pages have been written. Local clubs, postal and email play, classroom education; they all owe their formation and continued existence to the legacy Mr. Calhmer left behind. Elsewhere in this issue you will find articles and quotes about the man and the game he invented. I'll let those speak for themselves. Suffice to say that the man will be missed, but The Game will live on.

And, as the game lives on, so will **Diplomacy World**, so onward we go.

Our Staff position of **Club and Tournament Editor** is once again vacant, and we are actively looking for a new one. This is a very important position in Diplomacy World, because we think it is critical to maintain a sufficient level of face-to-face and tournament coverage. So as the Club and Tournament Editor, not only would we ask that you write at least one article yourself every issue (which means every three months), but you should also encourage (and recruit) other face-to-face Diplomacy players to submit material. The ideal candidate would be someone who travels to the larger Diplomacy events. Someone who attends the biggest European events would be a major bonus (and remember you don't have to be an American to hold the post; a European who travels to some of the U.S. tournaments would be just as well-suited, or even better suited). You would also have access to the Diplomacy World Blog in order to post results, reminders, and any other short reports you think are timely and newsworthy.

Interested in giving it a try? Email me at diplomacyworld@yahoo.com and let's discuss it! In the meantime, if you fit the description, don't be surprised if I send you an email about the post directly before you

send one to me. Remember, as I mentioned, we are actively looking for the right candidate to fill the vacancy! In this case, active includes being **proactive**.

So what else do we have for you in this issue? Well, let's see. Jim Burgess has a fun time reviewing the great Lewis Pulsipher's book **Game Design: How to Create Video and Tabletop Games, Start to Finish**. The timing of the review seems quite appropriate given the passing of Mr. Calhmer.

We also have an article by W.H. Seward, which was written as a response to a previous article by our S&T Editor Joshua Danker-Dake. This sort of back and forth is one thing I love, and something I'd love to see more of in Diplomacy World. If you read an article and disagree with the points it makes - agree but think you have more to add – sometimes instead of a short Letter to the Editor, you should consider an article of your own.

I should also point out that Heath Gardner, our new Interview Editor, introduces himself by interviewing Andy Hull. Be sure you all write in and mention how great it was, so he will be encouraged to keep it up. There's also the first game year of our new Demo Game, and plenty of other material just as awesome but too numerous to list here. That's what the Table of Contents is for!

Really, writing for **Diplomacy World** is not difficult. You write what you want to say (in Word format preferably but not exclusively) and email it to me. If you're really nervous about the topic of the piece, email me first so we can talk about it. Then on our end we edit it, and on occasion we send it back to ask that you write more in a particular section or to expand the article to cover an angle you've missed. That's really all there is to it. If you look through this issue you'll see some articles are quite long, but other are less than a page long before we add artwork. So don't be intimidated. Come join the decades or hobby bigwigs who have seen their name – and their word – in print in **Diplomacy World**.

I'll close by reminding you the next deadline for Diplomacy World submissions is July 1st, 2013.

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

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

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Knives and Daggers - The Diplomacy World Letter Column

Thoughts from Diplomacy Hobby Members Upon the Passing of Allan B. Calhamer, the Founder of "The Game"

Commentary by Jim Burgess *((We are sending this issue of Diplomacy World to Allan B. Calhamer's wife Hilda and daughters Sellenne and Tatiana, we thank everyone for their contributions))*

Ulrich Degwitz - The NYT obituary notice for Allan B. Calhamer, was released today (http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/07/us/allan-calhamer-inventor-diplomacy-board-game-dies-at-81.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0) Not too much honour for a great game inventor. *((From 2006-2010, Ulrich attended 14 FTF tournaments in Europe, almost all of the major events held in Europe over that period and helped to build up the German Diplomacy hobby.))*

Steve Emmert - As you learned here last week, Diplomacy inventor Allan Calhamer died last week at 81. I had the good fortune to meet Mr. Calhamer once, when he appeared as a World DipCon several years ago. I was very pleased to have the opportunity to thank him for giving me so much pleasure over the years, and for creating a priceless reservoir of solid friendships for me. As I've mused before, one of the wonderful ironies of this game is the fact that a game that legitimizes deceit and treachery can nevertheless create lasting friendships of profound depth.

He received my expression of thanks warmly and with a smile of what I took to be genuine gratitude. I'll treasure that memory for a long time, even as I continue to enjoy the fruits of his labor. *((Known as the Benevolent Dictator, Steve is the current elected leader of the Academy of Creative Destruction, an invitation only Diplomacy playing club of players committed to play in the style of the Creator, Steve also is one of those highly successful attorneys who loves Diplomacy.))*

Will J. Abbott - I had mentioned the possibility of publishing comments on the passing of Allan Calhamer on the way to the train station, as I recall. Another of the early figures of the hobby-- in this case literally the founder-- has passed. I wonder how many of the young players online will hear of his passing? I myself regrettably joined the hobby at a time when several figures are passing from the stage.

The postal part of the hobby (and it is a part, not a separate hobby. There are people who cross over (between face to face, postal, and internet Diplomacy) who may be the hobby's past, rather than the its cutting edge. Nonetheless, the hobby's past is and remains important. We stand on the work done by those who diplomed before us. The work done on openings, strategy, tactics, stalemate lines, variants, alliance play, and stabs remains with us, and becomes a shorthand

we can all understand. Imagine how much easier it is for Italy to say to Austria, "Do you want to do a Lepanto" than to outline three or four turns of moves?

This is why things like the Hoosier Archives (at Bowling Green University) and Doug's own Postal Diplomacy Zine Archive are so valuable. Even if few players want to read through it all, making the history available renders a wonderful service by allowing us contemporary players to find out where the ideas we use in our games today came from. *((After I first met Will Abbott in February 2013 as he came to TempleCon in Providence, RI, he mentioned the idea of doing a column of these comments in this issue of Diplomacy World, so is one of the people to thank for this effort. Will has been a subscriber to my postal Diplomacy szine since the 1990's))*

Paul Rauterberg - I had the honor of meeting, and playing a FTF Dip game, with Alan back at Andy Lischett's place in 1973. I was a newcomer in the hobby, and did not fully appreciate that I was playing a game with its inventor, and with Walt Buchanan, an early postal zine giant. Why I was invited to the confluence of titans escapes me, but I won't forget it. *((Back in the early 1980's, Paul ran what is considered to be the first Anonymous Postal Diplomacy game, an incredibly time consuming effort at the time that required that Paul retype and re-mail via post all the communications between players. This evolved on the Internet to the highly popular, if somewhat lamented by some of us (see Lew Pulsipher's comments on this immediately following), Gunboat Anonymous games. As noted Paul's been "at" this game for more than 40 years.))*

Lewis Pulsipher - I remember being at DipCons with Allan Calhamer though I'm not sure I ever spoke with him. He was certainly an unusual man. His mind ran in lines of what I can only call originality that you just didn't see from other people.

What's really interesting in his legacy is that there are no games much like Diplomacy other than diplomacy variants.

There are three categories of game players fall into:
"all games are math"
"games are all about people"
"games are about stories"

Diplomacy falls very much in the people category, but that's a category in boardgames that seems to be disappearing. Eurostyle games tend to be interactive puzzles, games where you aren't at a disadvantage if you talk with no one. Diplomacy is the epitome of a game where you must talk with everyone or be at a disadvantage. Another game that's very much about people, which I confess I've never cared to play oddly enough, is poker. Perhaps because, though you need to read people, you don't need to say *have to* say much of anything in order to keep up with the others.

Most video games require no talking with other players - if there are other players. Perhaps with the move to squash competition in schools, and a general lack of confidence amongst young people (who are told they're special but don't ever have to earn it), people are afraid to play multi-sided, highly interactive, competitive games.

At PrezCon in Charlottesville a few weeks ago I watched some of the multi-sided tournament games, including finals, such as A Game of Thrones the Boardgame, History of the World, and Risk. In none of those games was there really much negotiation at all. I think the key of Allan Calhamer's game is that he encouraged negotiation and set aside time for secret negotiation amongst the players. This made it a very long game face to face but made it very different from other multi-sided conflict games. First of all, it's almost impossible to have long-term alliances and close cooperation between players when all the communication can be heard by all the players over the table. Second, many games don't actually have a way for one player to help another: they can both say they're going to attack a third player or both defend against a third player but there's nothing like the support mechanism that enables them to actively help one another. Part of that is because we use simultaneous movement, although game of thrones the boardgame, which some people call it Diplomacy variants although I don't, does have the support mechanism amongst its options. Without a method of communicating when the other players cannot listen, Game of Thrones Boardgame becomes a bump and grind game that is pretty dull for everyone.

I was surprised at the Risk final that there was hardly any discussion of alliances or cooperation, being almost entirely limited to "I won't attack you here if you don't attack me there". There's an entire book about Risk, called Total Diplomacy oddly enough, which discusses negotiations at great length. But when I watch people play risk in tournaments there's almost no negotiation.

History of the World is a highly chaotic game, and one that also lends itself very little to long-term alliances because you have no idea which nations you're going to be playing, and because there is no mechanism for

actually cooperating or enabling the forces of two players to act in concert.

I've devised a token passing method that lets players communicate with tokens so that other players don't know what they are discussing, but of course that wouldn't be used in Diplomacy because there are secret negotiations; but it might help a lot in game of thrones the boardgame or Risk. I'll write a separate article about this after I test it out with some of my games that are being playtested at the NC State tabletop gamers club.

I am "morally certain" that there are other games that rely on secret negotiation, but I can't think of any at the moment. The big problem with secret negotiation is that it takes a long time. So games with secret negotiation are more suitable to online play asynchronously, as with postal Diplomacy or Diplomacy with judges. What has always puzzled me immensely, is that so many Diplomacy players seem to like to play "Gunboat" Diplomacy where there are no negotiations. That's the opposite of what the game is about, because it turns into a game that's more math than a game that's about people. (*Lew Pulsipher has published a number of books on game design, including the new book I review elsewhere in this issue, he also is the inventor of Britannia and numerous Diplomacy variants. He also teaches video and game design and has a Ph.D. in Military and Diplomatic History from Duke University*)

Dan Mathias - I only met Allan twice. I found him to be extremely personable and gracious.

His invention, Diplomacy, has had an influence in my life for over 40 years. I cannot imagine what my life would have been like without its impact, direction, and the numerous friends and adventures that were the result of it.

Thank you, Allan, for the impact you have had on so many, and the enrichment you brought to us all. (*Dan Mathias is a well-known Diplomacy FTF Tournament Director over many decades at Origins, the World Boardgaming Council, and elsewhere, he also has attended more than 60 Diplomacy tournaments while playing Diplomacy for more than 40 years.*)

Toby Harris - Allan Calhamer died today, aged 81. Very sad news. He came to WDC1 in Birmingham 1988, spoke a few words about the history of the game and covered some early strategies. Then he walked around looking at all the boards in the tournament as they took shape. It was at this point Dennis Jones piped up "who's the guy with the beard?"

So I would rather look back at the only time I ever saw Allan Calhamer with a smile, than with sadness. His creation, Diplomacy, has affected all our lives in some way, helped us meet new friends and given us some

great moments to look back on. *((Toby Harris is one of the hobby's greatest all-time players (he falls on my top all-time seven player board) and is from the UK, he also has attended more than 60 Diplomacy tournaments over the years.))*

Bernard Andrioli - I spoke to Mr. Calhamer's daughter Sellenne at last WDC and she did mention that she used to play the game and liked it, although I don't remember if she said anything about participating in any tournaments. Her name doesn't come up in the World Diplomacy Database anyway. Told her that I have often wondered why a game that involves sweet-talking, lying, manipulating, gossiping and backstabbing doesn't appeal to women more. She agreed. *((Bernard is a relative newcomer to the world-globe trotting FTF Diplomacy tournament crowd, but came all the way to Chicago from Europe for the 2012 World DipCon, where I met him. Bernard is one of the new up-and-coming generation of players.))*

Grant Steel - I was fortunate enough to meet Allan in Chicago last year. The standing ovation that he received when he entered the room is a lasting memory for me. Thanks to Allan and his game of Diplomacy I have been lucky enough to meet some amazing people and travel around the world.

RIP Allan Calhamer *((Grant Steel is from New Zealand and has played in over 40 tournaments over the last fifteen years or so, recently traveling to the US for the 2012 World DipCon.))*

Richard Weiss - I had the great joy of meeting Allan twice and playing with him once. I will treasure those memories, including discussions as to his views in general and more so, relative to the game he created. *((Richard has been active in the Diplomacy hobby for more than 20 years, and like many Diplomacy players is also professionally successful as a physician and health system manager.))*

Conrad von Metzke - I hardly ever knew the guy, but still; sad. He created one hell of a large part of my personal pleasure for over 50 years now. He will be much remembered. *((Conrad von Metzke has been part of the Diplomacy hobby since "the beginning". He's published innumerable issues of his postal zine Costaguana and has a renown impish sense of humor. Like many Diplomacy hobby stalwarts, including Allan himself, Conrad spent a career in the US Postal Service and has been a classical music singer, you have to hear him doing Schubert lieder...))*

Julian Ziesing - Really sad to hear. He will not be forgotten. *((Julian has been one of the leaders of the German hobby and has played in dozens of tournaments over the last decade, mostly in Germany, he reminds us*

at this time what a world-wide hobby Diplomacy has become.))

Bill Coffin - I have been a fan of Diplomacy for many years, and a few years ago, Allan Calhamer was kind enough to grant me an interview over the phone, in which he talked about inventing the game, his early thoughts on it and much more. Allan was very generous with his time, and I always have thought fondly of that conversation with him.

I was deeply saddened to hear of Allan Calhamer's recent passing. I had the pleasure of interviewing Alan for the 100th issue of Diplomacy World, and he was a delightful man to talk to. Even then, he seemed a little surprised that his game would mean so much to so many. For him, I think, Diplomacy was a labor of love that bordered on near-obsession with game balance and play - Should Russia start with three centers or four? Should Italy start with a fleet in Rome? He just wanted folks to have as much fun with it as he did, and I don't think he ever expected the game to become such a phenomenon. I was interested to see in his obituary in the Telegraph that he was considered too nice to excel at a game that celebrates (and necessitates) treachery. Hogwash! Alan cheerfully told me stories of how, in the game's early days, he would steal and dispose of other players' orders right before a turn processed so they would get stuck with DNRs. That takes a special kind of brilliance/bastardy, and one that only a guy like Alan could have employed to make a game that so many of us love so well. *((Right you are, one of the things about the The Game that is very cool is its openness, and containment within the game, of such "ethics". Bill Coffin has built a beautiful Tabletop board of Diplomacy that we have written about in Diplomacy World before (see Issue #106) as well as conducting the in-depth interview with Allan Calhamer he notes that appeared in Issue #100.))*

Bruce Linsey - What a shame. Allan will be greatly missed by so many people. *((Bruce Linsey runs a gaming company and published the Diplomacy zine Voice of Doom for many years.))*

David Grabar - I am so sorry to hear that. I have found memories of playing Diplomacy by mail with Allan. *((Dave Grabar has been a hobby personality for at least thirty years and appears at a FTF tournament like clockwork about once a decade.))*

Edi Birsan - The inventor of Diplomacy Allan B. Calhamer passed away today. His creation was a major impact on my life and he was a friend. I celebrate his life and design with the fondness and longing that there was not more time together. *((Currently Edi Birsan is experiencing a new career as a successful local politician – I know I wouldn't want to be negotiating with him at a City Council meeting – and is one of the greatest players in the history of the hobby. In recent*

years, he also has been the primary contact between the Diplomacy hobby and Hasbro/Wizards of the Coast.)

David Cohen - I never met him, just corresponded a few times. Still, my life would certainly not have been the same without Allan Calhamer. It was a nice coincidence that the Dipcon was so close to where he lived. I heard that he received a long ovation when he was introduced. I know that I sure as hell would have stood and clapped a good long time.

There is a tradition in the Jewish religion that when someone visits a grave, a pebble is placed on the gravestone, to signify that someone who cared about the deceased had visited. A year from now, if I visited Calhamer's grave, it would not surprise me at all to see a whole bunch of Diplomacy pieces sitting there. *((David is another of the hobby's successful professional attorneys, and also is one of the organizers of the Academy of Creative Destruction and a diplomacy map variant designer.))*

Harvey Morris - What do I say about the passing of someone I never met, and whose name I barely recognize? Only that his creative genius has provided me with decades of pleasure - intellectual stimulation, emotional highs and lows, mind-stretching concentration, grandiose plans, disappointing defeats, nail-biting anticipations, cathartic furies, and a magnificent venue for meeting and interacting with hundreds of fascinating fellow-players from around the globe.

Had he passed me on the street, I would have not have recognized him.

Had he not added so much to my life, I would be very much the poorer.

What do I say? Simply and sincerely - "Thank You." *((Harvey is one of the experts in the psychological side of the game of Diplomacy, may you never (or maybe always?) have the experience of being sliced and diced by his deep mental and psychological grasp of this great game.))*

Cal White - I met Allan at a DipCon many years ago and I was dying to ask him two questions that I thought to be of great importance at the time. He answered both of them and it has enabled me to win a few bar-type bets at future conventions.

The first question concerned whether or not it was possible to build a fleet in Moscow (south coast). He looked surprised at the question, but admitted that it was indeed possible. It could then move to Sev and then Arm, but that was it.

The second question concerned the wooden blocks that came with the original Games Research Inc set. I

wanted to know if he played with the armies standing up or laying down flat (for background on this earth shattering question, see the articles "Do Yours Stand Erect?" and "Do Yours Hang Limp?" which originally appeared in my zine Janus and were reprinted in Diplomacy World years later).

Again, Allan confirmed that he did indeed play with his erect (as it were) and I have won a few beer over the years with these two answers...

Never got to know him very well on a personal level as that was the only time I met him, but he will be missed. My heart goes out to his family and friends. *((Cal White is one of our many, many decades Canadian Diplomacy players, we haven't seen so much of him lately, but I also proudly own an original Games Research Inc. set that I learned on in the late 1960's))*

Heath Gardner - I never met or corresponded with Mr. Calhamer, and others that knew him can eulogize him far better than I can.

All I can say is sometimes something -- a film, a show, a game -- is so wonderfully produced that it creates a cadre of what they call "cult fans". I don't like that terminology too much, because what it really means is we're close. We are all fanatics about the same thing, and that forges great friendships that last decades.

Mr. Calhamer attained that rare achievement of producing something truly new when he invented Diplomacy. I am grateful that I discovered the game in my young teens, when I needed it most. I'm sure others will know what I mean by that.

And I am grateful for the example of creativity and innovation set by the creator of this game. The sort of thing I can only hope to achieve in my life -- it's an inspiration.

Rest in peace. *((Heath Gardner is the new Interview Editor for Diplomacy World and is a free-lance writer and copyeditor. As he notes, he discovered Diplomacy and postal hobby in his teens, backed away from it for a while, but now seems to be everywhere and we are glad he is.))*

Walt Buchanan - My best recollection of Allan was visiting him at his home sometime in the mid-70s. I remember him as a kindly person and of course I was in awe of him as the inventor of our beloved game. *((Walt was the originating editor of Diplomacy World and another of the doctorally trained professors who loves this game. Walt is highly renown in his field of engineering technology.))*

Patrick Lafontaine - I didn't know Allan but for his game, and I owe him so much for that map of Europe

and those colored wooden shapes... I started playing Dip in my High School years, and it was first in French (in zines "Mach die Spuhl" and "Plié en Deux"), then in English. I became quite fond of this game, although I never managed to get a clear solo win in postal Dip. I had the chance to be a part of the editing team for Dipsomania, maybe the only Diplomacy zine published in two separate editions (although identical in content), one in French, the other in English, where lots of variants were played.

I thank Allan for the opportunity his wonderful game gave me to play with players from around the world, from my little Belgium to UK, USA, France, Switzerland, New-Zealand and many others! To play with the frontiers (and the blunt and aggressive crossing of these borders ;-)) of Europe (and many others in variants) help me discover the World from a fresh and always enlightening point of view. *((Patrick has been at this game for 30 years, and we all have appreciated, no matter how large or small the country we come from, the opportunities to meet people from around the world at this game.))*

Rob Stephenson - have to thank Allan and his family for the game he created. The first time I played it I was hooked. The more I played it the more I learnt not just about the game but life and people. It is thanks to Allan that I met so many wonderful people throughout the world. Without his game I would probably never have left the Southern Hemisphere and yet I travelled all the way to Canada to meet friends I had never seen. I was welcomed with open arms and friendly smiling faces. It is a great testament to the man that a whole group of people come together all over the world to share in a collective experience that will bring you the highest of highs and lowest of lows. RIP my friend. *((As noted, Rob Stephenson is from Down Under, more specifically Melbourne, Australia. He has played in over 60 tournaments over two decades and has won at least 14 tournament trophies, including the 2002 World DipCon, and has won the Bismark Cup for play Down Under three times.))*

Fred Davis - Allan Calhamer's invention of "Diplomacy" has been the Love of my Life, after my wife, of course, since about 50 years now. *((Inge Davis obtained Fred's comments for us, for which we thank her dearly.))* I took to it like a duck o water, and considered Allan a genius for developing this great game of "Diplomacy".

I've had the pleasure of meeting him at Diplomacy Tournaments at least 3 times, where he acted as Umpire in charge on occasions. One of these tournaments we both attended was in London, England, which is a favorite memory of mine.

I was impressed by his keen intelligence and congeniality. The love of the game forged an instant

bond. Allan was not interested in Variants, which was my strong point, but he was very polite about it.

His Christmas cards were always home made, each year a different intricate design of a huge snowflake. I'll miss those. His passing is a great loss to the gaming hobby and all of us who had the privilege of knowing him. *((Fred Davis himself has been a stalwart part of the Diplomacy hobby for many decades, was the leader for many years of a MENSA Diplomacy group, and I too treasure my home made Christmas cards from Allan with the beautiful snowflake designs.))*

Dirk Knemeyer - Diplomacy is a keystone in modern tabletop gaming, designed in parallel with Charles S. Roberts' more celebrated - at least from a historical perspective - Tactics. However, Tactics' enduring reputation is thanks to its designer creating the legendary Avalon Hill Game Company, a beloved icon and important force in 20th century gaming. Yet, while Tactics as a game has been irrelevant and essentially unplayed for decades, Diplomacy has endured. With active international communities, played by famous real-life diplomatic leaders, and sharing a space in the gaming landscape with timeless classics like Chess and Go, Diplomacy is one of the most important games ever designed.

In the wake of Allan Calhamer's death my co-host, Jon Shafer, and I wanted to have a show focused on Allan's masterpiece. Our show, The Game Design Round Table, caters to game designers of both tabletop and digital. We invited my friend and veteran Diplomacy player and community organizer Jim Burgess to talk with us about Allan and the game. To listen, please visit:

<http://thegamedesignroundtable.com/2013/03/22/episode-19-diplomacy-allan-calhamer-with-jim-burgess/>

((Thanks, Dirk, I enjoyed doing the interview, and more of my comments than I could include here can be found there. Dirk himself is one of the top Diplomacy players at the diplomaticcorp web site (www.diplomaticcorp.com).))

Harley Jordan - I guess I played my first Diplomacy game around 1960, when I was in college at MIT. That would make about 53 years that I have enjoyed the hobby, and besides the pleasure, Allan and his game have taught me a lot about negotiating and the philosophy of relationships in general.

I have played by snail mail with John Boardman since the 60's, and at small gatherings, and at large tournaments with the MOW (Michigan Organized Wargamers), and by Email. I was Gamesmaster at a couple of MOW tournaments with over 70 Diplomacy players each (In Ann Arbor and in Detroit) and Allan attended one of them

Through his game he taught me that the quick doublecross for short term gain is the fastest way to alienate both players, and colleagues in real life. Success more often follows from the buildup of trust through honesty and sharing benefits for all partners in the enterprise.

I have a treasured game board permanently set up in my basement with this autograph:

6/7/80

To Harley Jordan with Best Regards
Allan B. Calhmer
Inventor of Diplomacy

((As Harley notes, he is one of the original players of the game, and we're glad to have him back as a more active player in recent years.))

Stephen Agar - Allan and I corresponded for a few years and we certainly stayed on each other's Christmas card list for quite a while. He was good enough to send me some early newspaper clippings about the very early days of Diplomacy. He struck me as quite a reserved person in writing, always friendly and very respectful. I think one of my most precious possessions is an early "plain cardboard box" set of Diplomacy, sold by Allan in the days before he had a distribution deal – from the days when the rules suggested each unit should have its own name (German 1st Army Division etc.) and way before the rules were clarified. It even has correspondence between Allan and the boy who had purchased it explaining some of the intricacies of the rules. For me it is a connection with the game as it began. It's a shame that Diplomacy didn't make Allan's fortune in the way he could have benefitted had he invented Scrabble or Monopoly – but what a legacy to leave behind. A simple concept, brilliantly executed.

((Stephen Agar is another of the hobby's attorneys or really a barrister since he is in England, he also connects two of the hobby's core professions as he is both a barrister and senior manager for the Royal Mail Group. Stephen also has published numerous postal szines and has been responsible for archives of variants and archives of the British postal hobby. We reprint his article on possessing one of those early self-produced copies of The Game in this issue, and follow this with another owner of one of those editions of The Game.))

John Boardman - Calhmer had a great deal of difficulty in getting any game firms to publish Diplomacy, and in 1959 he finally had 500 copies produced, and sold them by mail or through department stores, including Macy's. I first discovered the game in 1962, when I briefly lived above a block from a Macy's branch in Queens which has long since closed. It occurred to

me that Diplomacy could be played through the mail, as it would be difficult to assemble in one place, for some five or six hours, seven people who knew the rules. Players could send their moves on a deadline to a gamesmaster, who would adjudicate the orders, print up and mail out the results, and set a deadline for the next moves. I publicized the postal rulers through science-fiction fanzines, and easily obtained enough players to play several games. (The Los Angeles Science-Fiction Society was particularly a rich source of such players.) I continued refereeing and publishing postal Diplomacy games for the next 45 years, and several other gamesmasters also got started. About five or six years ago, illness forced me to suspend the publication of *Graustark* briefly. Moreover, with the rise of the Internet, players began playing Diplomacy by e-mail, making communication faster and more efficient.

In playing Diplomacy, whether over the board, postally, or my e-mail, the crucial move seems to be the appropriately timed double-cross of an ally. If you do it too soon, you leave him with enough material to strike back. If you wait too long, he may do it to you first. The two World Wars provide interesting examples of this strategy. *((John Boardman is way, way too modest in documenting his role in this process. Quite simply, without him as well, all of us pretty much wouldn't be here. He tried to get a new game of Diplomacy going in Graustark in 2010, but there were only four of us (including Doug and me) who were interested. I think John would like to keep this going, the 792nd issue of Graustark featured these comments, if I could assemble seven of you (knowing I can count on me and Doug, so five more of you) who were willing to pay John's game fees and play, I know it would mean a lot to him. If you're interested in that, contact me so we can deliver to him seven players at the same time.))*

Jim Burgess – Reading and thinking about all this has been quite emotional to me. I am firmly convinced that Diplomacy is THE Game, the game that surpasses all other games for me. In that way, in the way it has affected my life, for the deep and lasting friendships with those quoted above and a hundred more, there is absolutely no way I can repay the debt that Allan B. Calhmer built up for me and my life. I also am a professor and represent yet another profession common among Diplomacy players, that of economists, who are trained in game theory and develop a love for the elegance of the Diplomacy game design. We are asking that if someone wants to do something in Allan B. Calhmer's memory, that they consider a donation to The Nature Conservancy, (www.nature.org) which was Allan Calhmer's favorite charity. I believe "odd" donations of \$7 or \$18 or \$34 in his memory (with obvious meaning) would be very appropriate.

Allan Calhamer: A Retrospective

By Edi Birsan and Larry Peery

It is good to see Allan finally get the recognition he so richly deserves for his creation Diplomacy. In the past few weeks scores of tributes to Allan have appeared all over North America and even beyond. A Google search reveals a long and growing list of Calhamer obits, remarkable not only for its length but also the diversity of sources. Many of those were republications from the Associated Press's stock obituary file. Others were based on the excellent "All in the Game" story Edward McClelland wrote some years ago for The Chicago Magazine. Closer to Allan's home tributes appeared from both the great (The Chicago Tribune, 4 March 2013, by Joan Giangrassie Kates) and the small (The LaGrangePatch (by Darren McRoy). Among others worth a look are: "Allan Calhamer Dies at 81; Invented Diplomacy Game" by Margalit Fox, New York Times, 6 March 2013; "Diplomacy: The Map That Ruined a Thousand Friendships," by Henry Grabar, The Atlantic Cities, 7 March 2013; Even POLITICO, the Washington Insiders' news and gossip source picked up the AP story, as did The Huffington Post. Word of Allan's passing spread quickly in the internet community as well. The first word overseas came from The Telegraph in the UK (16 March 2013). Truly, Allan may be gone but he's not been forgotten.

Edi and I knew Allan for nearly a hundred years between the two of us, and we thought we'd share some of our memories of the man we both called mentor and friend, Edi focusing on Allan skills (or lack thereof) as a game designer and player; and I focusing on the man many in the hobby never got to know.

There were two questions we wanted to answer in writing this. First, how could a man who was so extraordinarily ordinary in so many ways create this one artistic masterpiece? Second, how could a man who was so quiet stir up such a frenzy among his fans?

Edi notes that he probably played with him more times than most. I, on the other hand, can't recall ever actually playing Diplomacy with Allan. Edi got to know Allan across the Dip board. I got to know him in spite of it.

Edi writes: he was always very soft spoken and low keyed and never spoke ill of anyone regardless of the insanity on the game board or around him.

Larry comments: It's true. He was so soft spoken it was sometimes hard to hear him even if you were sitting next to him. You really had to listen to hear what he had to say, difficult at times but always worthwhile. Nor can I recall ever hearing him say anything bad about anyone, although he wasn't above sticking a pin in an over-stuffed balloon once in a while. I can only recall one time

when I actually saw Allan agitated. More on that later.

Edi: He saw the game in more of a social context with the expectations that most games would be called on time and the "what if" situations discussed. He believed in the concept that as long as you were alive you could come back and "win" and that all participants were equal. With the development of the postal hobby and the advance of a multi-game scoring concept demand, he admitted that he tried one system sort of as a challenge with the idea of what to do with a tournament and time limited games that were forced to "unnatural" endings. The resultant system he designed (his only attempt at it) was so complicated and unsatisfactory to himself that he just left it and never went back to try to make a "perfect" scoring system.

Edi: When he worked on the game there was a lot of work done on the design of the map more than any other aspect of the game. That the map has remained unchanged in 54 years (Larry notes: That original map has inspired hundreds, if not thousands, of variants over the years covering just about every historical period and geographical locale.) and no one has come up with a better alteration is a testament to his process and focus. The fundamental rules have been only changed in the most minor of points with the exception of the alternate convoy rule and the shutting down of the unintended abuse of the convoy rules called the Unwanted Convoy.

Edi: We had many discussions on the finer wording of the rules and several aspects we worked on for the last major rewrite of the rules together: the 1999 Hasbro set with the metal pieces. By the way, the original set in 1959 was supposed to have metal pieces as well with battleships like the Monopoly piece and cannons for the armies. The cannons were to be two wheeled versions of the French 75 but the company that was to make them went out of business and he had to scramble for a substitute and came up with the wood block pieces.

Larry: Allan produced the first 500 copies of Diplomacy himself and sold them primarily through an ad in The Atlantic magazine for all of \$7.00. Allan quickly realized he wasn't cut out to be a businessman and John R. Moot, who passed away in 2009, took over publishing Diplomacy with his GRI Company in Boston. But it was when Diplomacy became part of The Avalon Hill Company's family of games that Diplomacy really took off. Here again Allan found a fan in Rex Martin who promoted the game early on. Early buyers were enthusiastic but soon ran into the challenge of finding six other players with the time and space to play a game. John Boardman's GRAUSTARK published the first postal Diplomacy game in 1964 and the postal hobby

was under way. Within a few years those early face to face and postal players were beginning to inter-mingle and the first Diplomacy Conventions were under way. Edi's written a history of the early DipCons and it is available on line. Rod Walker and I hosted DipCon IV in San Diego in 1971 which attracted local players and a smattering of out-of-towners for an informal, multi-round exclusively Dip event. The most important result of that event was the decision to host a follow-up event in Chicago the next year. DipCon V was the first event that modern Dippers would recognize, complete with multi-rounds, a scoring system, a host gaming event, an awards dinner, etc. It also marked Allan's first appearance at a DipCon and that proved a major draw as Dip fans from all over North America flocked to meet the man who invented Diplomacy. It was in Chicago that I first met Allan face to face, marking the beginning of our collaboration and friendship. Allan's early participation in and support for DipCon was to make a major contribution to the development and growth of the hobby in later years. Allan gave a talk at the awards dinner, and yes he was a terrible public speaker, primarily because he was so shy. He also brought his lovely wife, Hilda, and young daughter, Selenne; which suggested Dip could be a family affair and not just a pastime for nerdy college kids. But Allan's most important contribution at that early event was one he followed in later years of making himself available to fans whether in playing a friendly game or in one-on-one discussions; and if you were 'zine publisher running postal games, designing a variant Dip game, or thinking of hosting a DipCon of your own he was always ready with a bit of advice and encouragement. Allan may have been shy and quiet but he didn't miss much that was going on. I remember one night during the Con Jamie and I snuck out to see Peggy Lee at the Palmer House. The next morning, Allan wanted to know why I had missed the previous night's round. I learned early on that the way to read Allan was to watch his eyes. A twinkle meant all was going well. A narrowing of the eyes meant a stab was coming. The impression I carried away from that first encounter was how ordinary Allan was in spite of his creation and his way above average intelligence. I think it was this as much as anything that attracted players to the game and hobbyists to him. Players soon realized that they could play The Man Who Invented Diplomacy and beat him at his own game. Hobbyists learned that his way of gentle suasion could do things that the game's bombast couldn't.

Edi: On the rules the major difference we had was on the Alternate Convoy Routes which we argued on since they were introduced. However, we finally agreed on the elimination of the Unwanted Convoy and my wording on it was included in the 1999 rules. Oddly enough we had come to an agreement on changing the Disband/Civil Disorder rules so that units in a supply center would not be removed and you then removed units furthest (direct move regardless of Coast or connections) from an

OWNED supply center then fleets before armies and then alphabetical. However, the "tech writer" who was doing the final draft of the graphics and word blocking for Hasbro did not get what we had sent him and It missed the publication. We also had discussed the change in the less than 7 player set up and the possibility to include some same board variant rules but we were unable to come to a definitive solution, meaning he was not overwhelmed, so his caution took hold and it was left as it was from the beginning.

Larry: After a series of ups and downs that would have done The Bickersons (Look it up on Google) proud, the Diplomacy hobby was poised to begin a new Golden Age that would recognize the fact that the game and hobby were now a worldwide phenomenon. Richard Walkerdine, who passed away recently, conceived of the idea of having a "worldwide" DipCon event in Birmingham, England. Some four hundred gamers showed up, including Dip fans from as far away as the States and Australia. Richard brought Allan and Hilda to Birmingham for the event and for most of those attending it was their first face to face encounter with The Man Who Invented Diplomacy. A large crowd gathered, expecting to hear Allan talk about the creation of Diplomacy and perhaps some "secrets" on how to win from The Master. Instead, as only those who were there can attest Allan talked and talked and talked about the US Civil War! Eventually the large crowd dwindled to a handful including Richard, Hilda, and myself sitting in the back of the room listening. Hilda was patiently listening and smiling; while I was gleefully watching Richard squirm in his seat as he got more and more desperate for a smoke and a trip to the site's pub for a quick beer. As always Allan was glad to play an occasional round, chat with Dip fans one on one, and pose for pictures. To me more interesting than the actual gaming were the discussions and negotiations going on over the future of the event. It's interesting to note that Richard did not call his event World DipCon I, but just World DipCon. He originally had no idea that the event would become an institution. After a good meal and a few rounds in the site pub a handful of us agreed that the event should continue and that in two years it would be held in the USA (in Chapel Hill, NC in conjunction with DIXIECON), in four years in Australia (in Canberra), and that, if all went well, in six years we would return to Birmingham to consider our next move. Interestingly, Allan did not participate in that meeting, leaving it to the hobbyists to thrash out their future. The rest, as they say, is history, and this year's WDC in Paris will be number XXV. By now I had learned that Allan had interests other than Diplomacy and when we had a chance to talk one on one we usually found a subject other than Dip to talk about. I remember one morning at that first World DipCon Allan was particularly agitated, perhaps the only time I've ever seen him in that state. The reason was because there was no source in Birmingham to obtain the results of American baseball

games and his beloved Chicago White Sox were playing a double-header that day; and he had no way to follow the games or find the scores. I suggested he try the BBC or International Herald Tribune, or perhaps call the US embassy to see if they knew what was going on in Chicago. Remember, in those days the internet was in its infancy. When I ran into him later he said he'd gotten the results from the IHT, but I don't recall what they were.

Edi: He originally had no real concept of a forced stalemate line in the game and looked more to the concept of a strategic or diplomatic stalemate or exhaustion. He also was very concerned over the Austrian-Italian area of the board and the introduction of the concept of the Lepanto Opening with the idea of Italy and Austria working together to go east against the Turkey was a major plus. Not just the move combination opening play but the fundamental concept of Austro-Italian cooperation actively against Turkey rather than the choice of Italy going West or attacking Austria in the east.

Edi: He was a mediocre player (as most game designers are of the games they design). He was an unrepentant dot grabber. I remember him saying in one case where he slipped into an open Trieste from Italy, "He did not seem to be using that center and I could use a build." He almost never approached another player to discuss things and waited for them to approach him. When he did approach someone, it meant that his alliance pattern was changing and you knew to take precaution or just take him out. He was not a dynamic hit hard, hit first sort of player. He preferred to take the neutral centers and then see what the board looked like in 1902, probe a little here or there and see if he could join in on something. On the other hand he was hard to pin down on what he was going to do specifically mainly because he usually decided at the last minute when it came to order writing on any tactical thing.

Larry: While DipCon V and World DipCon I were the highlights of my face to face contacts with Allan there were other times we met. I think it was in Columbus or Hunt Valley that he, Rex Martin, and I were chatting on the patio one evening. I never saw Allan drink or smoke, but Rex enjoyed his whisky and cigar, while I had my usual Chivas Regal and Diet Pepsi chaser (Well, I was young in those days. What can I say?). We talked about Avalon Hill's hopes for their new "computerized" Diplomacy game (which turned out to be a dud), why Avalon Hill was putting out three piece game boards (to

fit in the boxes they got from their parent company), and gossiped about the hobby. By the time we were finished Diplomacy was going to make Avalon Hill the Parker Brothers of the gaming world (it never happened), Allan was the most creative game designer ever (take that Gary Gygax), and Diplomacy would make us all rich and famous (well, one out of three of us made it). Contrary to what most Dippers think, Diplomacy was not Allan's favorite game. That was baseball. He loved it. He mentioned that he had designed a game called National Pastime, which he hoped would be even more successful than Dip. He'd done the same thing with it he'd done with Dip, producing the first few proto-types himself, and he was selling them to see if there was any interest in his new game. It didn't sound like sales were doing too good so I offered to buy a few copies. I gave him a check for a \$100 and he said he'd send me some when he got home. Sure enough a few weeks later a big box arrived and when I opened it I found ten copies of National Pastime enclosed. I remember playing it once with Ed Runge and his son Paul (both major league baseball umpires) and they both politely said it had potential before heading off to find the margarita pitcher. Other copies were given away as prizes at various PeeriCons or sold to hobby game collectors. I think I still have a couple of copies out in the garage. I wonder what they're worth now? Although I can't remember playing Dip with Allan I do remember we once played chess, which was another of his loves. He was a wicked player, especially with his knights, and he played fast. Allan also introduced me to Go, the Chinese classic game which some people compare to chess, although Chinese chess is nothing like Go. I had forgotten this until a couple of years ago when I was reading Henry Kissinger's book "On China," which had numerous references to Go in it. I found it intriguing that Calhmer and Kissinger shared an interest in that game. I never knew when talking to Allan where our conversations would go. I mentioned to him that on a recent trip to Copenhagen I had seen the Royal Danish Ballet perform a work that combined the music of Mendelssohn's Midsummer Night's Dream and Ligeti's music from 2001 with the dancers appropriately costumed. That led into a long discussion of ballet of all things. Still, from Diplomacy to ballet isn't such a reach. After all, both are about movement.

Larry: Hopefully these insights will give you some idea of what this extraordinarily ordinary man was like, both as a Dipper and a human being. For some of my thoughts on Allan and the hobby see my "The Gospel According to Calhmer" in the current issue of The Diplomatic Pouch.

An Interview with Andy Hull

By Heath Gardner

On the day, years ago, when I visited San Francisco and played some diplomacy with the Bay Area Diplomats, I shook the hand of a great man.

I also shook Edi Birsan's hand.

The great man was Andy Hull. Edi is for another interview, once he finally distinguishes himself in the hobby.

For Andy's part, he just won WAC.

I recently sat down with Andy – okay, I e-mailed him some questions – to talk about his WAC win as well as Diplomacy in general.

He wanted to kick off the interview with a statement – his contributions are in bold.

Before I vomit the contents of my conscience, I would like to acknowledge my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to and for Mr. Allan Calhamer whom I can only assume was a decent and noble human being, blissfully unaware that his magnificent, educational, creation would be appropriated by such damaged yet fundamentally flawed people as those that have come to inhabit this hobby. I could never have met such a dastardly assortment of rogues and borderline sociopaths, except perhaps in a high-security prison for the criminally deranged,

I love you all.

Somewhat.

Andy, we somewhat love you too.

Yes, Calhamer will be dearly missed by our gallery of rogues. I can't imagine what it must be like to look at a map of Europe and go "huh, that would be a fun game" and have it, decades later, be this massive cult favorite with a dedicated hobby built around it. The man was a genius.

So, you recently won WAC. My greatest congratulations. I've been wondering for years, both online and face to face: how DOES it feel to actually win a tournament, anyway? Or to win at anything?

Thank you.

I have to say, it felt rather nice. Then I remembered all the misery and suffering I caused... and it felt especially nice.

Actually it was the first time I've qualified for a top board so I just thrilled to be there among the brightest and best*. I was hoping for Austria, I drew Turkey. I feel the same way about Turkey as some people feel about Brussels Sprouts.

*** of those who showed up.**

I love Brussels Sprouts, but I'm not partial to either turkey or Turkey. I'm a beefeater just like you.

So does Edi Birsan have to kneel down and kiss your ring when you win a West Coast tournament? I've always wondered.

Edi's been rather busy lately. Did you hear the Pope resigned? I'm sure it's all just a coincidence.

What Pope name do you think Edi would choose for himself? I think the answer is obvious: Innocent.

So, a little bit about yourself. Where are you from originally? Where do you reside now? What do you do for a living? Are you tired of me asking personal questions yet? Because I can keep going.

I am originally from the Sceptered Isle, Her Majesty's (Dis)United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Island. Subsequently, I defected to greater freedom while nobody was looking by floating in a Whiskey barrel across the North Atlantic until I was picked up by a Deep Sea trawler that mistook my vessel for a very large Cod. I currently reside in the 5-1-0, the East Bay, clearly the BADAsstet of the San Francisco Bay Area, arguably home to the best Diplomacy players in the California Republic. I am Software "Engineer" by profession. Don't tell anyone.

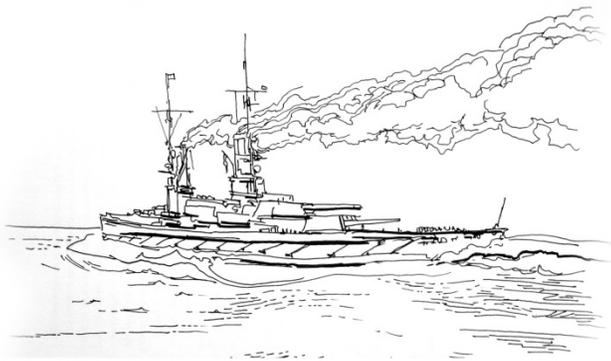
I hate to tell you this, Andy, but this is going out to a readership of millions... your secret is out.

So, let's get some things out of the way. How did you discover the game of DIPLOMACY? What are your preferred means of play? Can I still catch you in a judge game sometime? Do you have a preference between Face-to-Face or e-mail games?

A good friend bought me a copy of the garish UK edition as a present. I learned very quickly that playing with friends was a bad idea or rather my friends decided playing with me was a bad idea. I ran into Edi Birsan in San Ramon at DunDraCon in 2006 while he was recruiting for a game. I think I told him "I didn't have 8 hours for a game". Later I connected

the dots and realized that I had spoken to The Edi Birsan. I'm sure he probably felt the same way. I probably caught up with him again at ConQuest later the same year (before it returned to being called PacificCon) and got the bug again. I met some great people (for Diplomacy players) and had a blast. I also learned to annoy Louis Abranson, which was fun. I haven't played a judge game in a while but I'll probably pick some up again.

As for face-to-face versus email, I like them both for different reasons. My play is much more measured in email games. Sometimes, I succumb to the council of Eris when I play with people in the same room. Everyone should have a Muse.



Fascinating. (and I say that with the air of a 1950s-era psychologist wearing tweed and smoking a pipe.)

So tell me about WAC. First of all, congratulations. I never doubted you had it in you! I've done some research, and I see you managed to win the tournament without soloing, beating someone that did solo! I need to move to the West Coast :-P. Tell me about the tournament in general, who runs it, its format, who some of the regular faces are, and your best result at this con up to now.

I have to be honest, I am very fond of WAC despite my 50% actual versus attempted attendance. My dedicated personal research has revealed that in essence the participants spend several days at the bar during which Diplomacy happens thanks to the considerate hosting of Mark Zoffel, Nathan Barnes and Matt Shields. This year was a WACCon Redux with only three rounds as I understand they are planning something big for their 10th and final year. Consequently some of the regular travelers were not attending this year as the Triumvirate had sagely recommended attending next year over this year.

They still managed a respectable showing, including the Bay Area's very own dream-crusher Siobhan, the crew from Vancouver including Chris "Very Naughty Boy" Brand, Eric Mead and Doug Moore.

For the record I have had no best results at WAC previously.

But seriously, it looks like you had some tough match ups. Two draws with Doug Moore? So tell me, how the hell do you keep that guy at bay? I've played with him before and he's absolutely merciless. He's also always struck me as one of the most interesting personalities in the game. Can you talk a little bit about those games with him?

Unfortunately for Doug, he was stuck with me for every round. I should probably apologize, but as an apparently wise cowboy once said: "...sometimes you eat the bar, sometimes the bar, well, eats you".

So, tell me about the final board, which you topped to win the tournament. Looks like, just going by the final results, there was an E/F and R/T situation and you thought to stab your ally at the proper time. Is that putting it right, or was there more to the game than that. Talk about the top board experience in general if you can.

Drawing Turkey was not part of my plan. Chris Brand as England was vaguely enthusiastic about a 1901 ET pile-on with Russia. In a fit of quiet desperation, I opened large against Russia with the Crimean Crusher of Con - Bul, Ank - BLA and Smy - Arm. Of course Russia didn't honor the DMZ we agreed either. My essential strategy was to capture Sev and Rum as quickly as possible and then make peace with an embattled Russia while I cleaned up in the Balkans. Poor Austria was abused by all of its neighbors to make a rapid, mandatory dot donation. Soon after I found myself in position to pick up Greece from Austria, and Budapest and Vienna from Russia and Italy. At that point the game was mostly done in the East. Doug Moore's Italy barred my way into the Ionian while I worked on taking Trieste.

By 1906 the general consensus on the table was that I had won, so I kept pushing for a draw that I am certain Chris Brand kept vetoing as he scrambled to architect a big score in the West. I had limited opportunities to grow from then on, although Eric Mead's Germany kindly donated Warsaw after being brutally violated by England and Adam Berey's France. At some point during the chaos, Chris Brand mis-ordered his builds and allowed France to walk into London, thereby sinking his play for a win in the more fluid West. I managed to slip into the Ukraine and had enough fleets to threaten the Italian Peninsula. At that point, the draw was finally conceded.

I ordered an ice cold Bombay Sapphire Martini, straight-up with two olives, from the bar just before it closed.

The top board was a pressure cooker of high-quality play. Honestly, I expected to be contained by 1903, followed by spending the remainder of the game muttering to myself about The Treachery of Infidels.

Did you feel pretty confident going into the final board? Who did you consider your biggest threat? Did you have a game-plan right off the bat? When did you realize you were going to be able to pull off topping the board?



Confident... no. Did I mention that I hadn't played Diplomacy in over a year? Biggest threats? Chris Brand, Doug Moore, Eric Mead in no particular order. Those guys are sharks. I had no plan, I was simply playing for fun. Maybe that was my plan. I didn't realize I was on the top board until I heard it from somebody else. My Round Two result was rather amusing as we went from voting on a miserable five way draw, to eliminating one player, then helping the board leader to agree to vote himself out of the draw. Diplomacy is clearly a nasty game, played by failed human beings.

The other thing about WAC's results write-up that caught my eye: can you tell me the tale of "Chuck Spiekerman 5-way, 15 centers, 3:45 a.m."?

There's not much that should be said about that game. Other than everyone at the table agreed it was the worst game of Diplomacy ever played. Ever. Everything else about that debauched evening should stay in Seattle. I stayed to watch the train

wreck until about 3am, when I just gave up on those people. They should probably be ashamed of themselves.

What do you consider your strengths as a Diplomacy player? How did these help you win WAC?

I've never walked away from a board. Also I'm a great ally that never stabs. And I can count really well. Ask Mark Zoffel about Vancouver '07. Actually, best not.

So, I have to ask you about this. Jim Burgess sent me this exchange, from a con in 2008. Apparently it's "infamous". Would you care to address this or let it remain shrouded in mystery for most?

Well Heath, 2008 is a long time ago, although I remember everything perfectly thanks to my eidetic memory.

"Why should I believe you now, you are a liar...is this an awkward time to bring that up?" Mike Calhoun

Yes, it was awkward and inconvenient. Also very inconsiderate as I had a great deal to offer.

"I was fully truthful about what I did not say." Andy Hull

This statement is false.

"Shall we end this game now so as to avoid future embarrassments?" Edi Birsan

Edi made me do it.

Just a few general questions of interest about Diplomacy in general. What is your favorite country to play and why? Least favorite and why?

Austria. I love being the center of attention. Least favorite, Turkey, the needy middle child of the board that has to fight for relevance (and attention).

Mine are England and Russia, respectively. What that says about me I don't know.

My favorite gambit opening for England was to eschew a center and slip into ENG and MAO in the fall. I think I pulled that stunt in a game we played together.

Talk about your style of play. Are you a maniac stabber or a feel-good care bear, or something in between? (I'm guessing you'll say "something in between", but try to describe your style.)

I'm sure if you ask Condy Creek he will say "suck". However, in the legend of my own lunchtime, I would

say that my style is Discordian. Maybe I like to foster long term sharing-is-caring alliances, maybe I like to cultivate frenemies. Maybe I like knife fights, especially in the Balkans. There's something dysfunctional in my playing style that relishes making other people angry. That's probably a personality flaw. Sorry about that*.

***not actual remorse.**

How have you gotten sharp at tactics -- no press or just a lot of regular style Diplomacy?

No, no, I suck at this game. I think face to face Diplomacy shares something with stage magic. Is this your card? Oh hey, look over here!

What advice would you offer to the starry-eyed young Diplomacy novice who dreams of one day competing against the likes of Edi Birsan and Doug Moore? What's the key to mastery of Diplomacy? Fairly easy question, right?

It is my firm belief that it is a mistake to hold firm beliefs.

Andy, thanks for taking the time to answer my questions, and big congratulations again on winning WAC. I'm going to have to try to win at DixieCon this year to keep pace with you, but don't hold your breath. After all, Doug Moore comes to that thing every year.

Good luck and don't forget to be nice, it's just a game, after all*.

***not actual advice**

Also I'd like to float some of the sedition that was spread during WAC. There may be a consolidated, revolving North America West Coast tournament, of which WACCon 2014 maybe the first. Maybe.

OK, consider it floated. Thanks for your time, friend!

Heath Gardner is our new Interview Editor for Diplomacy World. Send in some positive feedback letters so he'll feel welcome, appreciated, and will continue with his interviews!

XENOLOGIC

by Larry Peery

Spring 2013

It's been quiet In Asia lately. First, it's wintertime. Second, there have been major leadership changes in some of the key Asian powers: China, Japan, and South Korea among them. However, don't let the quiet fool you. The Asian kettle is bubbling away more than ever. One key reason hasn't gotten much attention in the American press, but make no mistake it's a seminal point in the area: Asia's military spending has passed Europe's for the first time ever. Single digit declines in Europe and double digit increases in Asia have brought this about. Here's some of the key stories that shed some insight into what's going on.

"New Doubts About the Future of Carriers." (San Diego Union Tribune, 21 March 2013) The US Navy doesn't like to talk about the weaknesses of its carrier fleet and discourages the media from doing it; which is one reason this article is so interesting. Two facts keep bothering me: 1) Over half the 90 or so planes carried by today's carriers are tasked with the job of protecting that carrier from an enemy attack. At any given moment a carrier has about 4 planes available for immediate response to such an attack. The typical defender carries from 4-8 weapons. At any given time the USA has one or two aircraft carriers available in the South China, Straits of Taiwan, Sea of Japan, and Korean Straits area. China has about 1,500 cruise missiles covering

much of that area. You do the math.

"U.S. Flies B-52s over South Korea." (CNN, 19 March 2013), As part of a recent joint US-South Korean exercise US B-52s (probably two, perhaps four) flew a 13,000 mile round trip from Guam to the Korean Peninsula. That's about a 26 hour flight, an amazing accomplishment for a plane that's over 50 years old. The intent of the mission was to deter the North Koreans from doing whatever it is that they are doing. Will it work? Probably not. In point of fact the B-52s probably wouldn't be used in a strike against North Korea. More likely the B-1s or B-2s coming from US bases and using stealth technology would carry out a surgical strike against targets in North Korea. A couple of those flying at supersonic speeds at elevations of a few hundred feet would have impressed the North Korean military much more. On the other hand, would we really want the Russians and Chinese to see them in a near combat scenario?

"China Becomes World's Fifth Largest Arms Exporter, Bypassing Britain in That Ranking." (ABC News, 17 March 2013). A Swedish peace research group reports the top five arms exporters in 2008-2012 (share of international exports in parenthesis) were: USA (30%), Russia (26%), Germany (7%), France (6%), China (5%). The five top arms importers in the same period were:

India (12%), China (6%), Pakistan (5%), South Korea (5%), and Singapore (4%).



Also worthy of note: "Selling Secrets to the Mainland: Military Espionage in Taiwan." (By Tim Daiss). "China Cites Risks of New Tension as US Bolsters Missile Defenses." (New York Times, 18 March 2013). "Fears Xi's Push On Japan Poses Showdown Risk." (Sydney Morning Herald, 18 March 2013). "Under Xi, China Seeks to Cool Island Row With Japan." (Reuters, 18 March 2013) Both creditable sources with opposite assessments. "History Shows NKorean Pattern: Wait, Then Attack." (Associated Press, 12 March 2013). "Taiwan's Massive, Mega-Powerful Radar System Is Finally Operational." (from a Taiwan source). The US cancelled the last two of this Pave Paw radar it was buying, and no doubt the contractor found a ready market for one of them. I wonder who bought the other one? :North Korea Cuts Hotline With South, Threatens Nuclear Strike As War Games Begin." (Global Post, 11 March 2013). Another consequence of the joint US-South Korean exercise. "South Korea Go Nuclear? Some Are Suggesting It." (USA Today, 11 March 2013). More sabre rattling, only this time from the South Koreans. No doubt part of Mrs. Park's "push back"

approach to North Korean relations. "Chinese Buoys Are Focus of Latest Dispute Over Contested Islands." (New York Times, 22 February 2013). "China Accuses Japan of Escalating Tensions Over Disputed Islands." (New York Times, 28 February 2013). "China Restaurant Bans Asian Maritime Dispute Citizens." (BBC, 27 February 2013). The Beijing Snacks restaurant posted a notice saying that Japanese, Filipinos, and Vietnamese patrons are not welcome --- and neither are dogs." (BBC, 27 February 2013). I wonder if this is the same place that Kerry recently ate at? "China: The Diaoyu Islands Are Ours." (UPI, 2 March 2013). "Who's Bluffing Whom in the South China Sea?" (Asia Sentinel, 8 March 2013). "China Navy Seeks to "wear out" Japanese Ships in Disputed Waters." (Reuters, 9 March 2013). "Japanese Say Reported Remarks on China By Abe Were 'Misleading.'" (Washington Post, 22 February 2013). "Abe: Japan Acting Calmly In Island Dispute With China." (Reuters, 22 February 2013). "Abe Lays Out Vision of Japan Power In Asia." (CNN, 23 February, 2013). Lest we forget, it isn't all about the China-Japan Feud. "Japanese Holiday 'Celebrating' Disputed Islands Sparks Backlash In South Korea." (Washington Post, 23 February 2013).

China's foreign policy in Asia in the last of the Hu years has been a disaster. How much of that is the fault of the political/foreign affairs leadership and how much is the fault of the stronger military feeling its oats (or rice) is anybody's guess. The fact is Asian military spending is up, as we've seen. New governments in Japan and South Korea, as well as smaller countries like Vietnam and The Philippines are increasing taking a critical attitude toward China. So much for the swords. What about the plowshares?

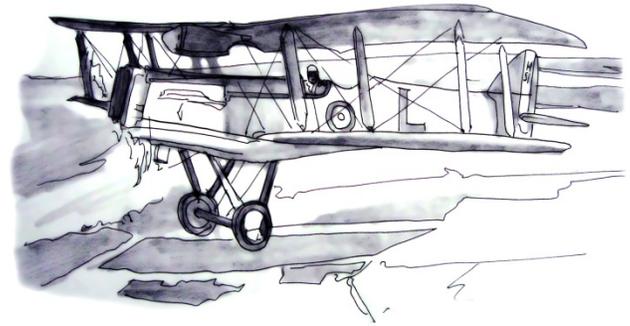
John Darwin's (No relation to Charles, I believe) "Unfinished Empire: The Global Expansion of Britain might be of interest to players in the beta test game Mr. Babcock is running (He writes with a wicked grin.) Alex Von Tunzelmann reviews the book in his essay "The Isles at the Center of the World." (New York Times, 23 February 2013). Worth reading with William Manchester's final, third volume, of his Winston Churchill biography; which covers the WWII and post-war years of The Great Lion's life. On the other hand, you may want to wait for the first edition of Vladimir Putin's newest suggestion, "a single history textbook for all schools designed for different ages but built into a single concept and following a single logic of continuous Russian history." Sounds like something the NRA would come up with for a history of the Second Amendment.

Long before there was Ping Pong Diplomacy there was DIPLOMACY diplomacy." Betcha never thought of that! For all you traveling Dippers here's a few stories. "With Brand USA, A Campaign to Lure Back Foreign Tourists - -- And Their Money." (Washington Post, 10 March 2013). The most important fact in this story is two-fold. The

number of foreign tourists visiting the USA and the amount of money they spend is just about back to what it was before 9/11, but the US share of the international tourist business has fallen by a third. 'nuff said. "Cruisin' Takes a Bruisin' In Eye of PR Storm." (USA Today, 18 March 2013) It's almost impossible to avoid the stories about Carnival Cruise Lines recent troubles. After all, everybody loves to beat up on the big kid on the block. Still, it makes me glad the hobby did the Dip At Sea DipCon when it did. "How to Spend 47 Hours on a Train and Not Go Crazy." (New York Times, 28 February 2013) is a well done feature on a cross country train trip. I brought back some pleasant memories of my 3 week, 9,000 mile Amtrak Dip junket some years ago when I used Amtrak to go to WDC in Denver, CO and another Dip event in Charlottesville, VA. With sightseeing in Chicago, WVa, and New Orleans along the way. I even managed to squeeze in what was probably the longest (four states), shortest (1 game year) Dip game ever. Sigh..."Unhappy Hour: US Tells UN to Sober Up, Too Many Drunken Diplomats at Budget Meeting." (Washington Post, 4 March 2013). Hmmm, I wonder if this story will spark any Mea Culpas in the hobby? Probably not. ♪

The United States has a new chief Dipper, Secretary of State John Kerry). Kerry has four strengths going into the job: 1) He has lots of friends in the Senate; 2) He knows foreign affairs; 3) He speaks several foreign languages; 4) He has perfectly coiffed hair all the time. However, he has one big weakness: he's boring! Compared to him Christopher Warren was a Justin Bieber of international travel. We've already seen one case where Kerry's comments about Israel and Zionism were way wide of the White House's game plan. And then there was Kerry's version in Berlin of John F. Kennedy's famous "I am a Berliner" speech in which Kerry said, "In America you have the right to be stupid." Did we really have to tell the world what it already knew? Oh well, we'll have to wait and see. China, on the other hand, recently revamped its Foreign policy establishment. The new foreign minister is Wang Yi, a Japanese expert described as brilliant, urbane, a wily negotiator who speaks excellent English; and that's all according to his wife. Another key figure (think Henry Kissinger in his National Security Advisor days) is Wang (no relation) Huning, an ex-academic and senior policy aide to past Chinese presidents. The problem is that neither Wang have a politburo status so they are subject to the control of the Politburo and must deal with the Party and military dabbling in foreign affairs. Time will tell if China can produce a new Chou En-lai when it really

needs one. The Vatican also has a new chief Dipper and who can argue with someone has God for a GM? Pope Francis is getting an early introduction to Dip a la Angeica with his first meeting with a foreign leader, his old nemesis the President of Argentina; and entertaining the President of Taiwan (a move sure to tick Beijing off) at his inauguration Mass.



Robert Loftis, a retired US diplomat with 30 years experience, laid into celebrity diplomats in a Room For Debate feature "Diplomacy Isn't About Friendships." (New York Times, 18 March 2013). Loftis's thesis was simple, "diplomats do what you want them to do; it's not about getting along and mouthing pleasantries." Dennis Rodman, are you listening? Don't get me wrong I like Vladimir Putin. He's always up to something, For instance, "Russia's Putin Tells Army To Shape Up For Foreign Threat." (Reuters, 27 February 2013). Anybody remember the story about the Russian Army's switch to socks from last time? On the other hand, "Chinese Leader In Russia To Promote Economic and Military Ties." (NY Times, 22 March 2013) and "Xi Jinping Visit Aims to Boost Ties With Moscow." (CNN, 22 March 2013) tell a different tale. Although China still needs and wants some military technology only the Russians can and will sell it, China's big goal is increased access to Russian raw materials of all kinds. The Russians have Siberia and the Chinese want it. Perhaps not outright political control, although that would be nice, but certainly economic domination.

Finally, if you don't read any of the other stories I've noted in this issue, please do yourself a favor and read Nicolaus Mills' story "Punished For Telling Truth About Iraq War (CNN, 3/20/2013). While Powell and Schwartzkopf may be more talked about; Shinseki is a real hero.

The War Room: Face-to-Face Diplomacy for Trendy Young Persons

By Joshua Danker-Dake

This issue, I want to talk about tactics of a different sort: the tactics of playing the game itself.

In spite of the relative simplicity of its components and mechanics, learning and playing (never mind mastering) Diplomacy can be intimidating, confusing, and overwhelming for new players. For whatever reason, a bunch of wooden rectangles (or plastic stars and anchors) can be dauntingly abstract to them, and the adjudication of orders a divine mystery.

Generally, I'm all for the promotion of abstract thinking and making people pedal a little faster, but in the interest of making Diplomacy more palatable to unreached people groups, here's a setup that emphasizes visualization and brings face-to-face Diplomacy into the twenty-first century by incorporating some of the best qualities of the internet game.

What you'll need:

- Seven players
- Seven laptops with adjudicator software installed (I like [iDip](#) because it's easy to use and easy to see precisely what's happening. And it has sweet arrows.)
- A TV
- Audio/video cables
- A big round table (optional)

What you won't need:

- A Diplomacy board

Gather in your underground bunker (or closest approximation thereof) with your provisions of choice. Here's the setup:

"Public discussions only" and negotiation time limits are time-honored Diplomacy house rules that can substantially cut down on how long it takes to complete a game, although the former significantly changes the nature of the game. In the interest of time, we impose these here, but alleviate this change with a twist from the world of online Diplomacy: although all verbal communication is heard by everyone, laptops enable the use of the instant messaging program of your choice, allowing the secret communication between players that makes Diplomacy what it is without anyone having to leave the room (I'd like to think we can, at least, exclude texting with phones).

Orders can be turned in the old-fashioned way: on paper. The player responsible for adjudication connects his laptop display to the TV and inputs the orders, which can then be easily copied and given to the other players to paste into their own adjudicators. The use of the TV to show orders and results contributes a Dr. Strangelovian feel to the proceedings because of the big map display (no fighting in the war room, kids), and seating everyone at a circular table is the icing of awesomeness on your delicious Diplomacy cake.



One million bonus points if you make an actual Diplomacy cake.

There you have it. So then, give the War Room a try, and if you discover any way to make it even more awesome, please do let us know.

Joshua is our S&T Editor, and the bastard didn't save me any cake.

Everybody Poops, but Droidippy's Stinks the Worst

By Alex Maslow

Remember when I wrote this last year? "I have to say that Droidippy is a great, if not quite excellent, system... If you haven't tried it, give it a go!"

I'm sorry for writing that. All of it. It's not true. It isn't.

Droidippy is to Diplomacy as what I imagine crack cocaine is to literally anything good in this world: A terrible substitute for joy. Now, don't get me wrong – I'm all for crack cocaine being available. Wait, no I'm not. Similarly, Droidippy is such a stain on our hobby. I am being so honest it hurts. Why did I ever laud this thing???

Like crack, technically (chemically?), Droidippy is a masterpiece – it is almost everything I could want in a mobile Diplomacy game. The map is easy to manipulate, it is bright and colorful, the communication is simple. It's goddam brilliant. And just like crack, it's addictive. And it makes you happy. And then you realize how awful it is. BUT YOU STILL NEED MORE.

Maybe it's just me. Maybe it's just my addictive personality that made me culpable. After every game, I wanted to play again. And again. AND AGAIN. And every time, I hated it. At first it was fun and novel – but then it was boring. But I still did it. I have no idea why. I just loved getting a new country – a fresh start! But by S03, I was just so bored. But at the end of each game, I thought: just one more. Help me!!

Droidippy succeeds because it does what it's supposed to do. It fails because it is supposed to be a substitute,

and Diplomacy is not a game which accepts substitutions well. There are still people who decry e-mail games as not a good substitute. So how could we think plotting via text would be better? Oy!

Droidippy is one of those things that sets out to do one thing, does it very well, but then leaves us wondering why we wanted that thing to be done in the first place? Like this toy:



It's a toy where the dog poops and children learn to pick up the poop. Go to Youtube and you'll find videos of this toy. That is what it does. It does exactly that. And it does it well. And it is hilarious. It accomplishes its goal and is funny. But why? Why??

I have no grand conclusion. Some days, you just wake up, sigh loudly in despair, and go back to sleep. That is my experience whenever I think of Droidippy.

In Which I Praise the State of Web-Based Diplomacy: A Reply to J. Danker-Dake

By W.H. Seward

It was with some interest that I read Mr. Danker's article (Diplomacy World #120) reviewing the state of Diplomacy on the web. I had just returned to the hobby after a several year (OK, maybe it has been more than a decade...) hiatus. When last I engaged in scratching the itch to dominate Europe, I had made my way onto the judges and enjoyed playing there, but after all this time, I presumed those old interfaces would have been replaced by something web-based and that would be where I should re-start my campaigns. With a quick Google search or two, I had identified likely candidates, and after inspecting a few of them, I decided to take the plunge at PlayDiplomacy.com.

Being a seasoned, if a bit rusty, player, I wasn't going to jump into the hobby again without at least trying to catch up to with what I may have missed over the last several years. (If Edi Birsan had gone and published a new opening system in the interim, I wanted to know about it!) Of course, my training program began by downloading Diplomacy World and starting to read. As one might imagine, Mr. Danker's article had me re-considering my new chosen Diplomacy home. Had I made a mistake, I wondered? Should I beat a quick retreat and figure out what judge had an open game? Was the internet really the bastion of imbeciles who couldn't possibly be expected to play a decent game of Dip, without mentally checking out, outright quitting, cheating, or worse?

Well, I am pleased to write here that the reports of the demise of web-based Diplomacy were greatly exaggerated, at least if my first few months on PlayDiplomacy.com are any indication.

"The strengths of web-based Diplomacy are its accessibility and ease of use," writes Mr. Danker. Perhaps not damning with faint praise, this certainly is not close to elucidating the fantastic advantages of PlayDiplomacy, the most important of which to my mind is the large and growing player-base. The site has over 3,500 active players at any given time and more signing up every day. Players that are starting in or (like me) returning to the hobby are going to look for a web-based system first. The huge, growing player-base means lots of games running and short waits for new games. As a player looking for a good game, you want to be where the action is, and the action is on the web.

PlayDiplomacy doesn't just offer a great number of games, but a great variety of games as well. Whether you want a live game with 10 minute turns or games with 7-days between orders, they're available. The main site supports a wide range of press variants (gunboat, public-press only, etc.), map variants (1900, Ancient Mediterranean, etc.) and rule variants (Age of Empires, Winter 1900, etc.). In addition to the fully supported variants, the site's Diplomacy Variant Forum Games (DVFG) offers an enormous selection of variants run by GMs. And the DVFG participants aren't just playing variants, they are developing them as well, as members test their own ideas out too. Granted the judges may have more supported variants running as they have been around longer and benefit from more development time and an easier development cycle (no graphics, for instance), I don't believe the judges have the player-base to actually get action for nearly as many variant games as PlayDiplomacy.

Then there is the social aspect of the site. PlayDiplomacy provides a variety of methods to communicate with your fellow players including a chat box on the site's main page for quick questions and breezy conversations as well as the web forum for in-depth discussions and debates on everything Dip (and plenty no-so-Dip). There are groups for the over-forty set as well as for students. Sign up as a premium member for a nominal fee and get access to tournaments, vote for new features, and more.

The future of course is mobile access. On the horizon for PlayDiplomacy, is an expanded interface to enable the development of Apps for smartphone or tablet play, though I must say, even the existing html site is playable on a smartphone in a pinch.

With so much right about PlayDiplomacy, one should be willing to deal with a few warts, especially since what

issues that exist are not unique to the site. Thankfully, Mr. Danker acknowledged that quitting, multi-accounting, and meta-gaming are problems with any system, PBEM or web-based. But as he continued, clearly his burning issue is quitting, and he is convinced it is bigger problem on the web.

Before, getting to the guts of Mr. Danker's critique, as an aside, I do want to make one point which is perhaps controversial; players missing moves and quitting is part of the game - deal with it. Allan Calhamer anticipated the challenge of getting people to play out his hours-long game in a face-to-face context, writing "...the problem of organizing a seven-person game was not solved until I entered the formal study of law in 1953. I became aware that players who failed to meet their responsibilities toward the game should be made to suffer light penalties, such as the loss of a single move, so that they are encouraged to comply but are not usually wiped out by minor lapses."¹ With that insight, the NMR rule was born. And let's face it, even in friendly face-to-face games, players are likely to call it quits before their game ends rather than play positions out to the bitter end.

Higher levels of NMRs and surrendered positions have always been associated with remote play, whether postal or electronic. Richard Sharp speculated that the reason Russia had better-than-average performance statistics in postal play was because the occurrence of NMRs and CDs were more likely to benefit Russia simply because it had more neighbors, artificially tipping the balance of the game in favor of the Tsar, and this apparent advantage would disappear in games restricted to experienced, reliable players.²

As Dippers, we have to accept that when the going gets tough (either on the game board or because of real life) some governments fail. Once you acknowledge that, the next step is to take advantage of it. Figure out who the quitters may be and what the signs are that a player may quit. Then win because you knew it was going to happen first and positioned yourself to take advantage of it.

Yet even if I don't care to complain about running into a quitter, I don't want to be an apologist for them either. On this point I wholeheartedly agree with Mr. Danker, "quitting isn't just unsportsmanlike; it's damn obnoxious." But his supposition that the internet is "breeding a generation of lazy players, of Diplomacy dabblers" strikes me as pure liable and doesn't square with my experience at all. I have found NMRs to be rare and surrenders have been of hopeless, immaterial positions not meaningful ones with the one exception being picked up quickly by a high-quality replacement, again, the benefit of playing at a site with a large player-base.

Mr. Danker also suggests, "one of the apparent factors that contribute to the web-based Diplomacy quitting epidemic is that it's now easier than ever to play in

multiple games... a lot of players can't [handle it]: they lose track of which game is which, they don't communicate properly, they don't invest in each game the way you'd hope, and they're more likely to quit the games that aren't going their way." This supposition is not consistent with the data. PlayDiplomacy statistics consistently show the average number of games per active player is below two. Certainly there are the exceptional players participating in a great many games (and likely often to the detriment of their play) but the vast majority of players are in just one or two games at a time.

Mr. Danker then proposed his "solution" to the problem of quitters, writing:

"I think a good place to start would be for web-based Diplomacy to take a page from Dipsters (a high-on-time-ratio gaming group on the judges). We don't need to have a site that's exclusively dedicated to such players, but surely any existing site could set up a "back room" only for players with high on-time move rates and no willing abandonments. This can't be a "pay extra" feature in and of itself – some quitters pay too; it has to be earnable. To the best of my knowledge, no such thing currently exists on any web-based Diplomacy site (if I'm wrong, by all means, please write in and tell me)."

I am writing in to tell you, Mr. Danker, such a "back room" already exists at PlayDiplomacy.com. And it's free. And it must be earned. It operates by members entering the web forum joining a group called the Classicists. A player must have completed a minimum number of games on the site and meet minimum reliability standards to be admitted. Once a member, Classicists can set up games and password protect them. The password is then made available only to other Classicists, effectively creating a game of all high-reliability players.

But as not all reliable gamers at PlayDiplomacy frequent the web forum, the site is looking at more ways to reduce the impact of surrenders for everyone else. To do that, the principal cause of the high surrender rate has to be correctly identified, and the prevailing view at PlayDiplomacy is not that this is a problem of having a population of "Diplomacy dabblers" or "extreme multi-gamers," (while acknowledging that such players do exist) but rather, it is the influx of users to the site who are new to the game of Diplomacy and, consequently, have no idea what they are getting into, joining a game

or three before deciding they don't understand or like it and then quit, never to be seen again.

Addressing this phenomenon takes care, as the site wants to encourage the next-generation of players to stick with the hobby by giving them an enjoyable first experience. Multiple approaches are currently being pursued. The site has implemented an option called "1st turn NMR protection." When this feature is used, in the event that a player does not show up at the start of a game, the game re-sets and a new player can be found for that position. This feature can help weed out a significant percentage of new-user surrenders. Additionally, a mentor game program has been established to encourage new players to try out their first game away from the general population and under the supervision of an experienced player who can offer advice as needed. The premise of the program is that any player that completes one game and then decides to come back will be significantly more reliable than an average person finding the site and entering games cold.

Is everything perfect on web-based Diplomacy? No, certainly not. But the perfect shouldn't be the enemy of the good, or in this case, the great. The PlayDiplomacy community has put a lot of effort into giving every player a great experience and that includes addressing surrenders. As the tools that are currently in place get wider use and new ones are developed, the issue of surrenders should begin to fade. For the informed user of the PlayDiplomacy.com, between the Classicists and the NMR protection setting, there are likely already more than adequate paths to getting into the high-reliability game we all want to play in.

Please dear reader, take my advice, point your browser at PlayDiplomacy.com and stay awhile. Play a few games and join the Classicists or any other group the suits your fancy. PlayDiplomacy has a great community with great features. We'd love to host your next game.

Notes:

- 1) A. Calhmer, "The Invention of Diplomacy: A Brief Background on the Design," in *The Gamers' Guide to Diplomacy*, 2nd ed.
- 2) R. Sharp, *The Game of Diplomacy*, 1978.

Disclaimer: W.H. Seward is not affiliated with PlayDiplomacy.com in any official manner other than in his capacity as a trustworthy diplomat. The opinions expressed herein are his own.

After reading this article, I made my way over to PlayDiplomacy to sign up for a game and see how it goes. Most of my gaming time has been spent on Diplomaticcorp.com lately. I kinda miss the old CompuServe days, but that's another story....

DIPLOMACY (1st edition 1959)

By Stephen Agar (reprinted from Armistace Day #7)



I recently bought a copy of the first edition of Diplomacy from Rupert Thompson in the US (which Rupert himself bought in April 1960) – this is the version of the game marketed by Allan Calhamer himself, prior to the game getting picked up by Games Research Inc. This original set didn't come with a box at all – only the box used for shipping (though Rupert had even kept that). It has 136 pieces (all wooden and individually numbered) – ten armies for each power, and nine fleets (save for England, France and Germany who get ten). As you can see from the picture above, the basic board and the conference map design have hardly changed at all

compared to the US editions of the game. Also included in the box were issues 1 and 2 of The Despatch – basically a mini-zine from Allan Calhamer himself – issue 1 of which I have reprinted below (I'll reprint issue 2 next time).

Rupert wrote to me after the game arrived here:

"I enclosed all the correspondence, etc. as I thought that it might be interesting. I originally saw the advertisement (enclosed in packet [see below]) in some magazine, I

don't remember which one, and sent off for it. As you can see I believe it cost me \$6.75 or so in 1960.



REAL FUN!

New Adult Game Says "All's Fair In Diplomacy"

As in real life diplomacy, two or more players may form secret alliances and plan their moves jointly. For further realism, members of an alliance may choose to double-cross their partners. The rules of the game permit for "no holds barred", so while it's fun for adults, it's poor training for children.

As noted by the game's creator, Mr. Allan B. Calhamer, "Any tactic based on deception is legitimate in Diplomacy". Such tactics would include: "military intelligence"—peeking as another player writes his move; "infiltration"—slipping extra pieces on the board unnoticed; "back-stabbing"—showing an ally a set of orders and then making an entirely different move.

The moves and rules of Diplomacy are based upon Mr. Calhamer's observations as a history major at Harvard, (Class of '53). He believes the opportunity to be nefarious in play releases tensions and emotions so as to better one's regular daily life. The chance to "play dirty" in the game and still be playing according to the rules can be an excellent emotional outlet.

The set includes a 20"X27" (when opened) playing board, 136 pieces or "units", conference maps for use in planning moves, and a booklet containing full instructions and outlines of sample games. Owners of Diplomacy sets also receive, gratis, copies of a newsletter called The Dispatch. It reports on games played by Diplomacy players—and offers ideas on new tricks and sly devices. Called "The Game With The Human Element", Diplomacy retails at \$6.95.

Further information is available without obligation from the manufacturer of the copyright game: Diplomacy, Box 1253, Boston 9, Mass.

By the way I hope you notice that the box in the box was the original one that the game came in. I am just a pack rat and prior to this game I had already sold over 100 other war games, primarily Avalon Hill, which I had collected and kept. Finally realizing that I had neither the time nor friends who were interested in playing them, I sold them to reduce the clutter when I moved into a new house. I had kept Diplomacy until the end to sell. I may have played a few "regulation games" with family but

could never generate interest from others. I probably never played the game as it was intended to be played. I fooled around with the pieces by myself a time or two and enjoyed the play time. Also in 1960 I was in college and did not have the time due to studies. After college I did the usual with a new job, then marriage, then family and the game remained stored away safely. By the way, I was 63 in August, so, as you can see, I am still a kid at heart. I still have a sticker that my brother once gave me which says "He, who dies with the most toys, wins".

Rupert was clearly a fan of the game at the time, and wrote to Allan Calhamer asking why Ireland wasn't passable and why Turkey didn't start with a F(Con) instead of F(Ank). This was Allan's reply:

"In answer to your criticisms, I considered permitting moves to Ireland - I also considered it as a supply center - and rejected the idea because I wanted to force the countries toward the center so that conflict would occur more rapidly. You have a point, however, inasmuch as there was diplomatic sparring over the allegiance of Ireland in both World Wars.

Turkey does not need immediate access to the Mediterranean, as you suggest. She can get into the Mediterranean fairly quickly by occupying Bulgaria at once and raising a fleet at Smyrna after the second move. A beginner (!) recently accomplished this result more rapidly by simply interchanging his fleet and his Smyrna army during the first diplomacy period. Of course, this would not have worked if either Austria or Italy had noticed it - and Italy was an experienced player!

The fleet in Constantinople would probably weaken Turkey. As is, she opens with something like:

1. Bulgaria 2. Constantinople 1F Black Sea (normally)
1. Bulgaria 2. Armenia 1F Black Sea (anti- Russian)
1. Bulgaria 2. stand 1F Constantinople (close alliance with Russia only)

In any case the army in Bulgaria may attack Greece, Serbia, or Rumania in Fall, 1901. If this results in a capture and the Second Army follows into Bulgaria, Turkey builds two. If this Fall move results merely in a stand-off; someone else is prevented from occupying a supply center. The power to withhold a center from either Russia or AH and permit one to the other Power is a good bargaining point. If the fleet started in Constantinople it would have to choose a coast of Bulgaria in Spring, 1901, and then would be limited to interference only in Greece or in Rumania, which one being known to everybody. The fleet based at Ankara is well employed simply keeping Russia out of the Black Sea."

Book Review of Lewis Pulsipher's "Game Design: How to Create Video and Tabletop Games, Start to Finish" on the Occasion of the Passing of Allan B. Calhamer, the Designer of Diplomacy

By Jim Burgess

Game Design – How to Create Video and Tabletop Games, Start to Finish

By Lewis Pulsipher

Published by McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2012

268 pages

ISBN 978-0-7864-6952-9

Lew Pulsipher's paperback book is available at amazon.com (<http://www.amazon.com/Game-Design-Create-Tabletop-Finish/dp/0786469528>) and I was planning to write this review for some time, but it seems especially apt to write it so it appears in the issue of *DW* on the occasion of Allan Calhamer's passing. Arguably no one has ever created a board game design with the level of uniqueness that persists to this day. Of course, hundreds of Diplomacy variants have been designed, including a number of great ones by Lew Pulsipher (designer of Britannia; and about 70 Diplomacy variants listed in the Variant Bank, including Dirigible Diplomacy, various versions of Anarchy Diplomacy, Middle Earth Diplomacy VIII, Twin Earths Diplomacy III, and even an "innings" Baseball Diplomacy variant), but unlike other great innovative game designs, Diplomacy has been a classic seldom imitated commercially.



I think it is debatable whether this book is more designed for Video game design or Board game design. I suspect those in each camp might say it is better designed for the other. I thought it was loads of fun to read through purely from a Diplomacy perspective, and that's how I'm

going to review it. The overarching question as I do so is why "Diplomacy based games" is not a common class of commercial games, and what is special about the Diplomacy game design and how Lew approaches his advice on the subject of game design in general. The general approach of the book is how you take great game ideas to design actual working games, and implicitly on games that will last the test of time. I believe as Allan B. Calhamer has passed from us, he has left a game that will always be a bit of niche, but will go on essentially as long as games do in society. And I believe that will be a VERY long time, even as games move so often into on-line forums. I don't know anyone who plays Monopoly on-line, but pretty much everyone who plays Diplomacy has played it on-line.

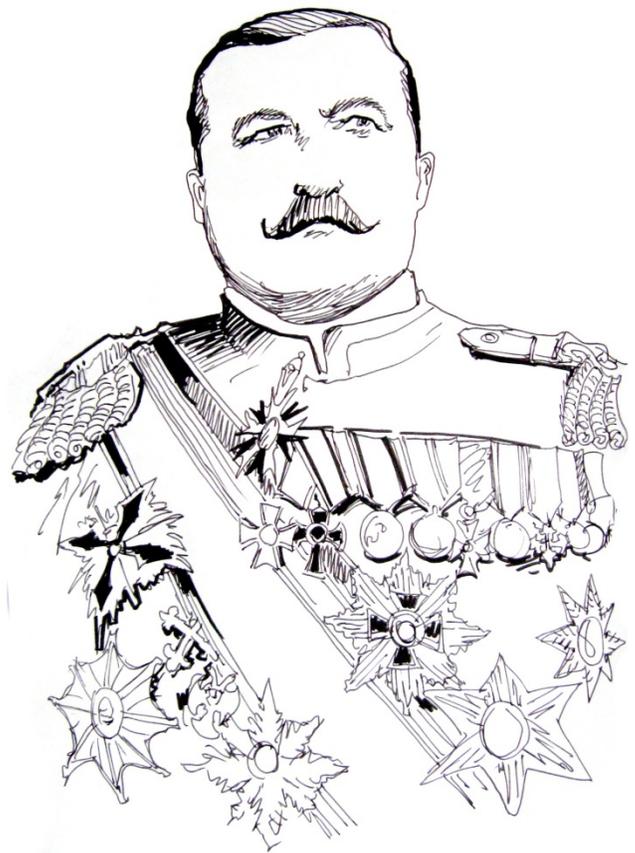
One of Pulsipher's key insights is that getting a game completed is not easy and it requires the suffering to get it right. The "idea" is not the hard part. I know that is my experience, which is mostly in Diplomacy variant game design. I would not have been successful without the base of Diplomacy that solved so many of the problems in getting a design completed, and I was only tweaking some of those ideas. I also know in advising others on their Diplomacy variant game designs, the "tweak idea" is not the game design, it is only the start. And lots of people don't want to hear that. Calhamer put in this suffering and time and effort to perfect The Game of Diplomacy. Another premise of the Pulsipher book is that most all of the ideas out there already have been used in games before, there really isn't anything new. As we deal with this down the road of this review, I will argue that there are at least three design elements in Diplomacy that Calhamer innovated, or innovated in large part. And that makes Diplomacy pretty incredible as a game design.

The highest level of game design, as Lew Pulsipher outlines it, has five characteristics. Theme is the atmosphere of the story in a game, in Diplomacy that is the compelling atmosphere of World War I. I strongly recommend the book "Dreadnaught" by Robert Massie for a full 1000 page or so description of all the context

underlying the game of Diplomacy. If you've only learned about the World War in school you will find that you missed a great deal of the nuances that make the Balance of Power and the changeability that is part of Diplomacy representative of the history. Yet, there are many games that use World War I as a backdrop. For the next characteristic, mechanics, the simultaneous play of Diplomacy is a true innovation. There undoubtedly were simultaneous move/resolution games before Diplomacy, but not many and I don't think any of them resemble Diplomacy. Then there is the system or genre, which again in Diplomacy's case IS the diplomacy. And here again, this game was quite innovative. Then you have components, where you have armies and fleets and a map. In this case, Diplomacy was a simplification, one where the game would have been lost if it had too many components and they were too complicated. You can see this in the confusion that arises when Diplomacy variants expand the number of components. Players seem to have trouble with this, trouble conceptualizing the component complexity, but more than that losing the key aspects of the game, in the diplomacy and the balance of power. Finally, there are constraints. The primary constraint in Diplomacy is time, the time for negotiation that makes FTF game play so problematic. Those of us who've thought about this a great deal lean toward short sweet negotiation seasons and drop-dead deadlines that keep the game moving. But this also is why Diplomacy works so well on the Internet, with on-line play that allows for more flexibility in negotiation time. There are other constraints too, of course. But these five characteristics: Theme, Mechanics, System/Genre, Components, and Constraints; these seem to be the right characteristics that categorize a game. The first chapter finishes with a series of questions that also are helpful for seeing the uniqueness of Diplomacy.

The first interesting question (number 3 in Lew's list) is incredibly important for the design of Diplomacy, the three C's. Is the game competitive, collaborative, or cooperative? Diplomacy, of course, is ALL three at different times, and frequently at the same time. This is one of the key complexities of the game. Only one player can win, but no player can win completely by themselves, and there are frequent opportunities for players to suggest moves to other players in strategic collaborative ways. And of course, alliances and cooperation are there too. Again, before Diplomacy, I don't think there are games with this level of the three C's interacting amongst each other so essentially. Diplomacy is an asymmetric game (though some people don't like this and have designed variants like the Five Italies that are indeed more symmetric) that is quintessentially zero-sum. One of the many places where Lew highlights Diplomacy is there in that zero-sum aspect of it. There ARE only 34 supply centers, an EVEN number of those, while we have an ODD number of players. But zero-sum means that if I take a center

(after the initial pick-up of neutrals), I have to take it from someone else. But another of Pulsipher's questions is how many "sides" and how many "players" are there? Of course, the standard Diplomacy game has seven players, but it has a shifting number of "sides"! I will come back to this characteristic, but this is another characteristic where Diplomacy innovates. Diplomacy also sits at the intersection of "rules-dominant" and "role-assumption" games. It really does both, but in ways that are somewhat able to be manipulated by the players. This also is quite unique. Many Diplomacy players like gunboat or anonymous play to control that aspect of the role-assumption. Many players try to make "rules" about lying, deception, or negotiation to try to nail down the rules better. But good Diplomacy games bounce around that space in interesting ways.



I am not covering all of the questions Lew Pulsipher asks here, but another important one for Diplomacy where a choice is made is on the role of chance. Diplomacy is hardly unique here as chess and checkers are classic chance-less games, but in the 1950's die based games were all the rage, Diplomacy went a different way. Another of Lew's questions raises yet another key design aspect of the game, the control of the game by the actions of the player. A chess master will never be defeated by us lesser mortals. But in Diplomacy, novice players CAN have success, there are openings that are

better than others, to be sure, but top-level players can be defeated, especially by coalitions of lesser experienced players. Diplomacy also sits right on the line between a “mechanical” game and a “psychological” game, and Lew notes this in discussion of that choice. “Romantic” and “classical” players exploit these characteristics differently, and in ways that make EVERY game different. Finally, Lew asks is the game “ruthless” or “nice”? You might think Diplomacy is ONLY ruthless, but again for this same reason you would be wrong! It is of course possible to play ruthless games of Diplomacy, but it also is possible to play nice ones. And most games are both and.

Chapter 2 talks about how you acquire skill at game design, I’m going to skip this, though I thought it was an entertaining and interesting chapter, to stay focused on Diplomacy issues. But Chapter 3 talks about the characteristics of good games and what makes them so, and even though Lew doesn’t mention Diplomacy in this whole chapter, we will. Games have to feed the player, not the designer! Many Diplomacy variants I’ve seen fail since they are the narcissistic exercise of the designer, and they sometimes “ask the player” to do what the designer wants (usually against some essential aspect of the game). This is boring, so it seems obvious, but Diplomacy is all about the player. And for Allan Calhamer it always was. Then, the next few characteristics are key for Diplomacy: Challenges, Choice, Interaction (with other players), and Activity. Boy, is Diplomacy great on all of these, or what? Good games also have some degree of play balance, and here Diplomacy breaks this rule to prove the point. Italy and Austria ARE NOT poor countries to play, they are DIFFERENT countries to play. Finally, you also need multiple ways to win, everyone cannot get to the win the same way; this makes it boring. Despite the apparent simplicity of the Diplomacy board, no two games play out the same way. I’ve NEVER seen that happen in hundreds of games. As Lew asks, “if the game is not entertaining, challenging, or instructive in some way, why would anyone bother with it?”

And Diplomacy, I also would argue, is what Lew calls an “epic game”, one that has Scope, Player Commitment, and Tension and Memorability. In many ways, even though the whole “scope” of World War I is NOT included, the scope of Diplomacy is epic and it is the seven countries of Europe vying for control that is part of what grabs you as player. Player commitment is generated from depth, length, and complexity in Lew’s view, and these characteristics Diplomacy has in spades. The complexity is psychological for the most part, in that you have to be on target in predicting what six other players will do. And people complain about the length of Diplomacy games sometimes. But it does add to an epic feel. Tension and memorability are created by great stories you can tell around a beer after a game and the heart-thumping uncertainty within the game. Again,

arguably Diplomacy is one of the most epic games I know I’ve ever played on this score. I still remember great stabs and silliness years afterward. And the simultaneous movement and orders being read together is always tense. So, is Diplomacy a “great game” in Pulsipher’s lexicon? Again, I quote: “A game is great if you can (and want to) play it again and again with great enjoyment over many years, if you can almost endlessly discuss the intricacies of good play, if you can create many variants that also are fine games.” Although Lew doesn’t mention Diplomacy at this point, to me he’s describing it to a T. He notes you don’t have to have popularity and need to avoid the “cult of the new”. Yes, I would assert that Diplomacy is a great, epic game. And Lew himself has probably designed more variants of Diplomacy than he has variants of any other game. This helps to engage those of us who love the player commitment and tension issues, but want new vistas in other areas.

I am not going to attempt to cover all aspects of this really well put together book, that not only all Diplomacy variant designers, but everyone interested in game design should consult, but there is a section on “21st Century Games” which argues a bit against the “great game epic longevity” of Diplomacy. I think it is important, especially to someone like me who is 55 and knows he will be playing Diplomacy for the rest of his life, to reflect on the game’s future. And the future is where it does, and does not, appeal to 21st Century tastes. I do think, by the way, that Lew has nailed what this generation wants in games, even though he is in my generation. There is a low tolerance for frustration and gamers are looking for instant gratification. This helps me understand some of the nonsense that Hasbro has tried to do over the years with Diplomacy (which really needs no updating). The key positive part that does engage people today, is there is no “lose a turn, sit and wait” frustration in Diplomacy (well, except if you can’t figure out how to engage when you’re losing, which does evade many novice players). That last point is key, if you want to grab younger new players, you have to teach them how to avoid the avoidable frustration (the game really is ALWAYS interesting for everyone), and admit the real frustration drawn from the simultaneous play and lack of control. This lack of “positive scoring mechanisms” where six players simply lose when one player wins is a real problem in today’s gaming world. But it must be judged not a bug, but a feature. I have always seen this and I think it is a key part of the niche aspect of Diplomacy as a game. There are three roots, I think, for players who play Diplomacy a few times and then run away from it. One is this positive reinforcement feature, I’ll come back to the other two in a bit.

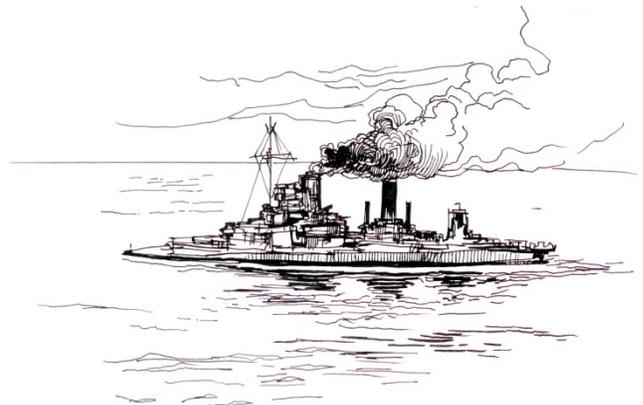
Then there is the “disinclination to plan or study” issue. Yes, Diplomacy does have openings, and I suppose people study them, but I don’t think you have to do this. I know I don’t do much planning or study of the play of

Diplomacy, though I do enjoy a good tactical article here in Diplomacy World I'm really reading it for enjoyment rather than study. You can study Diplomacy, but after a bit it doesn't help you that much. Diplomacy is a game of feeling, and in that sense IS a 21st Century game. Players also do not like to write things down or do even simple arithmetic. I have seen this in how people like to play Diplomacy on the web. I can go on and on about this, but I won't since I agree with the sentiment and see how Diplomacy works there and so do you. Another advantage of the Diplomacy in the simplicity of choices is that today's game players want a "reduced number of plausible choices, and not many pieces to deal with". The game design of Diplomacy works in this direction, balancing this feature really well so there is just the right amount of tactical complexity. We aren't just moving "one avatar", but we are reasonably close to doing so. Of course, another characteristic that Diplomacy shares is not having down time. This idea of waiting your turn is so "yesterday", yet most table games still have that feature. In this way, Diplomacy really is more like a modern video game that uses technology to allow simultaneous play.



Diplomacy does not have look up tables or dice, all no-go's for modern design, but it DOES have player elimination and it has a LOT of player elimination. This works better on the web than for FTF, but it still is a problem. Modern game players do not like elimination not just for this practical reason, but as a psychological safety. You can always re-boot or retreat into your safe haven where your enemies cannot follow. If you can't handle this or don't get this, Diplomacy may not be the game for you. I think this could be an excellent place for an Internet based variant design that combines Diplomacy with MMO (Massively Multiplayer Online) game design. You have your "avatar" homeland, and you marshal resources there to engage in "Diplomacy games" in structured spaces, but when you lose, you drop back into your homeland and then find other players to play. This is, in fact, what us Diplomacy players call "The Hobby" and it is why Diplomacy communities form. Two more features that Lew discusses represent the third major reason people walk

away from The Game. Pacifism and sharing/cooperation are hallmarks of games now, with less competition, and implicitly less backstabbing. Traditionally, we think, this is why Diplomacy tends to be a male oriented game, of course. And one can play Diplomacy very cooperatively, although it isn't as much fun that way. But anyone who cannot handle the ferocity of a backstab and laugh and have a beer with that player later is never going to enjoy Diplomacy. Finally, I'll mention one more 21st Century characteristic that is the deepest reason why ***I*** play Diplomacy and in which Diplomacy was way ahead of its time in its design. "Uncertainty of information is much more common." Diplomacy is one of the first of the hidden information, simultaneous movement games. The hidden information (what orders I'm writing) is sequentially hidden and then revealed. And many extremely popular Diplomacy variants expand the "fog of war". The major Diplomacy variant I designed, Spy Diplomacy, of course augments this characteristic.



Finally, I wasn't there when Allan B. Calhamer went through the long design process to bring Diplomacy to fruition. There are articles and descriptions and rule sets that show this development. I chose to focus my review of Game Design by Lewis Pulsipher about Diplomacy looking into the 21st Century. I hope you got enough of a sense of the book by the way I did that, which was NOT a traditional review. Lew also does have a lot of discussion about how to playtest and develop and complete a game design. Reading this book helped me to understand better how Calhamer really did "get it right" on so many levels and why I would assert Diplomacy is a great epic game. It also highlights really well why it is NOT for everyone and never will be more than a niche game in the marketplace. It is a classic game that is going to be around for a very long time. Thank you to Allan B. Calhamer, thanks for the epic and simplicity of your design, and thank you to all of you who I've met already or who I will meet soon over a Diplomacy board.

Anatomy of a House Game

By Alex Maslow

(When trying to get a house game going – and house games are the core of any Diplomacy community – it is important to know what to expect and what is expected. Here's an analysis and reflection on a recent house game we played in the SF bay area.)

I got an e-mail from Darin in the beginning of February inviting me to come play. I met Darin in August at PacificCon during a Twilight Struggle tournament. After the tournament we had talked about other board games we liked and Diplomacy came up. He said he'd keep me in the loop if a house game was being set up in the bay area. I had just moved here from Alaska (where there was no such community, though I had convinced some friends to try the game once), so I was excited. That was 5 months before. So, if you're new to an area and want to find out about house games, be patient, and be open. In all instances, but especially at board game conventions, talk to everyone you meet, be cordial, and make connections. And if ever you're at a gaming convention, talk about Diplomacy. You might just find someone looking for a local hobby.

But making connections is only step one. After you're in the loop, the real work of starting a house game begins. In this day and age, e-mail is the preferred form of communication. I was encouraged to invite anyone I knew, as was everyone else. "But you only need 7 players!" Not really. You need more. If someone drops out, then you just have six frustrated players. And if one or two of those are newbies, they may be turned off from the game entirely. We junkies know the game is worth the scheduling hassle. But new players won't be willing to put up with that, nor should they need to. So invite everyone in the area.

A known strategy is to invite Diplomacy veterans who can act as standbys. The point of a house game should be to give new players a chance to play in the hopes of growing the community. So if all your newbies show up, great, let them play! And if 10 people were expected to come and 2 bail, no big deal. At a certain point, we had 9 players signed up.

But while our numbers swelled at 9, they dropped down to 7. Seven is a precarious number for a house game. As anyone who's publicized any event via Facebook or Meetup can tell you, it is rare that everyone who SAYS they are coming actually does. Then someone e-mailed they had caught a cold. DANGER DANGER. I e-mailed Darin and told him I'd bring a few board games of my own so that if we didn't have seven players we could just play other games. I woke up Sunday morning hoping and hoping everyone would show up.

The start time was 11, so I showed up at 10:45. I not only wanted to play Diplomacy, but I also wanted to meet the players and make new connections. The purpose of a house game is to grow your community, or to join the community (depending on your point of view). Be kind, be polite, and don't be too cutthroat. We're playing the game to have fun and, if there's a new player, trying to showcase our favorite game. Nobody cares if you solo in a house game against newer players who then never play the game again. In fact, that's pretty detrimental to the hobby! Better if you play cooperatively and let everyone have fun. There are no prizes for house games except new friends and new players. Unspoken rule: Don't be an asshole.

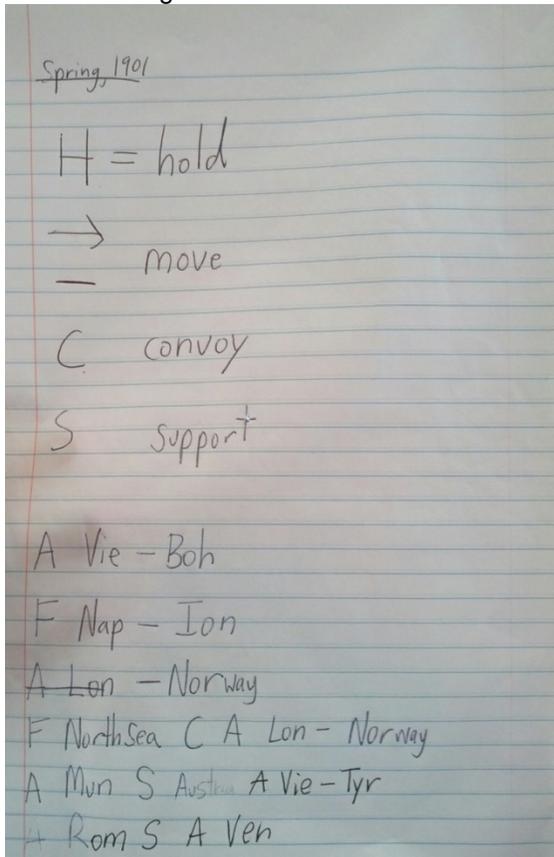


When I arrived, there were 5 players already there. The clock struck 11, but nobody panicked. Another player showed up soon after 11. Edi regaled us with some stories. We also had a new player (14 year old son of

one of the other player's) who had only played 4 games prior to this one. So we asked him some questions and all reminisced of when we learned the game. Another player had signed up recently so we were waiting on two players, so we had a brief discussion on who would step down. But sometimes everyone, new and old, want to play. If that's the case, the easiest ways to choose who sits out are: Whoever lives closest to the venue (Which means, if you're the host – you're first!) OR how recent was your last played game. Those players would stand aside and observe, possibly doling out advice to the newest players.

(Brief sidenote: Edi was talking with us about the design of the map boards. He said there was a version from Brazil that had given North Africa a supply center. One had not been removed from somewhere else on the board so there were 35 SCs. I think I'd like to play this "variant" (They did not realize the map was wrong until some time had passed) – it would be interesting).

So we had our 7 players. For newer players (and all players, really) there was a handy "How do you write orders, anyway?" cheat sheet. I recommend all house games have something similar.



This sheet not only establishes the norms of order shorthand, but also the abbreviations of many provinces

(though why Norway and North Sea were spelled out, I cannot say. It would have been more instructive to have them represented as "Nwy" and "Nth," respectively. We spent some time answering some questions for our newbies and our out-of-practice veterans. Diplomacy is a game to be won through cunning, not because your opponents misunderstood the rules.

There's no point going into the details, but I will mention that cordiality was the name of the game. We were all hoping to encourage our newbie to play more games, and for the most part the game was standard. I finally decided to stab our newbie, which ended up not actually being a great plan, and I had to pull him back onside to stop the solo threat on the other side of the board. It ended up being very educational for him – he learned how to react to a stab and when to let bygones be bygones. That said, I'm not encouraging you to stab newbies. It's actually the only time in the many games I've played with newbies where I've done that. I think it worked for the best (Not for the game or my own position, but for the learning experience), but overall I'd advise against it.

Darin was an especially gracious host. He had available cookies and crackers and soda and beer and his wife bought sandwiches for us. Food is always key at events like this. Also, house games are nice because you can call for a 30 minute lunch break more easily than in a tournament.

Another thing about house games: deadlines need not be exact. In a tournament, the bell rings and you're in the box or not. In house games, the bell is generally a warning, "Get your orders in!" As long as no one abuses this, it's fine. And by abuse I mean REALLY OVER THE TOP ABUSE. Especially for newer players, but really for everyone, we want a relaxed atmosphere.

Further, in tournaments, adjudication of orders is part of the turn. NOT TRUE in house games, especially with newbies. Read the orders such that everyone can see and understand what's happening, and always allow for questions from players, new or not. Further, if an order is unclearly written, 9/10 times ask the player what they meant and just roll with it. Unless what they're saying is CLEARLY influenced by the orders of other players that have already been read, give them the benefit of the doubt. We're here to have fun.

If tournaments are the fruit of our hobby, surely house games are the roots that must be maintained for such a harvest to be reaped. So run house games, but moreover, run good house games.

Ask the GM

An Advice Column for Diplomacy World

By The GM

Dear GM:

What is your favorite country to play in Diplomacy and why?

Signed,
Favorite Son

Dear Son,

I like to play the central powers more—especially the Krauts—the Germans or the Austrians—so I can get into everybody's business and start messing with their minds.

My favorite games are the ones where everyone is getting some information from me, it's usually misinformation, but it is information. Remember no one wins by talking to the board, sometimes I'm even reduced to telling the truth.

Your Pal,
The GM

Dear GM,

What are your thoughts on press in a Diplomacy game?

Signed,
Press Agent

Dear Fan,

Press, like most information from the other players, is mostly for suckers and to be taken with a grain of salt since I assume all players are cheats and liars. Having said that, you can often find some useful tidbits of information in some press.

Of course the long press that our editor loves some much by the late Richard Walkerdine or Larry Perry is generally a waste of time and should be avoided unless you like that sort of babble....

Your Pal,
The GM

Selected Upcoming Conventions

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

2013 CODCon Open - Saturday April 20th 2013 - Sunday April 21st 2013 - Glen Ellyn, Illinois, United States - Contact: [Dan Burgess](#) - Website: <http://windycityweasels.org/codcon7>

EuroDipCon XXI – Friday May 3rd 2013 - Saturday May 4th 2013 - Rue de la Montagne 43/A 5000 Namur, Belgium - Contact: [Jean-Louis Delattre / Laurent Joly / Dave Simpson](#) - Website: <http://eurodipcon.com/>

Wiesbaden Variant Days (WVT-13) - Friday May 10th 2013 - Sunday May 12th 2013 - Wiesbaden Youth Hostel (only 40 min. from FRA-airport), Germany - Contact: [U. Degwitz @ Deutscher Diplomacy Bund e.V.](#) - Website: http://www.diplomacy-bund.de/en/cons/wiesbadener_varianten_tage_2013/wiesbadener

San Marino EGP step 2013 - Saturday May 11th 2013 - Sunday May 12th 2013 - Best Western Palace Hotel, San Marino - Contact: [Luca Pazzaglia](#) - Website: <http://asqs.sm>

Weasel Moot VII - Saturday June 22nd 2013 - Sunday June 23rd 2013 - Willowbrook (Western suburb of Chicago), United States - Contact: [Jim OKelley](#) - Website: <http://windycityweasels.org/wm7>

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

WorldDipCon XXIII – Friday August 23rd 2013 - Sunday August 25th 2013 - Paris, 12 rue Michel Ange, France - Contact: [Laurent Joly](#) - Website: <http://www.worlddipcon.com>

Italian EGP step 2013 - Saturday August 31st 2013 - Sunday September 1st 2013 - Lucca (Tuscany), Italy - Contact: [Luca Pardini](#) - Website: <http://azogar.altervista.org/>

MidCon (UK NDC) – Friday November 8th 2013 - Monday November 11th 2013 - Hallmark Hotel, Midland Road, Derby, DE1 2SQ, United Kingdom - Contact: [Dave Simpson](#) - Website: <http://www.midcon.org.uk>

Diplomacy World Demo Game

“Thanks for the Roses” – 2013B

The Players:

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

The Commentators:

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

The GM:

Douglas Kent

The Players:

Austria: Christopher Martin – Born in Virginia, raised in Nebraska. Former professional ballroom dance instructor and musical theatre performer. PhD in Performance Studies, dissertation on the role ballroom dancing played in reinforcing white supremacy in the US between the civil war and WWI. Currently hiding out from Academia as a business developer for a small federal contractor in Falls Church, VA. Married, one child, who is almost old enough to start pushing pieces. First played Diplomacy at a summer leadership workshop in middle school; discovered online play in the mid-nineties, which led to The Old Republic, run by Tim Richardson, which led to a face to face game, at which point I was hooked. Since 1997:

F2F tournaments attended: 68
Boards played: 194
Solo victories: 6 (not counting concessions)
Boards topped or shared in the draw: 96
Boards eliminated or cut out of draw: 43
Tournament Win/Place/Show: 11/9/4
Rainbow points: 6/7 (No tournament solo as Russia)
World Dip Con Champ 1998
North American Dip Con Champ 1998, 1998, 2008*, 2011
North American Grand Prix 1999, 2011,
Eastern Swing 2002
Nor'Easter 2011
Current F2F Ranking: 6th/13th or 2nd/5th (NA/World)
of years without a tournament win: 6/13
of years without a win or place: 2/13
of years without a win, place, or show: 0 (not counting 1997, my first tournament, where I had two eliminations and a one-center survival - but I was part of the five-way draw! Berlin -> Kiel! BERLIN -> KIEL!!!!)

Events Organized:

NA Dip Con 2005 "Dip at Sea"
NADF Masters Invitational 2011, 2013

President, North American Diplomacy Federation 2012 - Present
Favorite Country: Austria

Email Diplomacy: Yeah, not so much. Not very good at it, but there you are. Plus, Laurent Joly doesn't compile stats for online play. :D

England: Frank Sudlow – Frank has been playing Diplomacy since the game was first published almost 40 years ago and still has the old board and pieces. However in those days he was never able to muster the full set of 7 players and only really came to the game about 20 years ago when he got an email account with compuserve and discovered PBEM.

He was soon addicted and his wife threatened to divorce him sighting the Dip Community as the correspondent! She relented.

He is a great diplomat and strong ally, which is to say that his is often stabbed first and has never achieved a solo. But he has a long record of draws and is rarely eliminated. Famously he once kept his single French army alive for 6 game years.

You can trust him to keep his word, for he is a diplomat!

France: Gregory Alexopoulos - What you should know about me is that I am 42 years of age (yes, I have actually reached the answer age!). I was born in a galaxy far, far away, but decided to grow up and live in Greece instead, where the challenges offered are far greater than simply blowing up a Death Star or two! I've studied engineering and I'm working as a management/IT consultant. Happily living with one wife, one son and one dog, driving all three of them crazy with what I call "humor". Into PBEM Dip since 1999, much less active recently though. Interests include literature, cinema, wine and fine dining, and collecting skulls of players who thought they had managed to stab me (just a heads up here!). Notorious for timing things wrong, but fighting anything out nevertheless.

Germany: Michael Sims – Michael is a man of mystery, declining to provide any personal details for his Bio. There have been rumors that Michael is a pseudonym for a famous Hollywood starlet who was introduced to

the game at school. If that's true, allow me to tell you...I have a big crush on you, Jennifer Lawrence, especially as your Silver Linings Playbook character.

Italy: Timothy Crosby – 43

I am a Leo and i enjoy long walks on the beach, my hobbies include books, movies, golf, fencing and listening to music. My turn ons are women who make me laugh, movies that make you reconsider your world view and singers that put all their emotions into their music. I try to avoid negativity and country music.

I have been playing the game for around 12 years but mostly through e-mail. I have played 4 or 5 games face to face back in college when i was introduced to the game. I was hooked the very first time i wrote an order. I do not have a lot in terms of credentials...two years i have played in the Winter Blitz on Diplomatic Corps and was pretty close to winning both of those years. I have a few solo wins and several low count draws...but the what drives me is the game itself. I love meeting new people from around the US and the rest of the world.

Russia: Peter Yeargin - Peter first began playing the game of Diplomacy in earnest when he moved to Chicago in 2007. Having been introduced to the hobby at a PTKS house game in Washington, DC, he went looking for a local game and found the Windy City Weasels Meetup page and the illustrious Jim O'Kelley.

The Chicago club was and remains an extremely active club. Peter was able to play 15-20 house games a year and also made the traveling hobby a regular activity. Peter is one of only two two-time champions at HuskyCon, though David Maletsky, the other individual, remains Champion of Champions thanks to his Champions board win in last year's tournament.

Peter finished 2nd place in the Grand Prix standings in 2010 and 2012, and took home 1st place as North American Grand Prix Champion in 2011.

Turkey: Jonathan Powles – I work in universities - either as an academic (my subject is music) or, as currently, in the nefarious regions of university management. I'm currently managing the implementation of a flexible/online learning project for a bunch of degrees across the University of Canberra.

My enthusiasm for all things online extends to Diplomacy. I had Dip set as a teenager in the 1980s, but didn't have six friends so never played the game. My first game of Diplomacy was in 2003, when I discovered the email judges, and I have been almost exclusively an email player since then. The exception was when I turned up to the Australian Championships in 2010, where I fluked second place with a lot of luck and a fair bit of wide-eyed "this is my first ever game of face-to-face Diplomacy.

The Commentators:

Jim Burgess: My history with this great game of Diplomacy began when I received my Games Research Inc. (the lighter reddish-purple box with the picture on the front) copy of Diplomacy for Christmas in 1969, when I was 12. My first games were family games with the six of us (three brothers and my parents) with some sort of adjustments that I can't recall that included help for my younger brothers, David (the one who still plays) was only 5 at the time!! I then put Diplomacy down for awhile mostly, like many of that generation I was playing mostly hex games and I was designing my own War in the Pacific hex game with carrier fog of war rules and stuff like that. I also was a member of my high school Chess Club and I came to really despise Chess for its structure and style of psychological pressure. I and my fellow Chess Club friends gravitated back into playing Diplomacy in the early 1970's. There also was a Schenectady area (where I grew up) growing Wargaming contingent of people that eventually evolved into the still continuing Schenectady Wargamers Association (<http://www.swa-gaming.org/>). But I was starting to see Diplomacy as the game of all games for some still very difficult to articulate reason. It was something about the total immersion of the personality and the soul, the way you could play the game at different levels, the sort of Zen aspect to it (this was

when Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance (1974) came out), and other things I could not quite put my finger on. I graduated from high school in 1975 still generally ignorant of the IDA battles and other issues in the larger hobby, but we did hear of John Boardman and Boardman numbers, so we started playing some postal games from college amongst my former Chess Club and wargaming friends that did have assigned BNs. These mostly were quite silly affairs, and most of them didn't even finish before we got busy with school and exams etc.

But I was at the University of Rochester, where organizer that I am, I organized another gaming association that is still going strong, the University of Rochester Simulation Gaming Association, they ran their 32nd SIMCON (<http://www.simcon.org>) in March of 2010 and at the first SIMCON, I ran and won my own Diplomacy Tournament (something I don't recommend, as now they don't play Diplomacy any more....). I also got myself more connected with the wider Diplomacy hobby (thanks to Gregg Dick, who was a friend of one of my high school Diplomacy friends, and was running one of the Dipszines we formed to play with those high school friends). For a period in 1982, when I was living pretty lonely quite frankly in Dallas, I was incredibly

engaged in the hobby, spending hours and hours writing letters, commenting, writing press, and being (with Tro Sherwood) one of the US Orphan Service directors helping to place orphaned postal games. This is where I acquired my Jim-Bob moniker, was elected 1982 Toady of the Year and a host of other personality driven sillinesses. This was my hobby Golden Age where I met each of the players in the game below in some manner or three. I started my own postal szine, which still is lurching along today on the web and I helped to bring hobby history to the startings of the electronic hobby in the late 1980's and early 1990's with the formation of the rec.games.diplomacy usenet group and other activities. I also got very involved in forming and reforming the FTF Diplomacy activity in the New England area a couple of times in the last two decades, and now am running TempleCon (<http://www.templecon.org>) in Rhode Island each February (come up and see me some time!!!). Somewhere in there, I became associated with this Diplomacy World monstrosity and somehow held it vaguely together so it could emerge under Doug Kent's nagging leadership again into the TRUE hobby institution it is today. Why anyone wants me to comment on this game is purely anyone's guess. I suppose I know this troupe of misfits as well or better than anyone else around here, so I'll try to engage and entertain you. I hope they write REAL press, so you can all see some glimpse of what real postal style press was, and I'll comment on that too as desirable. Well, here we go, first some comments about each of the players....

Rick Desper: Rick Desper first encountered the game of Diplomacy as a freshman at Georgetown University, where the local chapter of APO ran a big-board game in the basement of Copley Hall. Rick started playing email dip a year later, after transferring to Wesleyan

Opening Comments:

Jim Burgess (**BOLD**)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Jack McHugh (Comic Sans MS)

Here we go with the commentary on the game. Just as a side note, when I went to look up Tim and Mike's Diplomaticcorp records, I found one Jack McHugh with one of the lowest ratings on the site with 10 eliminations..... hmmm....

This game should be especially fun since we've brought together some great players who mostly have played in disparate hobbies and not with each other. I am not encyclopedic, but the players here who know each other best are FTF champions Chris Martin and Peter Yeargin; Chris and Peter most recently were together this January at Chris' biennial FTF invitational in New Orleans; Frank Sudlow and Gregory Alexopoulos are members of and have played together in the Academy of Creative

University, getting in on the ground floor of email-dip with legends like Eric Klien and Danny Loeb. In the 90s, Rick matriculated at Rutgers University for grad school, and was present for the early days of Ken Lowe's email judge diplomacy, as well as the birth of the Usenet group rec.games.diplomacy. Starting with Avaloncon in 1997, Rick became more active in FTF Diplomacy, and has attended World DipCons in England, Belgium, and Germany (as well as several in the US and Canada). Rick achieved a rare worst-to-first achievement in the 2004-2005 DipCons, but still takes more pride in the victory at the World Boardgamers Championship Diplomacy tournament in 2003.

More recently, Rick's Diplomacy activity has waned as his interest in the large number of excellent games from Germany has grown. Still, Rick is always interested in an exciting FTF game, provided that no muppets are allowed. Rick doesn't understand why people play Diplomacy if they are going to make no effort at trying to win the game. (It's like playing tennis with the goal of hitting the ball as close to the other player as possible.)

Rick's other pet peeve are movie-quiz publishers who ask their readers to guess a category that includes 9 Oscar winners for Best Picture, and only one film that didn't win Best Picture, and then the category is "Pictures that won the Oscar for Best Director". Rick finds that really annoying.

Jack McHugh: Jack McHugh is well known oyster diver and wargame affianado who has a history in the hobby going back to the early of days of the hobby helping to come up with such well known terms as R, D and OTB....Plays on several websites and has been as unsuccessful on the web as he was on pbm.

Destruction (ACD), Gregory and Frank were Italy and Austria together in the ACD game 234 back in 2009/2010, sharing a four way draw with two western powers; and Tim Crosby (fencertim screenname) and Mike Sims (FuzzyLogic screenname) are two of the top players at the Diplomaticcorp (www.diplomaticcorp.com). That leaves Jonathan Powles, who has mainly been one of the best of the recent players in the Judge hobby, but I don't think he'll be hampered by not knowing the other players as well, and I don't expect at all to see the game break out in these pairs. I think this is one of our most interesting Demo Game lineups we've ever had. Peter and Chris are the FTF stalwarts, Gregory, Jonathan and Michael have dipped their toes into the FTF tournament world, and to my knowledge Tim

and Frank haven't played FTF in tournaments at all. But these are all highly experienced players. Here are a few comments, right now in a "less is more" style about each of our players.

Austria: Christopher Martin: I've always found it fitting that Chris has a PhD in dance and really is a dancer, since that's how he plays, nimble and quick. But he also has extraordinary patience where he may pass up initial stabs and then bite later when his quarry least expects it. He is a strong win-oriented player, who has been part of the international FTF hobby for about the last fifteen years, he has 68 tournaments listed in the current EDC World Diplomacy Database and counting. He is extremely dangerous, especially in these games where everyone is good, so he can't simply be targeted and overwhelmed. Also, he plays Austria better than just about anyone I know.

I know Chris very well from FTF play in the DC area. He is one of the most determined negotiators I've ever met. He is adept at rallying from bad situations by talking, talking, talking until he finds a way to diffuse his opponents.

England: Frank Sudlow: Frank is one of those deceptively brilliant players, he will pass under the radar screen until you suddenly realize he's overwhelmed you. He also is really good at allying with really good players. I will admit that I was inviting Mike Morris from the Academy for Creative Destruction first, as I find Mike to be a complete shark and impossible to ally with. This is undoubtedly my weakness, since Frank engineered a brilliant three way as Germany, with Mike Morris as England, and the estimable Steve Emmert in Turkey. Frank will hang around and play well off these other really good players.

France: Gregory Alexopoulos: I often describe Gregory as one of the best tacticians I've ever met. And I have met him at the World DipCon in 2001 in Paris, where he finished 37th and I finished 68th, but I'm really referring to his brilliant E-Mail play. It comes out most effectively in variants where you have to learn new boards and tactics, where he just knows how to map a board in his head and maneuver it to his advantage. But he also is a great tactician in the standard game too, and I look forward to watching his tactics as this game gets going as well.

Germany: Michael Sims: Mike is very humble, but a brilliant player, his standard-bearing leadership of the Diplomaticcorp game site is matched by the efficiency and effectiveness of his play. He has an understated style, but he is very aggressive as well. This is going to be a fascinating Western

engagement between Frank, Gregory, and Mike. Mike has 11 solos at Diplomaticcorp, more than twice as many as any other player.

Italy: Timothy Crosby: Tim's special skills are similar to Frank's where he almost never is eliminated from a game, and playing only a quarter as many games as Mike Sims at diplomaticcorp, has earned a higher percentage of both solos and draws.

Russia: Peter Yeargin: Peter has burst onto the FTF diplomacy scene in the last four years and taken it by storm. He has won five tournaments in that time and in the more than 30 tournaments he has played in he has been in the top ten most of the time and very seldom been in the lower half of the players. He has mastered the game very quickly and it will be great to expose him to the wider hobby in this game.

Last year Peter moved from the Chicago area to the DC area, in the process leaving the Weasels for the Pitkissers. He is a solid player both tactically and diplomatically, but brings a trustworthy face to the game.

Turkey: Jonathan Powles: Jonathan has a fascinating style that is exceedingly difficult to describe, as he can be quite chameleonic in his affect. He is the only Aussie in this game and the only primarily Judge player. In his first and so far only foray into the Australian FTF world, he finished second, besting the estimable Andrew Goff in the last game. I've played in games with him, and he has a level head and plays with creativity and verve. Finally, he is a brilliant music theorist who understands the complexities of how to think about music in alignment with the world. I am in awe of him on that score. (sorry for the lame pun....)

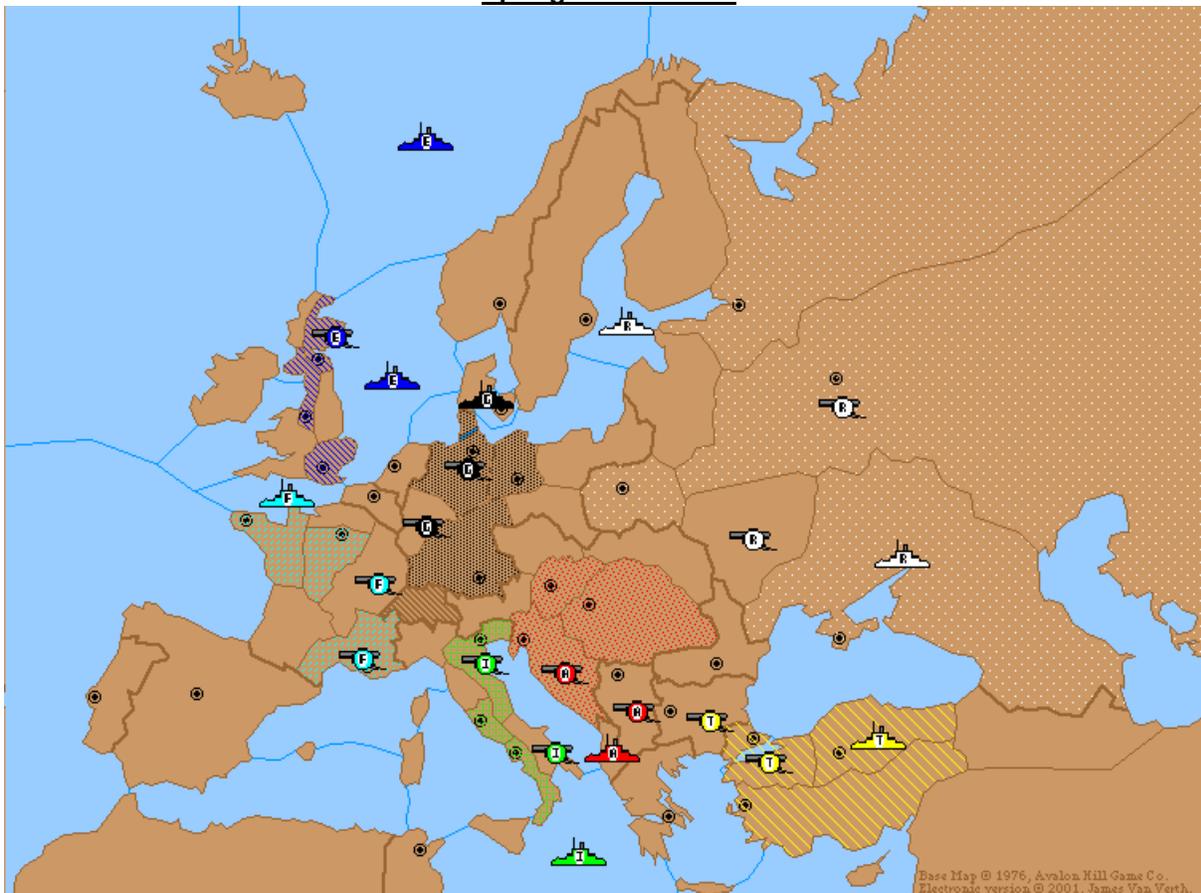
I have played with most of these guys on the the Diplomaticcorp.com website--a website I highly recommend, especially if you want to play with a human, rather than a computer, GM--the only one I remember working closely with was Mike Sims in a World Diplomacy game where we worked closely throughout most of the game. We didn't win however as we ended up being limited by the map and the fact that in North America several powers were not played very well due to abandonment and apathetic players. Quite a shame, actually, as the rest of the large board I thought was played pretty well with a minimum of disruption and NMRs.

I remember Mike from a few other regular Dip games as well and he is a good player and fine ally. I have to admit I haven't played on Diplomaticcorp.com much in

the last year and a half. I have found that being active for so long in the hobby as well as an editor on DW makes it difficult for me to play under my real name---people assume I'm a much better player than I am and attack from the beginning of the game so I've don't play that much online anymore.

Having read Jim-Bob's comments, if I am pretty impressed with the caliber of competition these guys have played against both online and in face-to-face competition. This means we should get a good game of Diplomacy for us to watch.

Spring 1901 Results



Fleets move to assert control of English Channel and Black Sea. A shadow war is in place, as forces redeploy but conflict is quite limited.

Austria: A Budapest – Serbia, F Trieste – Albania, A Vienna - Trieste.

England: F Edinburgh - Norwegian Sea, A Liverpool – Edinburgh, F London - North Sea.

France: F Brest - English Channel, A Marseilles Supports A Paris – Burgundy, A Paris - Burgundy.

Germany: A Berlin – Kiel, F Kiel – Denmark, A Munich - Ruhr.

Italy: F Naples - Ionian Sea, A Rome – Venice, A Venice - Apulia.

Russia: A Moscow Hold, F Sevastopol - Black Sea (*Bounce*), F St Petersburg(sc) - Gulf of Bothnia, A Warsaw - Ukraine.

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

PRESS

Anonymous Press:

here we sit, brave men
sharpened knives at the ready
who will stand alone?

Headlines: New miraculous cure for baldness found!
Patent owner hides the formula in Switzerland, forgets it
is impassable. Last hope to retrieve the formula: to enlist
the services of no other than the famous Mister Sherlock
Holmes. Watch this space for further developments.

- I say Watson, could this be the result of a college

mandatory writing assignment that went wrong?

Spring 1901 Commentary:

Jim Burgess (**BOLD**)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Jack McHugh (Comic Sans MS)

Well, a lot of common openings have been played. England, Germany, and Turkey all have played what might be the most common openings. (Liverpool - Yorkshire may be more common). Italy has also essentially played the very common Lepanto opening, with the twist that the army in Rome has moved to Venice instead of Apulia. The difference only matters if Austria has opened Tri - Ven.

The French opening is very common for Gunboat games...it protects both the English Channel and Burgundy. Greg has put two forces on Belgium and can collect Spain with his other army. Also, London and Munich are vulnerable.

The English opening, aka the Churchill opening, puts England in position to move into Scandinavia or to go after St. Pete early. Of course, it's usually preferred to not have the French in the Channel.

Germany has his fleet in Denmark (which is my preference) where it can affect either Sweden or the North Sea while collecting a build. If he trusts France to leave Munich alone, he could make a play for two builds in the Lowlands.

Austria and Russia have managed to leave Galicia empty. Austria's move to Trieste signals some distrust of Italy. But he's in position to pick up Serbia and Greece. Russia's opening is pretty standard. He's kept the Turk out of the Black Sea and sailed the Northern fleet. The army in Moscow is held in reserve for wherever it might be needed.

Italy's done the now-common Lepanto opening, as I said above. This can be flexed either against Turkey or Austria in 1902. Keep an eye out to see whether he convoys to Tunis.

Turkey's opening is pretty standard. The fleet move to the Black doesn't signify much by itself. It may have been arranged. Had he wanted to blitz Russia, he would have also moved to Armenia. Of course, now the fleet has nothing better to do than make another move to the Black Sea.

I agree with Rick that a lot of common openings have been played in this game. Let's start with the West, both Germany and England have played standard openings although England's move of his army to Edi signals a desire to go north.

Germany's moves look to me like he wants both Hol and Bel but I doubt he banked on France moving to Bur. France felt he needed to support himself with A Mar which tells me that France also felt he might be opposed in Bur.

The French move is the most aggressive of the three as he has both Bur and the Eng. This signals that he is mostly likely working with an eastern power, Russia being the obvious candidate but France can also be working with Austria, Italy or both as well as Russia. I tend to discount any Franco-Turkish alliance because there is little those two powers can do for each other in early game play.

Meanwhile in the East, let's look at the moves. As Rick says, Italy and Austria are moving toward a Lepanto opening but the issue have with saying that is most openings where Austria and Italy don't stab each other tend to look like Lepanto since both powers move towards the Balkans. This movement toward the Balkans by both Austria and Italy is, *ipso facto*, the definition of a Lepanto so most of these openings tends to get labeled that way, but I don't see that here yet. It's just too early to call.

Austria and Italy open cautiously and both go for their obvious neutrals—Ser and Gre for Austria, Tun for Italy—I'm more curious to see how Turkey, Italy and Austria treat Greece. That will tell me more about their relationship than anything else.

Russia and Turkey's openings are, as Rick says, pretty standard except that by moving to Ukr and holding in Mos, Russia is keeping his options open. This also tells me that Russia has yet to work out an understanding with Germany and England over Scandinavia. By avoiding Gal, Russia also keeps his options open with regard to Austria as well; this suggests things are still unsettled in the East.

I am complete agreement with Rick on Turkey—a standard opening that avoids spooking Russia by going to Arm. This opening continues to confirm my suspicion that nothing is settled in the East which actually makes the French opening look more defensive than aggressive since it doesn't look to me like France has a clear ally in the East.

All three commentators are in agreement that common openings were the rule here, as an array of excellent players feels each other out. We all agree that England made a bit of a lurch north with the move to Edinburgh rather than Yorkshire, but most of that preferred opening is the defense if France DOES move to the Channel. And of course he did and even though France can't convoy to Wales, the threat to London probably guarantees that France can support himself into Belgium successfully if he wants to. Germany made very standard moves these days, and could anticipate A Bur-Bel with A Ruh-Bur. If I were Germany in the fall, in fact, I would do that. And as a result France may do F Eng-Bel, that's what we should expect. I agree with Rick that France's moves are somewhat Gunboatish, I hope it doesn't indicate any lack of negotiation.

Italy did a bit of a strange opening, but perhaps there was some sort of promise he would do it that way so Venice wasn't doing anything around Tyrolia.

I agree with Rick about some distrust between Austria and Italy.

On the other hand, Russia and Austria displayed lots of trust and two EXCELLENT FTF champion players clearly have agreed that they're going to make some things happen before they get in each other's way. Of course, for attacking Turkey, this set of moves is notoriously REALLY slow. Turkey can see everything coming a mile away and should be able to get Italy on his side over it. The extreme version of that would have Italy and Turkey bouncing Austria out of Greece with Italy foregoing a build in Fall. I'm not saying I expect that, but it is possible.

The first moves do not do much else except set up for Fall commitments. I would expect Russia will not be successful in stopping Germany from bouncing him out of Sweden. Remember that us observers do not observe the negotiation, but we can comment on the press. I'll also always comment on press. The first anonymous press is a 5-6-4 Haiku, which of course is NOT technically a Haiku, which should be 5-7-5 for syllables. But for some reason with the proliferation of Haiku on Facebook these days, you see this sort of syllable pattern. I don't know why. The sentiment, of course, is pretty straightforward. The other press item makes a Sherlock Holmes allusion, could be interesting later, Manus Hand is most known for talking about Holmes and Diplomacy together. Maybe there will be references to classic Hand Diplomatic Pouch Holmesian queries. We will see.

Fall 1901 Results

Austria: F Albania – Greece, A Serbia Supports F Albania – Greece, A Trieste Hold.

England: A Edinburgh – Norway, F North Sea – London, F Norwegian Sea Convoys A Edinburgh - Norway.

France: A Burgundy – Belgium, F English Channel Supports A Burgundy – Belgium, A Marseilles - Spain.

Germany: F Denmark Hold, A Kiel – Munich, A Ruhr - Holland.

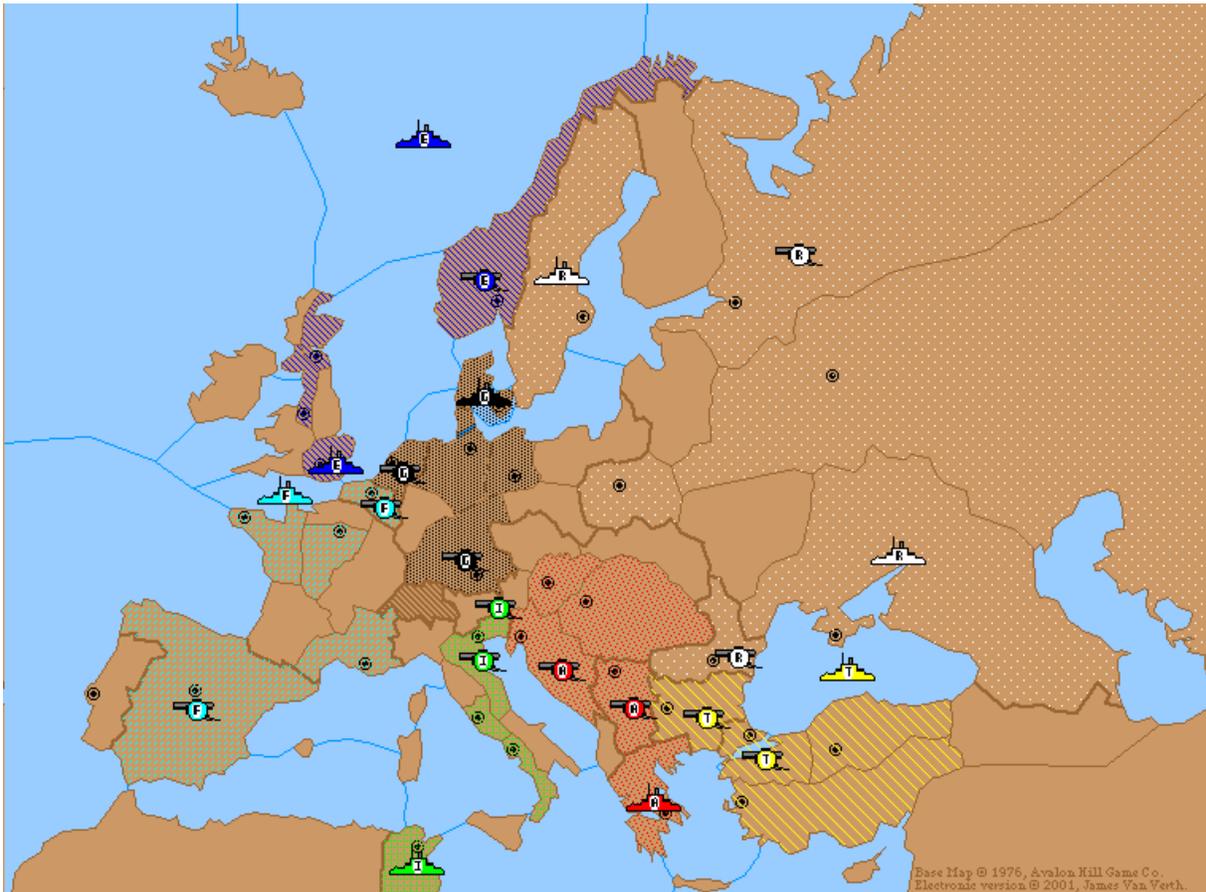
Italy: A Apulia – Venice, F Ionian Sea – Tunis, A Venice - Tyrolia.

Russia: F Gulf of Bothnia – Sweden, A Moscow - St Petersburg, F Sevastopol Supports A Ukraine – Rumania, A Ukraine - Rumania.

Turkey: F Ankara - Black Sea, A Bulgaria - Rumania (*Fails*), A Constantinople - Bulgaria (*Fails*).

Supply Center Chart

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



Wow, only two orders fail. Looks like things are shaping up for an interesting 1902! But who are the enemies and who are the allies? Only time will tell.

PRESS

Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson were going camping. They pitched their tent under the stars and went to sleep. Sometime in the middle of the night Holmes woke Watson up and said: "Watson, look up at the sky, and tell me what you see." Watson replied: "I see millions and millions of stars." Holmes said: "And what do you deduce from that?" Watson replied: "Well, if there are millions of stars, and if even a few of those have planets, it's quite likely there are some planets like Earth out there. And if there are a few planets like Earth out there,

there might also be life." And Holmes said: "Watson, you idiot, it means that somebody stole our tent."

You should have seen this joke coming; everybody knows what standard opening moves mean.

Anon:

France in the Channel!
Galicia Left Open!
What has Come of Us?

Fall 1901 Commentary:

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

Not much surprising here in F01. Mostly dot grabbing, though there are some things that are worth noticing.

The real moves were set up in the Spring, so most of the fall moves are predictable outlays to garner the builds for 1901. France had already guaranteed that Portugal would be unowned in Spring, but surely his for later. And any of the other contested centers

were successfully contested. This usually means a high level of diplomacy, since bounces and unowned Winter 1901 centers are a failure to take advantage of an opportunity.

Austria: Chris locks up his two builds by supporting himself into Greece. Has to view this as a good first year. The Turks haven't moved towards him, nor have

the Russians. But the Italians are in Tyrolia. That could mean any of a number of things.

I think Chris didn't necessarily know this was happening, in fact, it looks to me like he had an opportunity foregone not to bounce one or both of Italy's army moves. The diplomacy underlying that would be interesting to understand. In fact, now, Austria cannot build a fleet (obvious, but true) yet Italy can't make progress advancing on Austria either.

Meh...I don't see anything interesting yet in Austria's moves---safe and straight forward. Italy in Tyr could be a good thing or a bad thing. Since I predict an E/F coming I don't think it's a bad thing for either Austria or Italy for Italy to backstop Germany.

England: Frank does a safe move by convoying to Norway while covering London with the North Sea fleet. We'll see in 1902 if he has any allies. The army in Norway signals a stronger interest in holding that than a fleet landing would. And it also makes him slightly more vulnerable to a French attack.

The biggest risk for England right now is that he has left the North Sea open. As all Sealion fans know, this is REALLY dangerous for England.

I find England's move the most telling, not only did he leave North Sea open but he is not contesting Eng at all. In fact he looks pretty comfortable with France in Eng he sent his army to Nwy. That tells me there is a high probability of an E/F alliance, or at least England believes there is an E/F. We won't know for sure until we see France's builds and moves.

France: Gregory (Greg?) takes the easy builds. It was possible for England and Germany to combine to keep him out of Belgium, but that's an unlikely move. Germany has to be happy that he left Burgundy. This position is still anti-English in form.

It really is Gregory.... yes, I think that there is great opportunity for a GF alliance going forward. This was the way to maximize the outcome, and leave Portugal to be taken later. This seems like it was Gregory's plan all along.

France looks like he's a good position but It's tough to tell in '01 since a G/E alliance could be still be in the offing although with France in Eng it will be tough for it get off the ground with Italy's help.

Germany: Michael (Mike?) takes the easy build in Holland while covering Munich against the French. If

E/F conflict is coming, he'll be the swing vote. It's worth noting that he could have kept the Russians out of Sweden, but he didn't.

But Mike is fine here. I thought that was weird in tactics, and since Mike is such a fine tactician I must be missing something. I would have moved Ruh-Mun for the possible bounce and Kie-Hol since I couldn't believe with London threatened that England would bother to bounce Holland. And IF France bounced in Munich then he would have been stuck in Kiel without being able to build the fleet. Of course, it didn't matter, but it could have. As Rick noted, he also could have kept the Russians out of Sweden, but didn't.

Germany has a decent position so far, I'm assuming he's talking to Russia since he Russia has chosen to move an extra unit into the north. Again, it's hard to tell where people really stand while the neutral dot grabbing is going on.

Italy: Timothy (Tim? - geez, why is everybody so formal here?) bypasses the Lepanto convoy, taking Tunis instead with a fleet. And he moves his armies into Tyrolia and Venice respectively. The army move could mean any of a number of things. He might actually be attacking Austria, though letting Chris get two builds first seems an odd way to go about that. He might be miffed by the DMZ between Austria and Russia, and feel that he needs to set up a line, now, even if it isn't going to be offensively viable. He might have moved up there with Austrian encouragement, with an intent of bypassing Austria to go after either Germany or Russia. The move to Tyrolia gives Italy the most flexibility. I prefer it personally to just sitting on the boot. An Italy that does not go inland in some fashion is not an Italy that will grow much.

Tim or Timothy, I think he goes by either one.... but it is a more formal named group that usual. I also strongly agree with getting Italian armies into the action, so being in Tyrolia is better. Since Austria could easily have bounced it (with a bit of risk), one suspects some possible cooperation. Flexibility is always good and getting Italy to a place of flexibility is key to her long term success.

As for the convoy that wasn't taken: the convoy to Tunis has gotten unpopular. It only really makes sense if Italy is racing Turkey to take the Eastern Med. And it always requires another convoy back in any case. Also, the boot is much more vulnerable if one of the armies is in Africa.

And that's WHY the convoy to Tunis has become so unpopular, it is NOT flexible for Italy, both because it needs to be convoyed back at some point

tying up a fleet that needs to move, and because it takes an army away from the interior.

Italy, like most in this game, has made another non-committal move.—I agree with Jim Bob, there is no reason to put an army in Tun, it's a strategic dead end.

Russia: Peter takes two SCs in Sweden and Rumania, either of which could have been blocked if enough people had been hostile. The army move to St. Pete is less hostile than some might think. If Peter had really wanted to be aggressive towards England, he would have let the SC open so he could build a fleet up there. As things stand, Peter is forced to build two armies. He can't like the Turkish fleet in the Black Sea, but at least Austria didn't interfere with his capture of Rumania.

Again, here the Diplomacy was likely the interesting part. He DID get Germany not to bounce him, but did NOT get England to take Norway with the fleet. And he continued the excellent relationship with Austria (who he knows personally very, very well) in taking Rumania.

Again it's hard to tell how well or poorly Germany is doing until France and England reveal if they are

allied but I'd say it doesn't look good for Germany in the West.

Turkey: Jonathan does the only reasonable move here. Presuming Chris told him "I'm taking Greece with support," Jonathan had no incentive to contest that move. By moving two forces at Russia, he guaranteed that either Peter would be kept out of Rumania or that we'd have a Turkish fleet in the Black Sea.

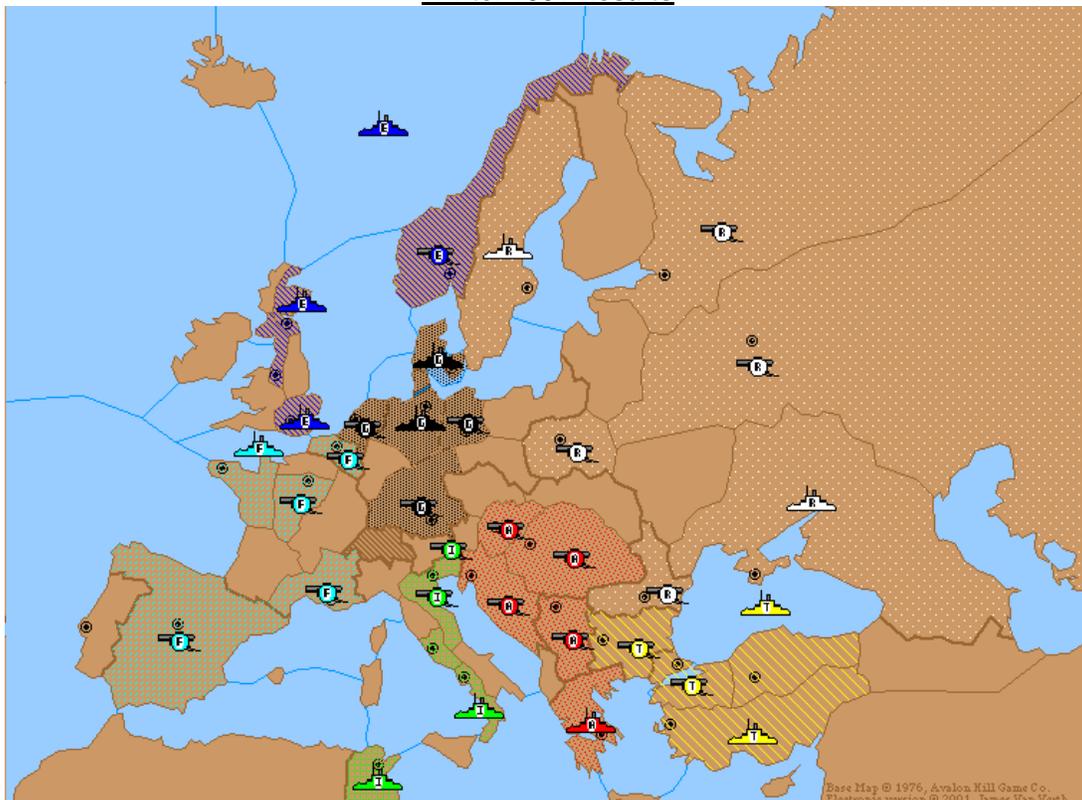
And we wait to see what Turkey REALLY will do, the builds will be interesting there, though could it be other than fleet?

And we leave 1901 with no power at a significant disadvantage. The French look stronger than most, but too much early strength can easily backfire.

I agree, good players, all with strong positions, all with options and possibilities. The builds will reveal some evidence of future direction. I expect to see relatively fewer fleets compared to a standard 1901 build season, but we'll see.

Looks like a standard opening Fall 01—can't wait to see the builds.

Winter 1901 Results



Interesting, perhaps. Surprising? Well, considering a few nations had no choices, don't ask me!

Austria: : Build A Vienna, A Budapest..Has A Budapest, F Greece, A Serbia, A Trieste, A Vienna.
England: Build F Edinburgh..Has F Edinburgh, F London, A Norway, F Norwegian Sea.
France: Build A Marseilles, A Paris..Has A Belgium, F English Channel, A Marseilles, A Paris, A Spain.
Germany: Build A Berlin, F Kiel..Has A Berlin, F Denmark, A Holland, F Kiel, A Munich.
Italy: Build F Naples..Has F Naples, F Tunis, A Tyrolia, A Venice.
Russia: Build A Moscow, A Warsaw..Has A Moscow, A Rumania, F Sevastopol, A St Petersburg, F Sweden, A Warsaw.
Turkey: Build F Smyrna..Has F Black Sea, A Bulgaria, A Constantinople, F Smyrna.

PRESS

Anon:

What a Silly Move
Where does Tyrolia Go
France Has a Big Smile

Winter 1901 Commentary:

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

And this is a great example of how a build season can be filled with new information.

The simple:

Austria and Russia had no choices. Two armies for each in the only places they could build.

Yes, but worth mentioning what the issues in those choices are. Austria's armies nail down one of the classic defenses against opposing units. In Spring, all five of his centers are defensible (though obviously Russia can bring more to bear). Austria should have a good negotiating position to offer help against someone. Russia has to decide whether to try to defend the north against hostiles, or use the builds working with Austria and Germany together. If Russia does NOT do that, he is some trouble.

The predictable:

Italy builds F Nap, Turkey builds F Smy. The most likely and typical builds for each power when they get exactly one build in 1901.

There is less interest here except in who Italy and Turkey are going to work with from those builds. Here I want to comment on the press about Italy's A Tyrolia, France should have a big smile. I might have built A Rome and tried to push Italian armies further north. Otherwise, it is a bit unclear what Italy can manage right now.

The flexible:

Germany builds F Kie, A Ber. Typical mix for Germany with two fleets and three armies. Even if he's facing a strong E/G he's well positioned for defense.

I think Germany could well have a plan to work with Russia here, and that will be interesting, one of those cases where Germany can withstand an E/F.

which brings us to...

The telling:

England builds F Edi, France builds two armies.

The English build says that he's not all that concerned about the possibility of a French invasion. Liverpool is essentially undefended. The French builds say he's not looking to start any kind of naval warfare. Which rules out a shooting war with England or Italy.

Yes, indeedly do. We have the French making a clear commitment, but how will France advance on Germany without help from behind? Is this what Italy will contribute? If so, my French take would have been to encourage A Rome and the moves as suggested above.

Looks like Germany is lagging on the diplomatic front. For now. Things could change quickly.

Possibly, but also Germany/Austria/Russia could have a pretty committed set-up and that wouldn't be bad for Germany.

I agree...Rick said it all.