

Diplomacy World



Issue #122 - Summer 2012
www.diplomacyworld.net



Notes from the Editor

Welcome to the latest issue of **Diplomacy World**, the Summer 2013 issue. I guess sometimes the summer doldrums hit and we find this issue to be rather empty. On the other hand, during some years the season gives contributors more time to write, and we get some unexpected gems.



Happily, it looks like **Diplomacy World #122** is one of the latter type of issues.

There's probably something in here for everybody. If you enjoy Strategy and Tactics, we've got a few of those, including one by a newcomer to Diplomacy World. It's his first contribution, but hopefully not his last.

If you're the sneaky sort and like a good laugh, check out the article by "The Shadow," who reveals a strategy he's been using with success to confound his opponents in email games. Nothing is more fun than bending rules without breaking them.

If you're looking for more Diplomacy-related reading material, Richard Young has a new zine entitled "A Fleet in Paris!" which comes to us from the land of playdiplomacy.com (but isn't intended just for Diplomacy fans who play there). He explains in his own article this issue the hows and whys of this new zine. As an aside, I've tried the site twice recently, and despite a few glitches I am likely to give it a go again soon. I mean, I can't do any worse than I normally do!

(Sigh) I must be old....I still miss the days of the CompuServe Diplomacy forum. Then again, I still miss

finding a postal zine or two in my mailbox a few times a week! Many of you don't even know what CompuServe is! And the prospect of playing a game of Diplomacy by mail might seem so outrageous to you that you can't fathom it. But that will always be my favorite period of my Diplomacy participation. Hmm...that is, unless I start playing face-to-face at the major tournaments. Winning a DipCon would be a nice achievement. Speaking of which...

If face-to-face Diplomacy is your thing, I'm happy to report that we've got multiple articles on that front; two on events that just took place, and others on upcoming events (including World DipCon in Paris). And this is a perfect time for me to mention that the **Diplomacy World Staff** position of **Club and Tournament Editor** remains unfilled. If you're interested in helping out and taking on that role – or if you just want more information because you *might* be interested – contact me!

Of course, this issue also has more of our current Diplomacy World Demo Game (1902 and 1903 are printed in this issue). Newbie or experienced player, watching a game progress – and reading the commentary to see if you agree or disagree – is a fun way to improve your Diplomacy skills. And maybe you wind up feeling smarter than everybody else. If you do, drop me a line and perhaps we'll draft you to play in the NEXT one, so you can show off your diplomactic chops for the rest of the hobby.

We had some positive feedback on the last issue (the tribute to the late Allan Calhamer), but I must say the lack of letters to the editor which are meant for print has been a disturbing trend. I mean, I KNOW you're out there reading this...I can tell by how many times it is downloaded from the **Diplomacy World** website. So how about some feedback? At the very least, jot down a note or two about your favorite (or least favorite) article and send them in. We want to hear from you!

I'll close by reminding you the next deadline for Diplomacy World submissions is October 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 fall, and happy stabbing!

Diplomacy World Staff:

Managing Lead Editor:	Douglas Kent, Email: diplomacyworld of yahoo.com
Co-Editor:	Jim Burgess, Email: burgess of world.std.com
Strategy & Tactics Editor:	Joshua Danker-Dake, Email: jadddiplomacy of gmail.com
Variante Editor:	Jack McHugh, Email: jwmchughjr of gmail.com
Interview Editor:	Heath Gardner, Email: heath.gardner of gmail.com
Club and Tournament Editor:	Vacant ← Contact me if interested!
Point/Counterpoint Editor:	Alex Maslow, Email: blueraider0 of gmail.com
Demo Game Editor:	Rick Desper, Email: rick_desper of yahoo.com
Technology Editor:	Chris Babcock, Email cbabcock of asciiking.com
Original Artwork	Nemanja Simic, Email: nemanja.painter of gmail.com

Contributors in 2013: Stephen Agar, Nathan Barnes, Edi Birsan, Jim Burgess, Bill Coffin, Joshua Danker-Dake, Rick Desper, Heath Gardner, Tim Haffey, David Hood, Alex Maslow, Jack McHugh, Austin Paoello, Larry Peery, W.H. Seward, Nemanja Simic, The GM. The Shadow, Richard Young. Add your name to the 2013 list by submitting something for the next issue!

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

In This Issue:

Editorial: <i>Notes from the Editor</i> by Douglas Kent	Page 2
Strategy & Tactics: <i>Strategy and Tactics in the Game of Diplomacy</i> by Tim Haffey	Page 4
Feature: <i>A Fleet in Paris!</i> by Richard Young	Page 5
Feature: <i>Peeriblah Triptych</i> by Larry Peery	Page 6
Strategy & Tactics: <i>The Power of Press</i> by Bill Coffin	Page 7
Face-to-Face: <i>When it Comes to DixieCon, Eventually = 2013</i> by Nathan Barnes	Page 9
Strategy & Tactics: <i>Turkey</i> by Austin Paoello	Page 12
Strategy & Tactics: <i>Of Mendacity & Men: Exploiting WebMail for Diplomatic Advantage</i> by The Shadow	Page 15
Face-to-Face: <i>DipCon as Theater</i> by Larry Peery	Page 17
Convention Report: <i>DixieCon 27 (2013) Report</i> by David Hood	Page 20
Strategy & Tactics: <i>Diplomacy – Leveraging from Behind in the Mid-Game</i> by Joshua Danker-Dake	Page 22
Face-to-Face: <i>A Farewell to WACCon</i> by Nathan Barnes	Page 24
Strategy & Tactics: <i>How to be a Better Diplomacy Player</i> by Jack McHugh	Page 26
Face-to-Face: <i>World DipCon at 25 – Something to Celebrate</i> by Larry Peery	Page 27
Feature: <i>Ask the GM</i> by The GM	Page 30
Convention News: <i>Selected Upcoming Conventions</i>	Page 30
Convention News: <i>XXIIIrd World DipCon 2013, in Paris, France</i> by Larry Peery	Page 31
Demo Game: <i>Thanks for the Roses – Diplomacy World Demo Game – 1902 and 1903 Results</i>	Page 32

Strategy and Tactics in the Game of Diplomacy

By Tim Haffey

It appears that in many articles about Strategies and Tactics in Diplomacy, Strategy and Tactics are always lumped together as though Strategy drives Tactics. I don't believe this is true. Actually Strategy is often determined before a move is even made. Let's take Germany for example. Germany is my favorite power to play, although I don't win with it very often.

When I draw Germany, and I understand that in some games a random draw is not used in spite of the rules saying it should be, but rather the GM ask for a preference list and depending on how many ask for a power you may get your first choice or maybe not. You may get your second choice or even your third choice. In any event you will be assigned a power and when you get Germany you will almost always adopt the following strategy



The Strategy is find a friend (ally) and stick with him (at least until middle game or until he screws up and becomes a liability or even turns on you) until you see an opportunity to stab him for the win. I love solo wins. Now, I should make a note here that going for a win or two way win is not usually possible in Face to Face games or at tournaments due to imposed time

limits. These game usually end in some sort of draw. But in postal or email games that continue for as long as necessary this is a valid strategy.

Now you will run into a lot of players who always say they don't want to make a decision about an alliance until the spring 01 moves are out. Then they will let you know then. This usually means he has already decided on the other guy. Or, maybe he means what he says which is a bad idea because then you can ally with the other guy and the Spring 01 moves can be a big shock to the wait and see bunch. There is an old saying; "the early bird gets the worm". (Ben Franklin)

As Germany, in my example, you do this by negotiating with both England and France with the hope of getting one of them to ally with you coming out of the gate. One or the other may seem more willing then the other and now you really need to choose one or the other while at the same time talking with Italy and Austria and Russia to keep those borders peaceful for at least the first year. And, of course stay tuned into Turkey as he may become an important ally later on.

Once you have determined your strategy based on he results of your Diplomacy you can develop your tactics. If you have decided to go with France you would probably move the fleet to Den rather than Holland and the armies to Rur and Kiel. If you decide to go with England you will probably move the fleet to Holland and the A Ber-Kiel and A Mun-Ruh or stay in Mun depending on how much you distrust the French.

So, what we see is that Strategy drives Diplomacy and Diplomacy drives Tactics. You cannot just move units without getting an idea of what the other players are thinking. Such a strategy as the dot grabbers use is not the best thing to try. The name of the game is Diplomacy and for good reason. You have to talk to the other players or you will leave it quickly. I have actually played in games where one of the players simply would not talk to anyone. They are almost always the first one out. Simply because nobody knows what to do with such a player so. they attack.

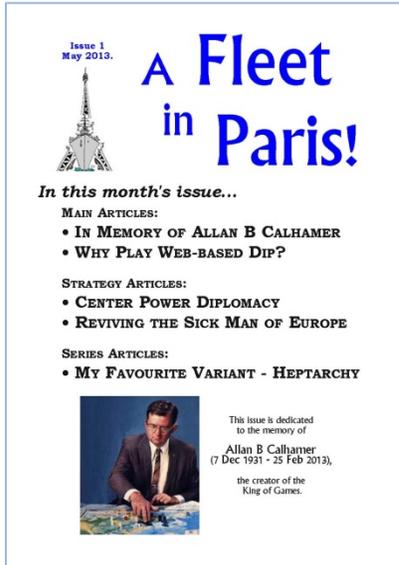
But, this does not just apply to Germany, the concept that Strategy drives Diplomacy and Diplomacy drives Tactics is valid for all the powers. So, when you get into a new game, start talking to everyone but especially the ones you would like to have as an ally. And, good luck.

Tim Haffey is a former Lead Editor of Diplomacy World

A FLEET IN PARIS!

By Richard Young

If you have played Dip for as long as I have (admittedly, on and off) then there won't be much that surprises you. Someone actually trying the Yorkshire Pudding, perhaps, but not much else. Finding a fleet in Paris doesn't even surprise me any more – but I'll explain why later.



In this case, however, *A Fleet in Paris!* isn't an improbable situation but the title of my new DipZine. Does the Hobby need a new zine? Possibly not, although of the various lists of zines I've found in different places I found only three where the link actually worked or the zine seemed to be running, and I already look at two of those three semi-regularly. Also, there were other reasons for starting a new zine.

To cut a long story short, I have been thinking about running a zine for a while and finally got around to doing it. But cutting things short isn't my style so a little about what I do with regard to Dip first.

Having been around the Hobby for a while (in my early 20s I purchased a new Dip game and found a flyer in it for a postal zine with no name; I sent my details off and found myself subscribing to the zine that would become Danny Collman's "Springboard" from issue #1) I came across a site a few years back that offered Dip on the internet. I am now an Administrator on PlayDiplomacy.com... I can hear the sharp intakes of breath from here: web-based Dip! Just hold off from sending the exorcist after me for a minute.

Having played Dip on the site for a number of years, having hunted cheaters for slightly shorter and having

administered the site's Forum (I think some of you might be surprised by the depth on the Forum, by the way) for over a year now I was aware of the fact that players on the site are pretty much insulated from other sections of the Hobby. Edi Birsan has played Dip there (a fair while ago now, admittedly) and we have some members who have experience of other Dip-playing media, but in general many members have found PlayDip and simply stuck with it. Of course, there's nothing wrong with that but – as religion proves – when a group develops in isolation, problems occur.

One of the aims I have for the new zine is that it brings a little exposure to the wider Hobby for members of PlayDip. That doesn't mean the zine is a PlayDip zine, it isn't. Initially the articles in *A Fleet in Paris!* will be from PlayDip members, simply because it is easier for me to hassle them to do something than to hassle anyone else. What I hope for, however, is that the zine will attract a wider audience and that Dip players from other media – whether judges or PBEM, FTF or convention players – will get involved. I want to show that there is a wider hobby out there (as well as trying to do away with the demonization of Dip websites).

So, on to the practical bits. As I write this (Sunday 7 April) the zine is weeks away from being published. As you are reading this (if you still are) it should be out there. It can be downloaded from: <http://playdipcomnotice.wix.com/afleetinparis> or I can send a copy by email from playdip.com.notice@gmail.com – just email and ask. The site is really just a publishing tool. The zine can be downloaded from the front page. It will also store back issues, and there are information pages with links to Dip sites and zines. Oh, just go and take a look.

And that's it. Give the zine a try. You might not like it, you might not want to contribute to it, but give it a look. You may also want to give it a try for a few issues (see how optimistic I am?) and even suggest bits I could add to it. Don't expect any games – that's what PlayDiplomacy.com is for!

Ah, yes – why *A Fleet in Paris!* as a name? On PlayDip, when a unit is dislodged from Picardy, the coordinates for placing that unit, waiting to receive a retreat order, seem to place it in Paris. When this was discovered (it happens on the site's standard map) it caused a lot of confusion, especially when the dislodged unit was a fleet. We did consider changing this but have grown quite fond of the in-Seine-ity of it.

Peeriblah Triptych

By Larry Peery

Today you're more apt to see a triptych in a museum than a church, unless it's a very old church. However, that was not always the case.

The word comes from the Greek word for "three-fold" and originally applied to paper. That tradition carries on today in the traditional three-fold used for business letters.

The triptych form arises from early Christian art, and was a popular standard format for altar paintings from the Middle Ages onwards. Its geographical range was from the eastern Byzantine churches to the English Celtic churches in the west. Renaissance painters and sculptors such as Hans Memling and Hieronymus Bosch used the form. Triptych forms also allow ease of transport.

From the Gothic period onward, both in Europe and elsewhere, altarpieces in churches and cathedrals were often in triptych form. One such cathedral with an altarpiece triptych is Llandaff Cathedral. The Cathedral of Our Lady in Antwerp, Belgium, contains two examples by Rubens, and Notre Dame de Paris is another example of the use of triptych in architecture. One can also see the form echoed by the structure of many ecclesiastical stained glass windows. Although strongly identified as an altarpiece form, triptychs outside that context have been created, some of the best known examples being works by Hieronymus Bosch, Max Beckmann, and Francis Bacon.

A photographic triptych is a common style used in modern commercial artwork. The photographs usually arranged with a plain border between them. The work may consist of separate images that are variants on a theme, or may be one larger image split into three.

Japanese wood block artists not only used triptychs but also created two-, four-, five-, and even up to seven-panel artworks, which were sort of mini-comic books in their days. Interestingly, I think, the best and rarest of these works today command prices that rise exponentially as the number of panels increase. In other words, a five panel work sells for twenty-five times what a one panel one does, not five times as much as one would expect.

Triptychs are found in other forms as well. William Schuman, the American composer, wrote a work called New England Triptych: Three Pieces for Orchestra After William Billings. There's a Triptych Restaurant in SoMa District of San Francisco (On Folsom St., so check it out Edi) with lots of art on the walls. Who knows, perhaps they even have a triptych or two! If you're looking for a

drink, not a meal, consider Triptych Brewing, a small batch microbrewery located in Savoy, Illinois. Triptych is three guys from three different walks of life united in the pursuit of sharing our passion for great, local beer with the community. Sounds like a Dip tournament team waiting to happen to me! And finally after all that food and beer you can take in the 2012 movie Triptych starring Kathryn Prescott and Lily Loveless.

Here's a look at a wide variety of triptychs;

http://www.google.com/search?q=triptych&rls=com.microsoft:en-us:IE-SearchBox&rlz=117AURU_enUS503&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=z1C-UYWaNIiv0AGo5YDIDg&sqi=2&ved=0CDMQsAQ&biw=1920&bih=905

And now that I've added a new word to your vocabulary here's a triptych for Dippers...

What do a long dead American diplomat, a Korean nicknamed "Baby Fat Cheeks," a sushi chef, a sunken submarine, and the number 2,500710 have in common with each other and Diplomacy? Keep that question in mind and read on.

John Milton Hay (1838-1905) was an American statesman, diplomat, author, journalist, and private secretary and assistant to Abraham Lincoln. Hay's highest office was serving as United States Secretary of State under Presidents William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt. Now that the latest wave of revisionist biographers/historians like David McCullough have rewritten the lives of most of America's icons, writers have begun to trawl the deeper waters for more exotic and esoteric subjects. One such is John Milton Hay, the subject of a new biography by John Taliaferro, *All the Great Prizes: The Life of John Hay*, which was published last month. You can find several reviews of the book online and although I tend to be leery of reviews that call books "brilliant" and subjects "one of the most amazing figures in American history," this book actually looks like it might be an interesting read. I picked this one for you, W. H. Seward. Let me know what you think of it. Other Dippers might learn something about the Open Door with China, the creation of the Panama Canal (And did you see where Daniel Ortega got the Nicaraguan Parliament to pass a \$40 BILLION construction bill for a new "Panama" Canal? And guess who is going to build it? Right, the Chinese!), and the establishment of America as a world leader.

A Korean Nicknamed "Baby Fat Cheeks": A few months ago I sent off an email to our Dear Leader Kim Jong Un.

Not knowing his exact email address I took a chance and sent it to BabyFatCheeks@PyongyangMacDs.gov.dprk and waited. And waited. Well, I never did get a reply, but I've noticed in the past few weeks that I'm getting an awful lot of emails with viruses coming out of isp numbers in Pyongyang and Oak Brook, Illinois. Go figure. Still, the world (or at least South Korea and the USA) is fascinated with Kim Jong Un. Hollywood is leaping on the bandwagon with a new movie in the works. Seth Rogen and James Franco are reportedly reuniting to film a comedy about two journalists who travel to the secretive state to kill off its leader at the CIA's behest. No word yet on what actor is willing, or would dare, to play the Dear Leader. What Dipper would you pick to play Kim at an upcoming DipCon near you? An even better bet for a small screen series (at least in South Korea where Kdramas about chefs and food are always at the top of TV drama serials) would be one based on the story of Kenji Fujimoto, the Japanese sushi chef who spent years as Kim Jong Il's personal sushi chef. You can read a complete interview in GQ (Gentleman's Quarterly). Among secrets Fujimoto revealed were: Kim had a "brigade" of young Korean women, known as the "Joy Division." Each grain of Kim's rice was inspected by hand to weed out any that were chipped or cracked. Fujimoto was the one who introduced Kim Jong Un to NBA basketball. Fujimoto would fly to Beijing to pick up McDonald's for Kim. Yeppers, sounds like a role for Heath Gardener, don't you think?

On a slightly more serious note, my sources at the NSA tell me that Kim Jong Un has become the number one subject for psychological profiling at the agency,

surpassing Venezuela's late Chavez, China's Xi, or even Iran's Khamenei. The art (It certainly is not a science.) of psychological profiling originated with the OSS during WWII when it was used as a tool to profile Hitler and other high-ranking German leaders. The results were entertaining (at least to Roosevelt and Harry Hopkins) but not terribly useful. Still, the potential, at least for Dippers, is there. If you're going to Paris for WDC and expect to play in the team event do a Google search on "Managing Groups and Teams/Psychological Profiling." You might just learn something.

The Poseidon Project. Sounds like a sequel to the 2005 movie Poseidon Adventure, right? Well, not quite, but close. It's actually a documentary film by Arthur Jones and Luther Jones and frankly I found it much more interesting than the Poseidon Adventure. Find out more at www.PoseidonProjectFilm.com. It's a documentary about a British submarine that sank off the coast of China in 1931, and the American scuba diver/explorer who spent six years looking for it. Even James Cameron couldn't have come up with this one!

2,500,710. Just a number, right? But what a number. Do you know what it means? All I will tell you is that it has something to do with something I've written for/in/about the current issues of Diplomacy World and The Diplomatic Pouch. If you figure it out let Doug Kent or myself know before the next publishing deadline and you'll win a prize, a very nice prize I might add.

And there you have it, another classic example of Peeriblah written on a lovely Sunday afternoon by a hobby old fart with more time than wit.

The Power of Press

by Bill Coffin

I was flipping through *Diplomacy World* #121, when I spotted this little nugget of dubious wisdom from the "Ask the GM" column:

*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 so much by the late Richard Walkerdine or Larry Peery is

generally a waste of time and should be avoided unless you like that sort of babble....

*Your Pal,
The GM*

This rankled me something fierce, as I am not just a fan of press in Diplomacy, but I feel that the truest, best version of Diplomacy is *not* played face to face at the tabletop, but either by mail, e-mail or some web-based forum where the players never truly get to look one another in the eye. In fact, I would go so far to say that if your experience with Diplomacy has been confined to personal tabletop games, then you have not yet enjoyed the fullest game experience Diplomacy has to offer. I say this knowing it will surely offend a few serious tournament players and longtime experts of the game, all of whom would likely mop the floor with me, but there you have it. On this point, I must stand firm.

I was introduced to Diplomacy in the late 1980s, when my friends in high school brought in a set and we began playing during free periods and in weekend-long sleepover games. The game was insanely fun, but the problem we had was that long periods of diplomacy between moves led to games where player endurance and attention span usually faltered before the situation on the board actually did. As a result, we logged a lot of games that never saw their way to completion, and for as often as I played, not once did we actually have a single victor at the end.

This is not to say that we didn't have some epic games that remain among my favorite game experiences of my career. In one game, I orchestrated a sudden and treacherous coalition effort that resulted in the complete destruction of a four-center Germany which I still look back upon fondly for its blend of workable tactics, behavioral engineering and sheer bastardy. This wasn't a case of putting the knife in. It was dropping the hammer, and afterwards, it took my every sportsmanlike instinct to not gloat over it all.

Moments like these, I think, are what a lot of tabletop players strive for (aside from victory, of course), and in that, Diplomacy offers an experience no other game really provides. But having said that, I have to say that for as much thrill and satisfaction I have received from the best of my tabletop experiences, they all – every one of them – pale before my more long-term, press-based experiences.

For a number of years, after my tabletop career had essentially ended, I played Dip online through a website called BOUNCED (Basic Online Utility for Network Computerized Electronic Diplomacy). BOUNCED (www.dipbounced.com) got rolling in 1999, and it's a fairly straightforward interface for playing games of Dip online against perfect strangers. Part of the rules of the site are that no identities are revealed during the course of play, so that players who already know each other can't form alliances before the game. (Of course, any rule meant to stymie dirty play in a game such as this is ultimately doomed to some degree of failure, but I digress.) BOUNCED offers a couple of different kinds of games. One style is "gunboat," in which you play without any communication with your fellow players at all, which to me feels like a strange cross between Risk and Russian roulette. Of the press games, there is different kinds of press. There is white press, which is broadcast simultaneously to all players, essentially shouting across the entire game. There is gray press, where you can send messages to whom you want and you can obscure your identity if you choose. And there is black press, where the author is completely anonymous. In BOUNCED, white press is a bit like a press conference. Gray press is the most common form of communication.

And black press is seen as rumormongering purely for the sake of rumormongering.

In a BOUNCED game, press is the thing. You simply cannot play well if you don't press. It's a bit like not chatting with your fellow players in a tabletop game. And here is the difference that I'm sure any postal Dip player can appreciate: in a tabletop game, people tend to know who you're talking to, and when you're talking to them. And while that lends a certain kind of gossipy goodness to the game, it also makes it difficult to do your thing without showing your hand. Postal Dip, or press in a BOUNCED-type game is much safer. Much more discreet. And much, much more paranoia-inducing. The average BOUNCED game I have played in takes *forever*. They go on for weeks, but I've been in games that lasts 2-3 months. And during all that time, you are waiting. You are sending out messages, and receiving word (or not) from other players, and all the time, you are thinking. You are dwelling. You are fretting. And your mind is buckling under the knowledge that whatever dirty trick you have in mind is probably on everybody else's mind, too. You have too much time in which to second-guess yourself, and to question the loyalties of your allies. You have the time to become your own worst enemy. And what becomes a set of moves that should be obvious becomes anything but. *That* is the glory of postal/online Diplomacy. And *that* is the glory of press.

When writing press, some players take on a persona. Others just write it straight. Some folks are needlessly long-winded. Some are laconic. Some switch between the two to make a point or as conditions warrant. But the importance of press becomes all-consuming, whether it's trustworthy, whether it's accurate, whether it's being shared with others, whether it's even coming from who you think it's coming from. In this, press is not merely some bit of hokum to be discarded without serious thought, as the GM suggested in the column I quoted. Press is a part of the game that elevates it well beyond the pieces on the board. It is a more subtle, more challenging way in which you duel with the heart and mind of your opponents. It is a great equalizer in which an all-but beaten Power can still assert his or her importance within an alliance, or to the game at large. (I have played in one game where my efforts to be humorous in press kept me alive purely because my enemy no longer had the heart to crush me; he liked reading my snarky dispatches from the front too much.)

So to the GM, who so casually dismissed the importance and value of press, I offer this meager article as press of my own. And until we meet in a game ourselves, may our daggers stay sharp, and our wits even sharper.

Bill Coffin: Diplomacy player, nice guy, accomplished writer, teen heartthrob....

When it Comes to DixieCon, Eventually = 2013

By Nathan Barnes

Dixiecon has been chugging along for quite awhile. Nearly three decades of gathering players together in that folksy way that is only really possible in a place like North Carolina. Everyone loves it for a panoply of reasons, but they all sort of hover around a sense of hospitality and informality. This Diplomacy Tournament is serious but doesn't take itself too seriously.

For all the praise showered upon the event, I had not found the time or the wherewithal to make the trek. I live in Seattle. Chapel Hill is not exactly a major destination from Seattle. I'm pretty sure it's not a major destination from anywhere outside of North Carolina, but that's really beside the point. In my case, it's a minimum commitment to four flights over the course of a long weekend. But eventually I was worn down. Eventually it was nonsense that I had never been. Eventually I had to go.

Evidently "eventually" meant 2013.



And so I booked the ticket and found myself winging through May skies to Chapel Hill via the lovely and incredibly busy Charlotte airport. With lots of time to enjoy the tarmac, I waited on the ground longer than my 50 minute puddlejumper to Chapel Hill. With nothing better to do, I started to wonder what exactly was going to happen. For one thing I had only a vague idea of who was going to pick me up and my flight was landing a little on the late side, so I was expecting to arrive to a room full of at least 6 people waiting on my arrival. And I'd not eaten in hours and hours. Oh, and probably I should check in? No idea how that was going to happen. But these were worries for the future.

The future rudely arrived in about an hour. After a brief wait and some fancy smart phone work, Mr. David Maletsky found me and carted me off into the sunny

afternoon via a white convertible chariot. We proceeded for another 45-60 minutes in heavenly rush hour traffic to the University of North Carolina campus, arriving with just enough time to have absolutely no time to spare. No time for food, no time for check in. That stuff is for suckers. Announcements needed to happen and boards were being called post haste. Things will probably work out, right? Right.

Between announcements of various events -- including, by the by, WACcon 2014, the very last WACcon, January 23-26, 2014 -- Mr. David Hood, the paragon of hospitality and barbed compliments, quickly informed me that there was no need to worry about checking in. No reason at all, the University of North Carolina kindly "staffs" the front desk of the dormitory with indentured student servants 24 hours a day. I say staffed, but really, as far as we could tell, those poor kids were chained to something under their desks. We never saw them leave or their relief arrive. Likely there was some access point beneath their desks where their handlers would unshackle them and take them to a holding cell, but really, that's all theoretical at this point. Just saying, if you go to DixieCon, the slightly creepy students at the front desk are all about helping you out. It's like their life depends on it.

Knowing I could check in later, I set my bag aside and wait for the board call. Everyone has already found some other game to entertain them, but I managed to wrangle a few handshakes and see some old friends. Lots of people come to Dixie and because it's a little more laid back, there's lots of new players to meet. And by meet I mean engage in a battle of wits over a Diplomacy board. And by "battle of wits" I mean "lie to their face." My board assignment was promptly yelled to me from across the room, which I will not bore you with, and began my game. The problem, of course, was that I had yet to eat. Thankfully, my good friend Dave Maletsky was there to help a brother out. I explained my plight and he immediately sprang into action. He had the perfect solution and would be back in a flash. Hooray! In retrospect, I've known Dave a lot of years, and I really should have given pause to how gleefully he skipped out of the room to bring me some dinner.

I should take an aside here. I'm from Seattle. The Pacific Northwest! Full of obsessive vegans, people that chide you for not recycling well enough and home to more ways to eat healthy than you could shake a big bushel of tofu-based sticks at. While I've done a good deal of traveling around the world, I've not spent a lot of time in the Southern portions of our fair nation. Let's just say I was somewhat uninitiated in the cuisine. Or, to put

it another way, I was somewhat unprepared for what was to come. You see, dear reader, there is a little institution right near the dorm. A purveyor of any manner of delights. And as everyone in Chapel Hill knows, "delights" is slang for food you should only be eating while wildly intoxicated and lack the common sense to refrain from putting it in your food hole. Yes, this little strip mall food manufacturer is known as the "Time Out." No. I don't know why. I'm sure there's some local lore on how it was founded by early Appalachian explorers, but I'll defer to a certified expert.

But back to the tournament. Things are moving along well in my game, I'm progressing and doing fine. Actually. Before I go on, I should say this isn't an article about war stories, hard fought battles, and defending my brilliant play. If you're looking for that type of thing you can listen to DiplomacyCast, the podcast I co-host with Mr. Eric Mead. That'll have more gritty details about how the West (or East!) gets won. I'm just going to tell you about how I experienced DixieCon mostly outside of the board play. You'd only want to read that other stuff if you were on my boards, and if you were on my boards we already talked about it enough, we can go ahead a move on. It's over. Let it go.



So I'll break the suspense now and say Round 1 was lovely affair that ended perhaps prematurely in a three way draw. It was more or less genial and people are somewhat satisfied with the result. That's not really the point of Round 1. The point of Round 1 is that in 1902 Dave Maletsky presented me with a white paper bag. A white paper bag that weighed 10 pounds. 10 pounds of my dinner, to be perfectly precise. And you're thinking to yourself, "My! What a gentleman that Dave Maletsky is! A large bag just full of everything needed for a 5 course meal! That man has heart! I bet he just bought it for Nathan without even asking for cash! See, that's what it's all about, right there." If you are thinking that, first you've apparently never met Dave Maletsky, and second, obviously, you're wrong in every possible way it was to be wrong. Because contained in this small white bag are just two identical foil wrapped items weighing in at a bold five pounds a piece. What are they, you ask? Chicken sandwiches, obviously, because chicken sandwiches normally look like small boulders wrapped in foil.

Why all the fuss about a chicken sandwich bigger than 4 chicken pot pies? Well, normally, I don't take several pounds of whole, fried chicken breast, top it with a half-dozen scrambled eggs, smother it with a brick of cheddar and wedge the whole delightful mess between two piepans of fluffy biscuit. But that's just me, see. I occasionally enjoy a vegetable. But I learned long ago, that when in Rome, you should try everything. That ups your chances to visit the vomitorium, which the Romans went to so much trouble inventing. It would be rude not to go for broke. So obviously I tried it. Now, it should really go without saying that when I say "tried" I don't mean I just took a bite to sample it. I mean I tried to eat it. I attempted it. I really gave it my all. But I failed. I just couldn't get through it all. Eventually the whole experience -- and it was a full experience -- conjured images of the pie eating scene from Stand By Me, and after a Herculean effort I had to call it quits before finishing the last of it. Did I mention he brought two? Thank golly for that. That just meant I got to spend a great deal of time between negotiations trying to give the other one away. Whatta guy.

After my game was done there were still boards going so I enjoyed some banter with players, met some new folks and checked into my deluxe suite. The nice thing about Dixie is that your rooms are cheap and they are right upstairs. Very little commuting is involved and there's always room for everyone. On the downside it is a dorm, and it sleeps like one. Luckily it's a diplomacy tournament, so you're only going to be spending 3-4 hours sleeping. Tops. When the boards ended, we gathered a pack of players and took to the night, searching for a nearby establishment that would sell us beverages of various kinds. Sadly, sometime in the last few years I've become an old man, and every place we could find was either much too loud or much too

crowded. Or both. So I quickly ditched those misguided enough to stay at those places and found myself a game to play. It involved pirates. We weren't very good at it. I'm pretty sure we didn't follow the rules. But I do remember talking like a pirate. Somehow, and I really do wish I knew how, bar-b-que was ordered at 1am. And then, just as suddenly it became 3 in the morning and someone came up with the idea that we should maybe go to bed. After much debate the motion carried and we adjourned.

The next morning came early. I shambled downstairs, forgetting breakfast, and reported to my table. Again, I won't bore you with the details, but I will say I got to blow up that pesky fleet Sevastopol and only 5 other players though that it had something to do with an RT. That's what we call subtle. This game ended with us stopping a solo, and as a reward I managed to get roped into the honor of assisting in setting up the bar-b-que dinner. To be fair, Mr. Hood had obligations, and I was only too happy to help. Somehow, all of Saturday went by without a hitch and without Mr. Hood trimming the sail. It was a very smooth ride. So was the trip to the bar-b-que pit with Mr. Malestky. Before you knew it, we had transported many pounds of meat and slaw to the waiting and hungry masses. And much food was had. This is such a nice touch, I have to say. It's always good to have a meal with your fellow players, but almost no restaurant can accommodate the numbers. Dixiecon's tradition of a bar-b-que dinner is a great part of the event and you get a little taste of North Carolina-style bar-b-que.

There is no evening round on Saturday, because in the southern tradition of slowly digesting things while in a rocking chair on your vast front porch and staring into the middle distance, one does not play two games of Diplomacy in a single day. That's for crazy people that live on the West Coast with their action-packed lives and rock star lifestyles. So instead we played games. We hung out. I played pinocle at a Diplomacy event for the first time. We visited various establishments for beverages before it was too loud. And generally enjoyed ourselves. Maybe even more than if we had played a game of Diplomacy. Maybe.

Later in the evening, Mr. Graham Woodring showed me a very classy and kind of secret establishment where I could order a well-crafted cocktail. Which I did, and for which I am still thankful. And I say finally, but that wasn't the end. The night only ended after Mr. Jim O'Kelley ambushed Graham and I and forced us to have cigars until three in the morning. Only then was I allowed to lie down on my bed for 15 minutes before the next round.



The final round of an event is always a mixed bag. The tournament leaders know who they are, the rest of the players are less motivated to play, and you always lose a couple of folks between Saturday and Sunday. I wanted to sit out for some reason. But I was informed through my barricaded door that if I did, some people would not get to play. They were just too short on players. So I slapped on my face and rearranged my clothes and reported, once again, for duty. The round had started for the other boards when I crawled in, so the clock immediately started and S1901 was rolling. It took a bit, but I soon noticed that my old pal Dave Malestky was playing some non-Diplomacy game, meaning that there were extra players, but they just didn't want to play. Stab. Second stab of the weekend from Mr. Malestky. But, seeing as how he picked me up from the airport, and he's a terrible Diplomacy player anyway, I couldn't be too upset about it. So the game progressed. My stellar performance is recorded somewhere for posterity, but suffice to say I barely survived and certainly my Germanic forces were not invited to the table peace talks that divided up post-war Europe.

And so, like anything with heart and soul, Dixiecon 2013 ended. I needed to leave to catch a flight, so I missed the first DixieCon awards ceremony with a tie for first place. But it was an excellent event. I highly recommend it to everyone, particularly if you've never been to a Diplomacy Tournament, if you have kids that like to play board games, or if you're interested in a Diplomacy event, but don't want to play three full rounds of Diplomacy and want to play other games. This is perfect for all of those things. Mr. Hood brings an ease and a charm to the event that will make you feel like family in minutes, and DixieCon manages to avoid some of the more intense emotions that can sometimes run high at a Diplomacy tournament. So if you haven't been, don't make my mistake and wait 13 years to attend. Go next year. They're hosting the World Diplomacy Convention in 2014. How could you miss that? Exactly. You can't. See you there.

Turkey

By Austin Paoello

Turkey is an interesting country to play as. He has many options and can be quite dangerous and powerful.

Turkey should be able, through astute Diplomacy, to link up with one of his Balkan neighbors and cause some tensions between the other two. As to choice of allies, I personally prefer the Russians because almost all the considerations of playing that duo are positive. Geographically, an RT has no rear or flank enemies, due to the good ol' board edges.

Militarily, you're in like Flynn when it comes to coordinating moves. Once the land bridge of Ukr/Rum/Bul is established, you've got a natural springboard for joint operations. (Alas, poor Archduke; I knew him well...) The Russian should keep peace with at least Germany in the west, so that full attention can be devoted to the Balkans early.

As far as moves go, a good option is to simulate war between yourselves by moving to Arm/BLA, writing obfuscatory letters, etc. Then at a later date (Fall 1901 to Spring 1903 is good) you can use a Black Sea fleet to convoy into Austrian Areas, optimizing surprise. A truly trusting alliance will also try to get the Russian fleet into the Med. Or you can arrange a Turkish "stab" (aided by the Austrians, no less) into Russian occupied Rum in Fall 1901. Russia can retreat his fleet off the board and build an army to use against Austria in the Balkans. Hey, the RT has more options than a Chinese Menu!

Diplomatically, you and your Tsarist ally can smokescreen the board long enough to get positioned against any expected western counterattack that will organize. (Western players worth their salt will indeed organize to stop an RT, given its lethality.)

The best thing for Turkey and Russia is to immediately write both the Austrian and Italian early and often. Don't let them even think of forming an IA "Lepanto" against you in Turkey, instead offering each of the nebulous gains for neutrality while you do your deeds. Promise Italy you won't build fleets, even though "Austria wants me to sail against you." (It's probably a fib, but so what? We're not playing bingo here.) Tell Austria (rightly so) that you encourage him to go for two in 1901, if he'll let you get the other two in the Balkans. I recommend getting him to support you to Rum from Ser while he gets Gre and Ser. Austria will be more than happy to bide his time with an amenable Turk who's preoccupied "elsewhere." The true unsheathing of blades is best saved for the moment when Austria is out of position (diverted west or sucked north versus Gal/Rum) - that's when the RT is best poised to strike.

Once you get rolling and Austria or Italy is weakened, you must write furiously and heavily to Germany, France, and England. Stress that this "apparent" RT is temporary at best, that it's expedient for you to eliminate the "obvious AR" that was forming, etc. Solicit their help in "keeping Russia in check" while offering lots of vague promises of assistance to them. With a little luck and a lot of letters (remember that this game is called "Diplomacy") you can divide-and-conquer while the West fights among themselves. Timing is everything in an RT: when to strike, when to move, when to begin your disinformation campaign against the board, etc. Always stay friendly with others, since one never knows when the time may arrive for you to realign your priorities!

One word of caution: while the RT alliances are very strong, perhaps even more so than the EF on the opposite edge, don't get overconfident or smug about your power and position.

I also recommend play a "tactical game", in which you look 1-3 turns ahead and look for short gains. This would be as opposed to a "strategic game", in which you would do things like plan coordinated moves for 1906 while still in 1901! With your "nibbling" strategy and hoped for suppression of anti-RT coalitions, you should be well on your way to imposing the Turkish crescent over half the board.

"The Janissaries are said to have been formed originally from the sultan's share of the prisoners of war..." [Adrina Stiles 1989.]

There are no prisoners in the game of Diplomacy, but perhaps a mutually advantageous lifeline can be thrown to a player who is otherwise about to be vanquished by the advancing Ottomans?

The challenge of the Mid-Game will face every player of Diplomacy who has avoided having to take an early bath. This phase is certainly one which has attracted a small number of "how to" articles when compared to the plethora of opening strategies which seem to come around again and again. It is a crucial phase where the contenders for a possible win come through, or the eventual draw starts to take shape.

Quite what constitutes the Mid-Game is open to some debate. David Hood offers six definitions for it in his "Stages" article in "The Gamers' Guide". I won't regurgitate them for you here. Suffice it to say that I endorse his observation that "no matter how you define it, however, the Mid-Game is the time for each player to re-evaluate the strategy that has served him so well (or

poorly) in the Opening Stage".

The Turkish Mid-Game is especially challenging. The Ottoman occupies a strong defensive position in his corner. It can be broken and can be subject to a Lepanto, but unlike his likely adversaries at least the Turk isn't sending his units away from where the action will be in the subsequent stages.

Let's assume that Turkey has come out well from the initial tussles between the powers of the South-Eastern portion of the board (Turkey, Austria, Russia and - most probably - Italy). What does Turkey do next? Quite possibly become embroiled in a contest against one of the other three powers in that quadrangle. Unless, that is, there has been such a drawn-out contest with multiple stabs and switches of sides that an alliance to stop an advancing potential game-winner or strong alliance from the North-Western triangle is the best way of hanging on for a draw. Whatever happens the Turks risk throwing away any chance of a win.



That is not to say that it is impossible for the Turks to cross the various stalemate positions for a win. However, it is a very demanding task. The Janissary option can boost your Turkish chances of doing so.

Turkey and England face a similar problem when trying

to force their way beyond potential stalemate positions. Their home centres are such a long way back from the likely front lines. While other powers may straddle, or be within reasonably easy reach of, such positions, newly build Turkish units may well be four to six moves away from even getting into position. A lot of defensive shuffling can be accomplished by your opponents while you bring up a fresh unit to the action around, say, Iberia or Munich.

It can be particularly galling for a Turk to build three new units after a successful year only to face the frustration of the excruciatingly slow plod to get them into position. The importance of traffic management should not be overlooked! There is also most likely the question of how many fleets should be providing a convoy pipeline through the Mediterranean.

Maybe your play of Turkey has turned out so well that you handle all of this with ease. Maybe not though. You could no doubt also use a friend. This friend could be a lesser power in the North, such as an England who has taken a few knocks. It might alternatively be your Juggernaut ally - a Russia who may well be running a far stronger steamroller than you are. There may be someone else to sound out though.... Someone closer to home.

The Janissary strategy draws a battered but not eliminated Italy or Austria into your force pool. The actual situation will quite naturally vary from game to game. Turkey faces up to the drawbacks of the corner position identified above while Italy or Austria is thrown a lifeline to save them from the quick-exit sandwich that follows being caught between the advancing Turks and another foe coming from the west.

The art is to judge the best moment to make the offer. Before considering that, let's be clear what the offer comprises.

The terms of the Janissary revolve around a Turkish guarantee that Austria or Italy will be kept in the game TO THE END unless Turkey is able to take a win. In return the Austrian or Italian units become Janissaries. These remaining units, which probably number from one to three, are sent west in concert with the advancing Turks. They seize or maintain the tempo of the Turkish advance. They move to secure inland objectives like Munich and/or steam westwards through the Mediterranean before their opponents can stop them. The Turk doesn't snuff out the Janissaries as the compensatory builds would be way back from the front line in Constantinople or wherever. As the Turks advance any remaining Janissary home centres will probably be swallowed up, but as a redress replacement centres are found as the Janissaries help to gain ground for the alliance.

Not only does this make it hard for the Janissary player to stab the Turks, he also has a front line role. This cannot be over-stressed. A key aspect is that the Janissaries are not signed-over units. Rather the Turks and Janissary discuss tactics every turn (within the overall plan outlined above). The survival of the Janissary units depends upon the development of sound winning tactics in concert with the Turk. This strategy does not assume that units are signed over to Turkey. It is based upon mutuality and the need for the sort of "trust" that we always talk about in our communications with each other (ahem).

How many times do you enter the Mid-Game to see the Diplomacy aspect of the game recede as alliances settle down? The strongest power is often the loneliest power. The Janissary is someone to discuss tactics with. Someone to bounce ideas off. "It's good to talk"...

Tempo is a vital aspect of success in Diplomacy games. Sometimes one can be "on a roll" with continued advances and centre gains. Games solidify as the leading powers lose tempo. The Janissary maintains tempo following the season of its instigation due to the creation of Turk-friendly units where they are most needed. The alliance wrong-foots the opposition who are not expecting a power on the brink of elimination to switch sides to its conqueror. The discussion of tactics matches that between any well-coordinated coalition which may oppose the Janissary.

When should a Janissary be proposed? It should not be mooted too early, but it is vital that lines of communication have been kept open even while you are attacking your eventual ally. Make sure that you send a letter every season even if you don't get a reply. Of course, a player who regularly replies to you in such a situation is more likely to be receptive to your offer and should indeed be a more reliable Janissary.

If Austria is the choice your Turkey is perhaps on seven to nine units at the time the offer is made. With Italy as the choice the Austrians have probably already been crushed and you are on a higher count. Whichever one is chosen they should preferably be on two or three units, although a token single unit Janissary should not be sneered at. It is possible for both to be kept in the game as Janissaries. So the right time is when the talkative foe is down but not out and preferably on or about to be reduced to two or three units.

Who gains the most from the alliance? What is really on the table for the Janissary? For the Turk the strategy is one that can bring a win closer to fruition. The Janissary has to be convinced of the Turk's sincerity in promising

not to gratuitously eliminate his position in the endgame to wrap up a draw. If truly convinced of this, then a likely elimination is turned into a draw for the Janissary. If the opposition gets its act together and a draw is forced, the Turks might end on, say, fifteen centres and the Italians or Austrians on two. And a draw is a draw, er, isn't it? [Yes I know that is another can of worms.]

As Turkey, be prepared for the worst. Do your utmost to stall the blitz. Do not hesitate to send incriminating letters you have received to the other players. Boomerang Austria over to your side. Forge correspondance or supply your opponents with lies. Offer to substantiate these 'facts' with documented proof but somehow never get around to doing it. If you can get Italy, or Russia, or Austria to commit themselves against someone other than you, then the battle of survival is partly one. Should you hang on end even grow a little then be cautious in your outlook. Your moves will draw more and more attention to yourself. It may be impossible to do what you had planned. Do not despair but, rather, prepare yourself to share in a draw by forcing stalemate. Bide your time and an impatient opposition may disintegrate through internal stabs. The special stalemate mentality that is unique to the Turkish position also means that your greatest fear becomes the likelihood of one of the three western powers winning without having to admit you to the draw. Direct all your efforts to preventing this. Go to the point of relinquishing centres to that neighbor of yours who can beat resist this usurper, The Turkish path to victory may be one of the most twisting and uneven of any, but it still can be one of the surest.

Craftiness and deviousness are essential qualities to a winning Turk. If you can lie and maintain a sweet angelic posture; if you can stab an innocent and then pull the knife out a bit when someone else joins in the slaughter (so that your victim will be grateful and turn his fury on the latecomer); if you can bide your time till those around you become distracted and lower their guard against you, then my boy, not only will Islam dominate your little Europe but you will be ranked as one worthy enough to handle with aplomb those other far easier countries in other games.

Well, Sultan, that's all I got. Hope you know how to play as Turkey just a bit better. Until next time, goodbye! Next month: The Czars are going to learn how to control Russia.

Austin, a new contributor to Diplomacy World, is 15 years old and has been playing for two years. He lives in Mullica Hill, New Jersey

Of Mendacity and Men: Exploiting WebMail for Diplomatic Advantage

By "The Shadow"



I have been playing Diplomacy since I was knee high to a grasshopper, which amounts to a long time now that I approach my half-century. I am one of those driven characters, who once in a game lives it to the full, gives it everything it takes to win. Often I do, and I generally survive and that is because there are few lengths I won't go to in order to survive. There is no lie I won't tell, no promise I won't break, no DMZ I won't march over. This article is all about faking it.

When I was a youngster I played by Diplomacy the old fashioned way through a postal zine. It became pretty clear to me that the game is kind of no-holds-barred. Short of deceiving the GM, physically assaulting an opponent or doing something illegal there aren't many things you can't get away with. Setting up means of supplying opponents with fake intelligence is a standard part of my play, especially face-to-face, but also in other formats. Some of my earliest deceptions involved forging letters (you remember those- the old pen and paper, envelope and stamp thing), sending fake messages to my opponents in handwriting vaguely like a rival's. I even took long journeys specifically to send the letter from a place that would get a genuine looking postmark on the envelope.

These things were all pretty amateur though and I am not convinced that I ever got away with it. In this modern age though, faking it is easy and is an absolute delight. Players who use the common webmail accounts are easy game and it is easy to set up an account that looks very similar and then start communicating with other players using a rival identity. I will give you some examples in a moment, but the technique is easy enough. You want to mimic MikeJones1@gmail.com, then set up a MikeJones1@gmail.com account. Can you

easily see the difference there? How about Paulbrown30@yahoo.com becoming Paulbrown30@yahoo.com? wtjosephjones@gmail.com as wtjospehijones@gmail.com? I don't do this in every game, but will often bring it into play as a game moves towards a conclusion and people are talking less, feel more secure and working more on automatic.

eDeception

This is the main usage of the fake account- finding out what rivals are doing and laying false plans. Let's use the most recent example to illustrate the point. I played Russia and got to a strong position (13 sc), with Turkey, Austria and England eliminated, Germany in trouble and only Italy and France as credible opposition. My main worry is a G-I-F alliance to force a stalemate. Luckily Italy has an account I can replicate so 'fake Italy' comes into play. I know I can get away with it because real Italy is telling me the game has become like gunboat and nobody is talking. Fake Italy gets stuck in immediately and trades insults with Germany, ensuring that those lines of communication are shut off. Germany is a curmudgeonly newbie and hopefully will now be offended enough to either NMR or do something really stupid. Next comes France- adopting a style of language similar to 'real Italy' a dialogue develops. How can we stop a Russian solo? Any ideas? Plans are exchanged. The poor ones I support wholeheartedly, the good ones I poo-poo. France is taken in hook line and sinker and the deception lasts for 3 weeks, across 50 messages before I finally get busted. by then I am on 15 sc with nos 16 and 17 more or less secure. in the meantime my Russian persona has been getting on well with the real Italy and the bigger picture I have gained from the deception has really advanced my progress from a likely solo, to a definite solo.

Poor old France really was taken in by that and compared to his infrequent, generally one-line communications earlier in the game became positively garrulous. The advice that I received on how to stop myself from winning was golden and never to be forgotten. My family loved it too. We often sit around the table discussing the state of my plans for European domination and the machinations of fake Italy provided hours of entertainment. My wife worries that I am doing this in real life too and that she is somehow the victim of complex conspiracies woven from my iPad.

Another game as Russia- only myself, Italy and France in the game and I am on 14 sc to France 10. So fake France talks to Italy and persuades him of a master plan,

which uncannily delivers 4 sc and victory to Russia on a plate. Just 3 fake messages was all it took. It can get even more elaborate- I had fake Russia emailing fake Germany and fake Germany passing on the messages to England in another game.



Causing confusion and annoyance

In one game I created an account called The Shadow. The Shadow was basically a kind of black press account and emailed the other players spreading all sorts of rumours and comments about the state of the game. Some of these were criticisms of my own Turkish position, but in particular The Shadow targeted my Russian ally. By goading and cajoling and just really getting on his nerves (and I mean really), The Shadow pushed him into the fatal mistake of attacking Germany and opening the door to invasion from the south. Nobody knew who The Shadow was and there was much finger pointing and accusation going on and so my alter-ego also managed to contribute to general mistrust among

potential rivals. I got a 3-way out of that and Russia was eliminated, having at one point been on 11 s.c.

What happens when you get busted?

Not a lot really. In all my years of doing this, the deception has only been detected twice. The first example above is one instance and I am pleased to say that the real Italy thought it was very funny and asked me to write this article about it. We now communicate with each other, with me using the email account in his name, which must be a bit surreal for him. The other time was when I let leak a fake account too early in the game and it was spotted instantly. However with all seven players still in the game, nobody guessed it was me and the recipient England assumed it was France and never seemed to think that Turkey would be interfering so early on.



Is it 'nice'?

This may be unsportsmanlike. Maybe. Rude. Yes certainly. But it works and is hilarious. Is it nice? I don't really care that much. I play to win and view deception and dishonesty as key tools of the diplomatic trade. My big tips are a) check incoming email addresses carefully and b) don't use gmail, yahoo or Hotmail accounts to play from if you can avoid it.

Keep on stabbing!

You can contact "The Shadow" at MendaciOusMike@yahoo.com aka MendaciOusMike@yahoo.com

DipCon as Theater: So What's the Best Seat in the House? or What to Look for at World DipCon 2013 or What's the Difference Between a Tet and a Tete a Tete Anyway?

By Larry Peery

Introduction

We don't often think about DipCon venues before the fact. Let's give it a go as this year's World DipCon (WDC) approaches. Do the kinds of chairs and availability of toilet paper really make a difference? You bet your sweet ass they do.

A DipCon As Theater

The venue provides the theater. The theater provides the stage. The stage provides a place for the actors to play. The play provides the action. And the action provides the drama. It's the same in Diplomacy only the terminology is a bit different.

When you go to a concert, opera, or play where you sit in the theater can make all the difference in the world. So it is at a DipCon, but more on that later. Allow me a few vintage Peeriblah flashbacks. One of the joys of going to the first WDC in 1988 was spending three weeks in London during which I got to see no less than 14 different plays, operas, and musicals. One of the joys of theater in London is the small theaters. I got to see Dame Wendy Hiller in *Driving Miss Daisy* from the second row, or being close enough to the stage to pull the whiskers at *Cats*! In San Diego's huge Civic Theater I saw Petula Clark in *Sunset Boulevard* from the second row, close enough to see the sweat flying and the make-up dripping. On the other hand, in Buenos Aires famous Teatro Colon I had a stall seat on the side of the auditorium for Gomes' opera *Il Guanary* and since I could only see about 15% of the stage I missed the entire famous *Nude Ballet* scene! To put it all in peerispective, the tickets for those 14 events in London in 1988 cost me less than a front row seat for one performance this year at Covent Garden.

First, let's consider the venue/theater/stage in which a DipCon occurs. An awareness of the physiological and psychological advantages and disadvantages each DipCon site offers can make a big difference in whether a player enjoys, or not, the event, or what his end results are.

Among the factors to consider are:

The size of the room: It should be a bit bigger than necessary to allow freedom of movement, but not either crammed or half-empty. I've experienced them all, from Hal Naus's little trailer's eight foot by 6 foot dining area to the mammoth hall at San Marino's first Euro DipCon, which was 75% empty.

The layout of the room: Is it set up in auditorium, classroom, banquet, amphitheater, or parliamentary style? What's the difference? Auditorium layout usually means a stage at one end with rows of fixed seats facing it. Multi-functional rooms often have a stage at one end with a flat floor facing it that allows for temporary seating. Classroom layout usually is just that, rows of rectangular tables with seats on one or both sides. Banquet style has round tables that normally hold eight or ten people. Amphitheater layout often features a half-circled room with a stage in the center to one side and tables/seats facing it, sometimes raised, sometimes not. I've only seen the parliamentary floor plan used once and that was, appropriately, in England at a WDC there. It certainly lived up to its name and the two sides almost came to blows during the debate over the future of WDC.

Is there a stage? A stage can be useful or not, depending on how it is used. Sometimes it brings the event staff and players closer together, as it did in Birmingham's WDC events. I will never forget when the French won the championship in Birmingham and en masse climbed onto the stage and sang *La Marseilles*. Pure *Les Miserables*! Even Cameron MacKintosh would have cried. At other events, as at the Gothenburg WDC the event administrators occupied the stage and from that lofty perch ignored or not, as they chose, the pleadings of the players below.

Is there voice amplification? There's nothing more irritating, especially if you're dealing with foreign language issues, than trying to hear what's going on, especially when tournament procedures are being discussed. Failure to hear leads to failure to understand leads to great unhappiness.

What are the noise levels? During the play a certain amount of noise is good, it hides private tete a tete discussions, but too much noise makes it impossible to hear announcements from the tournament directors (e.g. One minute until orders are due!)

Is the lighting natural or artificial? I've played in venues with no natural lighting, again San Marino comes to mind, or even the second DipCon I hosted in San Diego. But in Namur, at the Citadel, we were playing in a fort with walls eight feet thick and the few windows added a sense of atmosphere that make the venue and

event remarkable.

Are there distractions within or outside the room? Distractions can come in many varieties. A screaming child, a nursing baby, an unhappy wife or significant other, an over-zealous air-conditioner, etc. can be a minor irritation on the first day and a real pain in the butt during the final round.

What kinds of tables are used? As real dippers from Napoleon and Alexander, to Kissinger and Tho have learned table shapes are very important. I mention Kissinger and Tho because their negotiations to end the Vietnam War were ended with the peace talks and agreement signing that happened in the same room where the first Euro DipCon was held. And this year that same room will be opened to the public with the opening of the Peninsula Hotel at 19 Avenue Kleber in the location of the old French Foreign Ministry Conference Center. From 1973 (Vietnam peace talks) to 1993 (Euro DipCon I) to 2013 (Peninsula opening) we see an example of the link between diplomacy and Diplomacy. For a DipCon event game a large round table works best as it allows plenty of room for the seven players and a GM or the occasional serious observer. Smaller tables don't work as well. On the other hand, the traditional school room style tables do provide excellent tenting opportunities for Dippers needing a cheap place to sleep. I'll never forget walking into one venue one morning and discovering a young Dipper soundly sleeping under each table with a modicum of privacy provided by a low-hanging tablecloth. Years later while on an Amtrak headed for World DipCon Denver and then PrezCon in Charlottesville as I dealt with my first experience in an Amtrak sleeper compartment I thought back to that earlier DipCon .

What kinds of seating are provided? Seats at DipCons come in many sizes and shapes, just like Dippers asses! For negotiations there are lounge chairs, arm chairs and tet a tet chairs (Although I can't recall ever having seen one of those at a DipCon venue). Normally you see folding chairs, either padded (Acceptable) or unpadded (Definitely bad). The important thing is that chairs be strong enough to hold the weight of the players. That's not usually a problem in the USA but it can be in Europe. I remember running into chairs that just weren't big or strong enough to handle over-weight, ugly American Dippers. Sigh. This was a real problem when I broke a chair at that same first Euro DipCon. Fortunately Bruno – Andre Giraudon came to my rescue, explaining that he always broke at least one chair at every European DipCon he attended. 9

Are drinks and eats readily available? This can be helpful or even vital, especially when DipCon events run multiple-rounds spread over multiple-days. Players, at least some of them, can go without sleep but they can't go without drinks and eats. The problems, and there

have been some serious ones, come when drinking runs to excess. I've walked out of DipCons in both North America and Europe because of liquor problems. Well, no, the liquor wasn't the problem. The problem was players who didn't know how to handle their liquor. Eating is not usually a problem during the gaming, although it is sometimes difficult to carry on a game or conversations with players who are scoffing down pizzas loaded with garlic.

Are restrooms and other venues for waste disposal provided? Where there are drinks and eats there's going to be a need for rest rooms, water closets, or toilets. Having one adjacent to the gaming rooms can be useful, provided it's cleaned occasionally and supplies (e.g. of toilet paper) are replaced as needed. And yes, that can be a problem. I recall one venue in England where four hundred players shared the same rest room for three days and it was never cleaned nor, alas, were supplies replaced. It got pretty rank after the first day and wasn't fit for human use after the second. In contrast, the Euro DipCon venue featured toilets that were so modern it was hard to figure out how to make use of them. I was embarrassed until I saw another Dipper using the sink for a pissor because he couldn't figure out what to do where. Of course nothing competes with my Hong Kong venue experience. There's nothing like being on the thirty-first floor of a hotel using a urinal that faces a wall of solid glass over-looking some of the most expensive real estate in the world. And speaking of urinals there's something special about the Grand Hotel (of Nobel Prize fame) in Stockholm that features a glass enclosed, framed copy of the front page of the daily paper on the wall above each urinal (and each urinal's paper is in a different language). But so much for the potty humor, what of other kinds of waste? The biggest challenge for most DipCons is the sheer volume of paper. What do you do with all those left-over pieces of paper when orders are written? A typical average sized tournament will generate 2,352 pieces of paper! What do you do with it all? Well, I've caught more than one player going through discarded orders looking for clues to other player's past mistakes, or for clues to future moves? I myself, several times, tried to save them all for a single game with the idea of re-creating the game later. It never worked and probably won't as long as we rely on a paper writing order system. What I did learn is that most players can't write worth a damn, can't spell, often miss-write their orders (which game masters don't seem to catch), and it isn't worth the effort. And that's the best players! If you really want to impress me at a DipCon provide a paper shredder to deal with the waste paper or come up with an electronic system for writing orders.

Combine all that paper, those empty soda and beer cans and pizza boxes and you have a real mess.

And finally a word about timing. I swore, after a few horrible experiences in Europe, that I would never again play in a DipCon event that included a mechanical timing

device or an arbitrary time or game year deadline. The clocks drove me nuts and the idea of arbitrarily ending a game in 1907 drove me crazy. It still does. But, I'm older now. Hopefully the 25 pills I take a day will help me deal with the aggravation. If not, the three bottles of Five Hour Energy (Hej, if it's good enough for the governor of Virginia, its good enough for me!) may give me the stamina to make it through the night.

As you can see DipCon event venues come in all forms and shapes from school rooms (Fredericksburg, Birmingham, Chapel Hill, and Gothenburg) to cookie cutter hotels (Marriott's here there and everywhere), to historical sites (The Citadel in Namur, the slightly remodeled WWII Quonset hut of the first San Diego DipCon) to a garage in Portland!

What are the Difference Between a Tet and a Tete a Tete Anyway?

A Tet can be:

- The Vietnamese new year, Lunar new year. The Tet Offensive, a military campaign in the Vietnam War that began in 1968 will be remembered by those of a certain age.
- Tet (river) in Roussillon, France;
- Tet or teth, or Ta, a Semitic abjad character;
- Tet, a town in Hungary (population, 4,000);
- Tet, the ISO 639-2 code for Tetum, a language spoken on Timor Island;
- Tet, a painting by Morris Louis.

A Tete a Tete is a private conversation or interview, usually between two people, usually facing each other but sometimes side by side.

The term is also used for a kind of furniture. Here are some examples:

<http://www.google.com/search?q=tet+a+tet+chair&rls=co>
m.microsoft.en-us:IE-SearchBox&rlz=117AURU_enUS503&source=lnms&tbnm=isch&sa=X&ei=6Ja_UYalKtGu0AH3o4DQCg&ved=0CAkQ_AUoAQ&biw=1232&bih=523

Note that most of the designs are European and feature the facing each other mode, but the American design (Adirondack) features side by side seating. Keep that in mind as you watch the Europeans and Americans and the way they stand when negotiating at WDC. Europeans will usually get right up in your face and and stare into your eyes. Americans will stand next to each other, looking straight ahead, and make very little eye contact.

Location, Location, Location!

What do you do at a DipCon? You talk, listen (hopefully), write, walk around, stand, eat, drink, generate waste, and sit!

When you go to a DipCon, especially a major event (e.g. one with seven or more boards going at once), where you sit can tell a lot about you. Think about it. If you've been to five, ten, or fifty or more DipCon events (like Edi), think about where you sat at the opening session, meetings, closing session, and awards ceremony? (You probably don't have a lot of control over where you sit during the gaming, so I won't discuss that.) There may be a pattern there that you're not even aware of, but we are animals and we are creatures of habit. So, like a cow in her pasture our routine movement patterns tend not to vary much. I remember with fondness my bovine friend Rembrandt in Leiden who taught me more than Dutch Diplomacy habits than Jaap Jacobs or Lex Pater, two superb players, ever did.

So where do you sit? Do you sit up front, in the rear, or safely tucked away in the middle of the crowd? Or are you one of those who prefer to stand at the back of the room, even if half of the seats are empty? There are pros and cons to each choice, of course. Being in front gives you good contact with the stage, host, and tournament director. But being in front also means everybody behind you will only see the back of your head, and it's hard to slip out of the room if there's a boring speaker without being noticed. In the back it's easy to escape, but you'll only see the back of peoples' heads, and it's hard to hear. In the middle is a good place to hide if you're a past DipCon winner or top player, but on the other hand people may not even realize you're there. The best choice, perhaps, is to pick a seat in the middle at one side. This allows you to pivot to the front or rear to hear and see what's going on. I call this the Obama Dip Style. So much for the theory. What about reality? Well, based on my observations, I've noticed that Fred Davis always preferred the right side of the room because of his hearing problems. Don Del Grande, on the other hand, tended to favor the left side of the room because of his sight problems. Or was it the other way around? Jim Burgess prefers the right and always under a light because it showed off his profile. Bruce Reiff didn't care where he sat as long as everybody could hear him. And Edi Birsan preferred being in the front, at the side, under a light so it could spotlight his shining dome, but it didn't matter with Edi because he was always the center of attention anyway.

Conclusion

So much for the theory and history of where to sit at a DipCon event. Come to Paris this August and see how right I am.

Dixiecon 27 (2013) Report

By David Hood

Memorial Day Weekend – time once again to host Dixiecon in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. We had a wonderful collection of both old-timers and new attendees this year. The first step in the process is Thursday night before the Con itself begins on Friday. After rearranging the basement study lounge where the Con takes place, it was time to figure out who our Thursday night gamers were and what we would play. Though we were missing some of the usual suspects, we had a nice crowd consisting of Doc Binder, Dave Maletsky, Rich O'Brien, Peter Yeargin, Andy Bartalone, and yours truly David Hood.

We started with some Sword of Rome before our sixth player arrived. After Maletsky and I did what we usually do in games together, destroy each other enough to set up Peter Yeargin to probably win the game, we bagged the game to set up a rousing six-player game of Campaign Trail. The game is not rocket science, but it is surprisingly fun and involves actual strategy in the 6-player version because as the players with the least number of Electoral Votes are eliminated, it becomes critically important to have some presence in those states because the votes then go to the 2nd place winner in each state. Doc Binder won in the end, which was fun. It was even more fun to see Buffalo continue to get screwed in the card play portion of the game. He took it so, so well.

On Friday we had many gamers begin to arrive at lunchtime and thereafter, in preparation for the official start of the Con at 6pm. A number of games were played throughout the morning and afternoon, including Here I Stand (obviously), Twilight Struggle, Lost Cities, Navagador, Leaping Lemmings, Quirkle, Star Trek Catan, Ricochet Robots, A Fistful of Penguins, and what was clearly the non-Diplomacy game of the Con this year, Seven Wonders.

Even more important for posterity was the fact that we did actually have official Dixiecon basketball games this year. Game 1 consisted of two old guys (Doc Binder and me) versus the father and son pairing of Jim and Kevin O'Kelley. The Ancient Ones were able to sneak a win over the O'Kelleys – and then Andy Bartalone showed up. So we played a second game adding Buffalo to the O'Kelley team, at which time the Ancient Ones were, well, smushed. Oh well, easy come, easy go. At least none of us were chicken, we got out there and played. Next year I double-dog-dare some of the rest of our roundball players to get ready for some World Dipcon-sized games...

As the Diplomacy portion of the festivities got under way Friday night, I first began with the traditional bestowing

of awards from past Dixiecons. Ike Porter was the lucky recipient of his 14th Place certificate from the 2002 Dipcon/Dixiecon. Yes, Ike was given an eleven-year old award. That was pretty awesome. Didn't put much of a target on his back for this year though – I mean, it was a 14th Place award. Come on.

The Diplomacy tournament started off with the usual three boards in Round One. All three games ended in three-way draws, and interesting enough in all three games Austria was a draw participant. Other interesting facts include that World Dipcon champ Doc Binder was able, with his outstanding play, to get eliminated in 1903 without ever having built as Russia in Game 1C – and that Danny Grinnell got into a draw in his first tournament Dip game while his dad Eric, playing about his millionth tournament Dip game, sucked wind as an eliminated Turkey. More on that contrast later – where Eric is listed as the I Got Hammered winner for the weekend.

During Round One, we also started our tournament for the non-Dip gaming, which we call the Iron Man of Gaming. Games that hit the tables on Friday evening included Order of the Stick, Here I Stand, All Creatures Big and Small, Twixt, Spin Monkeys, Railroad Tycoon, both Settlers of and Star Trek Catan, Plague and Pestilence, and Dixiecon perennial Outpost. There was also some limited Poker played that night, to be expanded on greatly the following evening.

Saturday morning saw the Diplomacy Team Tournament, played at the same time as Round Two of the Dip tournament. The three games ended at very different times – 1905, 1907 and 1910. The long game ended in a fairly classic DIAS with Tom Kobrin's England at 11, Jim O'Kelley's France at 12 and Andy Bartalone's Turkey at 11. Where did Eric Grinnell finish? Yeah, well, eliminated. Former Dixiecon Champ Adam Sigal sat out the round to play Here I Stand – which apparently did not affect his ability to tie for the win in the bloody Dip tournament. Other action on Saturday included games of San Juan, Battle Line, Puerto Rico, Source of the Nile, Le Havre, and lots of Poker. The traditional barbeque dinner was also served in between there somewhere.

There was much eating.

With a number of people in the running to win the event, it all came down to the Round Three games beginning on Sunday morning. Again, we had three boards. Because of the looming time limit, players with smaller positions altered their playing styles slightly and actually opted for longer games with the hopes that they

might end up in the draw when time was called. This almost worked in Game 3C, where Sigal, Heumann and Kobrin were racing against the clock to eliminate the vestiges of Jim Koehler's France and Brian Lee's Turkey. They were able to accomplish this just before time was called, mostly due to one order from Jimmy that would have kept him alive had he ordered differently. This turned out to be critical to the tournament outcome, as Sigal and Kobrin tied for the Dixiecon Championship based upon this result!

The Sunday Iron Man gaming consisted of New World, Wellington, Detroit/Cleveland Grand Prix, Star Trek Catan, Settlers, Crappy Birthday (yes, you read that correctly), Twixt, and even more Seven Wonders. After the awards were announced, many travelers headed home while those who could retreated to a nearby restaurant for the exchange of After Action Reports and general good times.

Sunday night, after having played games for three days straight, we decided to...play more games. Titles included Age of Renaissance, Battlestar Galactica, Innovation, Ticket to Ride, Twilight Struggle, Guns and Cash, Plague and Pestilence, Railroad Tycoon, and Ticchu. It was a blast.

Thanks to all for coming. We missed two of our usuals, Bruce Reiff and Bruce Allen, due to family health concerns – our thoughts and prayers were with them. We welcomed a number of new players to Dixiecon, including several young teens, which was a great thing to see. We discussed our plans to host World Dipcon in 2014 and will have a number of volunteers to help promote and run that event. If you want to be involved, please contact David Hood. There will be Facebook groups and other things starting on that front soon, so pay attention.

2013 Diplomacy tournament results:

Best Austria - Peter Yeargin
Best England - Adam Sigal
Best France -Graham Woodring
Best Germany - Tom Kobrin
Best Italy - Tom Kobrin
Best Russia - Chris Martin
Best Turkey - Andy Bartalone

1. Tom Kobrin (tie)
1. Adam Sigal (tie)
3. Graham Woodring
4. Peter Yeargin
5. Andy Bartalone
6. Ike Porter (tie)
6. Tim Richardson (tie)
8. Jeff Ladd (tie)
8. Brian Lee (tie)
10. Jim O'Kelley

11. Chris Martin
12. Nathan Barnes
13. Doc Binder
14. Jay Heumann
15. Brian Ecton
16. Arthur Price
17. Danny Grinnell
18. Heath Gardner
19. Richard Maltz
20. Jason Mastbaum
21. Eric Grinnell
22. Jimmy Koehler
IN Kevin O'Kelley (one round only)

Team Champions: Two and a Half Men (Binder, Bartalone, Gardner)
Death with Dignity: Richard Maltz and Don Binder
I Got Hammered: Eric Grinnell
Brick: Tim Richardson (again!)
Golden Blade: Jimmy Koehler (for stabbing the tournament director)
Player's Choice: Danny Grinnell

Iron Man Tournament (non-Dip gaming)

1. Rick Desper
2. Steve Koehler
3. Bruce Duewer

Other non-Dip players this year: Ravindra Prasad, Mary Prasad, Kevin Brown, David Hood, Dan Mathias, Carol Mathias, Ed Rothenheber, Jesse Martin, Mary Martin, Rich O'Brien, Dave Long, Steve Nicewarner, Adam Nicewarner, Aaron Dixon, Robert Koehler, Jim Yerkey, Dave Maletsky, Jeremiah Peterson, Tedd Mullally

Total Attendance – 45

Game 1A – AFG Draw 1908

A Adam Sigal 12
E Jim O'Kelley 7
F Nathan Barnes 6
G Tim Richardson 6
I Heath Gardner 2
R James Koehler 1
T Eric Grinnell 0

Game 1B – AEI Draw 1909

A Peter Yeargin 14
E Brian Lee 11
F Jason Mastbaum 1
G Jeff Ladd 0
I Tom Kobrin 8
R Brian Ecton 0
T Richard Maltz 0

Game 1C – AET Draw 1906

A Ike Porter 10
E Danny Grinnell 5
F Jay Heumann 3

G Chris Martin 5
I Andy Bartalone 2
R Doc Binder 0
T Arthur Price 9

Game 2A – EFT Draw 1910

A Brian Ecton 0
E Tom Kobrin 11
F Jim O’Kelley 12
G Arthur Price 0
I Jason Mastbaum 0
R Eric Grinnell 0
T Andy Bartalone 11

Game 2B – AFR Draw 1905

A Doc Binder 8
E Jay Heumann 1
F Peter Yeargin 9
G Nathan Barnes 2
I James Koehler 1
R Jeff Ladd 9
T Kevin O’Kelley 4

Game 2C – AEI Draw 1907

A Graham Woodring 10
E Tim Richardson 12
F Richard Maltz 3
G Danny Grinnell 0
I Brian Lee 6

R Ike Porter 0
T Heath Gardner 3

Game 3A – EFT Draw 1908

A Danny Grinnell 0
E Ike Porter 8
F Andy Bartalone 10
G Jason Mastbaum 0
I Peter Yeargin 1
R Nathan Barnes 5
T Brian Ecton 10

Game 3B – FRT Draw 1909

A Jim O’Kelley 0
E Doc Binder 1
F Graham Woodring 14
G Eric Grinnell 0
I Richard Maltz 0
R Chris Martin 11
T Jeff Ladd 8

Game 3C – EGI Draw 1909

A Arthur Price 0
E Adam Sigal 13
F James Koehler 0
G Tom Kobrin 14
I Jay Heumann 7
R Tim Richardson 0
T Brian Lee 0

Diplomacy – Leveraging from Behind in the Mid-Game

Joshua Danker-Dake

This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being a force of nature instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. – George Bernard Shaw

It happens to all of us from time to time – you reach the mid-game and find yourself caught out of position or outpaced by an ally. With four or five centers consolidated, you’re in no immediate danger of extermination, but two or three players are doing quite a bit better than you are, your proposals are merely humored, and your future prospects for growth look bleak. What next?

In the traditional Diplomacy social structure, those with the most units call the shots, and those who have less scramble for what diplomatic scraps they may find. Threats from this mid-game second class are often laughed off, as these small powers are typically unable to inflict significant damage without leaving themselves completely vulnerable to the depredations of others.

In such cases, as long as your primary goal is to keep your home centers, you are likely to find yourself with little power; barring some astoundingly improbable developments, you may languish in impotent obscurity while the game’s major powers sort things out.

How to remain relevant? How to increase one’s power? To be listened to by your neighbors, your threats must have weight; otherwise, you become the neighborhood’s little yappy dog: you make a lot of noise, and maybe you bite an ankle now and then, but you don’t cause any real damage and nobody takes you seriously. What’s the solution?

Fortes fortuna adiuvat. risk must be taken. If you are married to your home centers, your power and potential will largely be tied there. If, however, you are willing to take a chance on losing them, on losing even your own life, your potential for success increases dramatically.

One of my foundational Diplomacy principles is to play with purpose: the initial purpose, of course, being to win, but when victory becomes unlikely or unattainable, to

find another purpose beyond simply prolonging the game for the benefit of others.

Therefore, when I find myself in an undesirable mid-game position, I am never afraid to play, after careful deliberation, the “work with me or I’ll do everything in my power to drag you down, my supply centers be damned, outcome of the game be damned” card. Note that one does not arrive on the Diplomacy scene with this card; it is earned with many losses and tears.

Does it always work? Of course not. This is Diplomacy. But sometimes, it offers a chance where there would otherwise be no chance, and, even better, it can be extremely exciting.



(Those who consider “do all you can to prevent a solo regardless of what may result” to be the prime unwritten principle of Diplomacy play may consider this a dirty tactic, arguing that it involves, on a certain level, throwing the game to another player. I don’t want to get into that at length here because I wrote about it fairly extensively in *Diplomacy World* #115 in the context of the Grand Alliance, but in short, given that Diplomacy is a seven-player, zero-sum game, while one can typically prevent *someone* from winning, one is almost never in a

position to keep *everyone* from winning without winning oneself, as keeping Player A from soloing may well aid Player B’s efforts to do just that.)

I’ve also written in the past about the long-term value of this brazen approach, that is, sacrificing your life in one game to give your threats weight in others. This can be useful both in face-to-face games with people you play with regularly as well as in web-based Diplomacy, where you can easily refer other players to your previous games. In *Diplomacy World* #107, I discussed this briefly in the context of hopeless positions; here, I want to look at the mid-game position which is tenable but does not have great potential for growth.

Let us consider an example. England and Germany have an alliance, and have collaborated on a limited offensive against the French (because nobody likes those guys). France is still on his feet, though, because Italy has his own problems and because of some tactical blundering by Germany. England jumps out to a supply center lead over Germany, Germany faces threats in the east, and it soon becomes clear that England will continue to grow while Germany languishes.

As 1905 opens, it’s England 7, France 5, Germany 4, with Germany bogged down and England poised to break out. Germany realizes that he has been demoted from ally to meat shield and that a change has to be made. While the alliance is nominally intact, England has shown little interest in supporting Germany or helping him close their supply center gap. Germany tells him outright: *Turkey is picking up steam in the east, and I need more units or I’m going to go down pretty quickly. Can you either spot me a center for a year or help me get one this year?* England refuses.

England’s utter disdain for the German is understandable. After all, what usually happens in this situation? England gets away with his antisocial tendencies because Germany will be his buffer against the other powers, giving England the opportunity to make grabs in Scandinavia and France before queuing up among the circling vultures.

Germany takes a hard line: *If you don’t help me, I’ll drag you down with me.* England finds this irritating, and dismisses it – just another bluff by a mid-game straggler with enemies at the gates who’s beginning a slow death – all bark and no bite, since Germany can’t do anything substantial against England without leaving his home centers extremely vulnerable.

But this is precisely what Germany means to do. He takes his case to France, who also has limited prospects – the French-German land conflict has resulted largely in gridlock. Germany suggests a counter-English alliance. France is naturally suspicious, but he’s also very interested because A. England turned on him early in the

game, B. he doesn't really have any other friends, C. Germany isn't in a great position to benefit by lying here, and D. England's been kind of a superior jerk this whole time. Germany proposes the following: *Since neither of us have a good chance at winning at this point, let's throw everything we have at England, teach him a lesson, and see what happens.* Germany plans to go all-in against England regardless of what France says, even if it means that France gets the German home centers, but France, obviously, doesn't need to know that.

France agrees with the proposal, and Germany provides a show of faith by giving France immediate support into an English center; this solidifies the new alliance, which makes further gains in the fall. To the delight of France and Germany, England is furious. He points out that while they're attacking him, Turkey is up to 9, with three more lined up for the following year, and he's absolutely right, even if he is a jerk about it. Germany and France say, *Fine. Accept your diminished territory and help us fight him.* England insists on having his supply centers returned to him. France and Germany recognize that they can't deal with Turkey and a resurgent England at the same time, and they tell him so. England is incredulous that France and Germany would let Turkey run away with it for the sake of their spite; yet, after several missed opportunities for England to repent of his pride and entitlement, this is precisely what happens. France and Germany can slow Turkey by themselves, but not stop him, and so while Turkey rampages across the Mediterranean, they beat England like a rented mule, enjoying every minute of it, heedless of their own gains or losses, seeking only to destroy.

Final score: Turkey 19, Germany 8, France 5, England 2. Germany and France find moral victory in this turnaround, not least because England whined the entire time about what stupid players they were and how they should have been fighting Turkey instead, although they harbor some regret that they were not able to wipe

England off the map entirely. They lost, but they lost with five of their six respective home centers intact, and each with a unit in an English home center. They lost on their feet. They lost with purpose. They went home happy.

The moral: Don't be a jerk. Seriously (more on that next issue).

The other moral: Whatever your situation, as long as you have units on the board, however few, you can almost certainly influence the proceedings of the game, if not the ultimate outcome.

For me, win or lose, trying to get this sort of turnaround off the ground is one of Diplomacy's most exciting experiences, ranking up there with pulling off a crippling stab or trying to break out from the pack and sprint for a solo.

In short, then, when you're middling in the mid-game, the less attached you are to your own survival, the more power you have (although, granted, it may not last long). To flagrantly misappropriate Shaw, the nation I play in Diplomacy "is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for the moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations."

Around the Diplomacy board, we're all dishonorable sociopaths, aren't we? Don't be an overly conservative sociopath. Choose to never be irrelevant. Diplomacy irrelevance is boring. When well behind the pack, even at great risk to yourself, look for alternatives, try to shake things up, try to get something started. Take the initiative. Teach them a lesson. Find a hand that's not feeding you, and start biting it.

Joshua is the Diplomacy World Strategy and Tactics Editor.

A Farewell to WACCon

By Nathan Barnes

Sometimes you have an idea. Sometimes the idea has you.

It was summer of 2003 and I was driving a beat up pickup truck from Seattle to Port Townsend. At the other end of the bench seat was a fellow Diplomacy player, Jake Mannix, mulling over a particular problem that had been bothering both of us for quite some time: Diplomacy Tournament scoring. Back then Mr. Mannix was still in school working toward ever-higher echelons of mathematical wizardry. We really thought we could solve this problem if we just chipped away at it hard enough. We'd sketched out some board ideas by the

time I found some public parking on a bluff a quarter mile away from the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Across the water, in the hazy distance, was Canada and our destination just a short ferry ride away. The Victoria Diplomacy Tournament was scheduled to begin in just a few hours.

After settling in we had more than 5 minutes on our hands so we opened up a Diplomacy Board and continued chatting about scoring systems. Before long a couple wandered over and the gentleman introduced himself as a player at the event. Always pleased to meet new players I introduced myself and shook hands for the first time with Mr. Mark Zoffel. Mark and I didn't

know it at the time, but in less than four months we would be hosting the very first WACcon Diplomacy Tournament on November 1, 2003.

What happened at the Victoria Tournament largely doesn't matter. We had a great time, Mr. Edi Birsan won the event and we all went home happy. A few months later we all found ourselves in Washington, DC for DipCon hosted by the Potomac Tea and Knife Society (PTKS) at their annual Tempest in a Teapot Tournament. That was an amazing event. I'm absolutely still scarred from it and still tell stories about the adventures that were had on and off the Board. Maybe that was part of it. For some reason, the decision was made to host an event. And so we did. And we decided to use the Washington Athletic Club (WAC) to do it.

In the beginning, I really envisioned WACcon as an event for Diplomacy tournament junkies. We wanted something a little different. In 2003 we just wanted to see who we could get to come. Thankfully I'd put enough time and effort into organizing things in Seattle and Portland that players knew what to expect when they came to an event I was involved with (yes, yes, except for Dragonflight 2004, which I still hear about, thank you Dave Maletsky). That meant people travelled. Edi came and Mr. Andy Marshall showed up all the way from DC. It was a decent event and Andy and Edi really helped us out by spreading the word.

Because WACcon 2003 was so late in the year, we had a lot of time to plan the next event. As I said, we wanted something different. We'd spent a lot of time in hotels and at houses and other event spaces. WAC offered a very different venue. We also had the opportunity to pick any time of the year to do it. At the time, we didn't want there to be any issue with players altering their game because of the Grand Prix. The idea was to have it at the very beginning of the year, before the Grand Prix began. That way we would eliminate that concern. And there was something nice about being the first event of the year. So January 2005 it was. As a side note, that same philosophy of putting events outside of the Grand Prix cropped up again later in 2005 with some other Diplomacy shenanigans – namely organizing the worst kept secret in Diplomacy, the Las Vegas Invitational Diplomacy Tournament every November from 2005-2008.

So we also decided early on that having the same scoring system every year was boring. Remember that scoring system Mr. Mannix and I were talking about in 2003? By 2005 it was developed. Basically the philosophy around that system was to make it so complex that no one could really be sure where what their score was at any one time. This was to lessen the motivation to just take out the leader, or have tournament leaders band together for the sake of better

scores. That particular system proved to be unwieldy and unpopular. So we changed it. And from then on, WACcon was a place where new tournament systems could be tried out. Unfortunately Diplomacy players don't always like being play testers. And to be frank, I eventually grew weary of fielding complaints about different systems and how quirks of the system were to blame for the player's result. Eventually we just went to a system where we would use whatever scoring system was going to be at DipCon or WDC.

Another tradition that grew out of the 2005 event was the idea that WACcon would have wacky and crazy prizes. Every event has blocks of wood. We were tired of wood. So every year I'd come up with some strange way of making awards out of various things. One year was plates. Another was glass paper weights. Best countries one year was the country's flag on a patch ironed to T-shirts left over from WDC 2005, which was its own brand of hilarious. My favorite year was making hallowed out books for the top 7 using historical texts. Point being, that became the tradition and you just never really knew what the prizes were going to be.

The other thing about the first couple of WACcon events was that we wanted to invite everyone but also wanted to have a really enjoyable time. Better meals than chips and fast food. Better surroundings. So we charged \$80 to attend. That certainly limited who could attend, but it also made for a slightly different atmosphere. And, surprisingly, the \$80 was not as much of a detriment as we thought it might be.

From 2005 on we knew we had an event that people were really enjoying. Something about the venue, how we approached it, and how everyone interacted just worked. We've had an event every year since. We even had two in 2010 when we had a mini-WAC in January and hosted the European Diplomacy Championships in Paris. It's been a really good time. We've had great events, do far we've had 138 different players sit down for a game at the WAC with a total attendance of 333. We've made a lot of good friends and have limitless stories to tell. But all good things come to an end. And while a little sad, WACcon's time is done.

So we need to thank some people. First on the list is the long-suffering Mr. Matt Shields he has been our Tournament Director at nearly every event, and we can't thank him enough. We'd much rather play the game. Mark and I are more host-oriented anyway, and when I've tried on the Tournament Director shoes I did not enjoy it. Mr. Eric Mead has always been there to support the event and one of the very few that would help with airport runs and was willing to shuttle visitors around. Now Eric and I spend a lot of time working on Diplomacast, a podcast all about Diplomacy. Isn't that exciting?

And we want to thank everyone that supported this adventure. It's really nothing without the players showing up and making the event truly great. People have flown in from all over the world for WAC, and we can never really express our appreciation for that.

But enough with the eulogy. We don't believe in funerals; we're all about a wake. So join us to say goodbye to WACcon in January 2014. Help us say goodbye to something special. We'll have a special dinner on Thursday January 23rd, where we will be

roasting our friends, reliving our favorite moments and raising a glass to the passing of a great event. Four rounds of Diplomacy will follow from Friday the 24th through Sunday the 26th. You only get one chance to say farewell. Do not waste it.

You can keep up to date on details at <https://nbarnes.jux.com/> and on the Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/events/452691528142776/>

We'll see you there.

How to Be a Better Diplomacy Player

By Jack McHugh

Its 1901 and the country assignments have just come out. You see a couple of names you recognize, including someone who publishes the occasional strategy article in DW. You also see a few newbies and someone you've allied with before.

Do you tend to ally with the same people? Do you avoid working with veteran players? Do you always avoid newbies? In other words do you have a style of playing you tend to do over and over again without thinking? A kind of rut that you've gotten into from playing Diplomacy for a while that you is so ingrained in your habits you don't even think about it anymore?

Most people tend to do this, not just in Diplomacy, but with any activity that repeat over and over again. Usually, but not always, they've had success with it at some point, maybe even a lot of success and naturally most people want to recreate their triumph. This means doing what worked in the past.

I know I have done this myself but it tends to make for rather rote play as you simply to what worked in the past. It doesn't just make your play stale but it makes the play of those around you stale as well as they tends to respond to you in the same way. They may be stuck in the same feedback loop as you—get England, ally with Germany and move to the Channel....if you are Germany, always bounce Russia in Sweden. This can lead to repetitive play on your part. In fact, if you play with different people it may even be worse since you're assuming you won't fall into this pattern since you play different people every time you play.

Don't be that player! Try different strategies, ally with no people, attack new people, don't just be the guy who

reflectively attacks the same people over and over again.

Are the type of player who pretty much stops doing diplomacy after the opening moves? You shouldn't be, the whole mind set of Diplomacy is that nothing is written in stone and nothing is not negotiable, including your current alliance.

There is nothing more boring than playing with a bunch of people who think that all the alliances should be set in place by 1905. Remember nations only have permanent interests, not permanent allies, if you're current enemy is offering you a deal, hear him out, and do so with an open mind—don't demand he be able to guarantee you four centers by next winter, that's ridiculous, especially if your alliance is doing well. If your current enemy could take that many dots from your alliance he would and he wouldn't write to you about it.

To summarize: one, be open to new styles of play and players. Two, don't prejudge the other players—let them explain themselves to you. Three, don't be afraid to continue to talk to people once the game is moving.

This will keep your play fresh and vibrant and make you the type of player that other players will want to be on the board with. Happy stabbing, and may you be surrounded by cut throats always willing to cut a better deal.

Jack McHugh is the Diplomacy World Variant Editor. He also holds the record for being attacked by multiple nations from Spring 1901...in Gunboat games.

World War One at One Hundred; Something to Remember World DipCon at Twenty-Five; Something to Celebrate

By Larry Peery

Next year marks the 100th anniversary of The Great War. Seventy million combatants served in “the war to end all wars.” The last of them died two years ago. Originally idealistic, then disparaged, and today simply numbered the first world war, that event is still something to be remembered.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of World Diplomacy Convention. A few hundred Dippers participated in that first WDC, although like The Great War it wasn't numbered as such until the second one came along. Already the ranks of the veterans of WDC I are thinning. Walkerdine is gone. As is Calhmer. Still, this is not only an event to be remembered, but also one to be celebrated!

Here are some suggestions to help you do so.

If you're lucky enough to be going to this year's WDC (August 23-25, Paris, France) you have a great opportunity to remember and celebrate both events.

But before venturing off to Europe and Paris, take some time to do your homework. Or if you're an “armchair warrior” crawl into your favorite rocker or recliner with one of these:

Histories of World War I: The First World War by John Keegan (UK, 1999); The First World War by Gerard de Groot (UK, 2001); The First World War by H. Herwig (Canadian, 2009); The Eastern Front: 1914-1918 Suicide of the Empires by Alan Clark, UK 1999); The Guns of August by Barbara Tuchman (USA, 1962); My Experiences in the World War by John J. Pershing (USA, 1931) and Black Jack: The Life and Times of John J. Pershing by Frank Vandiver (USA, 1977). The first three are excellent, fairly recent histories of WWI. Alan Clark, a British historian and politician (and son of Lord Kenneth Clark, of Civilisation fame) is a revisionist historian, offering a different view of The Not-So-Great War. Tuchman, a distinguished historian proved a woman could write good military history and produce a best seller to boot! Pershing's book is by a WWI participant. Vandiver's book is about a WWI participant. It's interesting to compare these two books with others written by and about WWII or more recent wars.

Novels about World War I: Unlike the histories above, the novels written about WWI were written fairly soon after the event. Three Soldiers by John Dos Passos (USA, 1920), The Good Soldier Svejk by Jaroslav Hasek (1923, Czech), Quiet Flows the Don by Mikhail Sholokhov (Russia, 1925), All Quiet on the Western

Front by Erich Maris Remarque (German 1929), and A Farewell to Arms by Ernest Hemingway (USA, 1929) are all up-close and personal accounts of the war. Three Soldiers by Dos Passos (1920) should not be confused with the 1951 movie Soldiers Three based on a Rudyard Kipling story. Dos Passos novel is one of the great American war novels. Sholokhov won the Nobel Prize for Literature for his story about the Don Cossacks. Interestingly, the first parts of the book were written in the 1920s, but the last volume was written in 1940, perhaps more as a prelude to the upcoming WWII than a remembrance of WWI. Publishers had their own battle to see whether the Remarque or Hemingway novel would appear first in 1929. The race to the movie screen was won by All Quiet on the Western Front which appeared less than a year after the book was published. A Farewell to Arms wasn't released until 1957.

Movies about World War I: Wings (1927) won the very first Best Picture Oscar and is one of only two silent movies to win an Oscar. Dawn (1928) was a British silent war film starring Dame Sybil Thorndike. It tells the story of WWI martyr Edith Cavell, a nurse who risked her own life by rescuing British POWs from the Germans. When she was captured and sentenced to be executed, it sparked an international outcry, even from neutral nations. One of the most controversial British films of the 1920s, Dawn was censored because of what objectors considered its brutal depiction of warfare and anti-German sentiments. Pressure was exerted by both the German ambassador and the British Foreign Secretary Austen Chamberlain to prevent the film being passed for exhibition. All Quiet on the Western Front (1930) Realistic and harrowing the film was the first to win a Best Picture and best Director Oscar in the same year. Lawrence of Arabia is considered by many to be the greatest movie of all time. Seven Oscars, including Best Picture and Best Director, but not Best Actor (Peter O'Toole was a Hollywood newcomer at the time) make that hard to argue with. Gallipoli (1981) may well hold the record for the longest run of any movie ever. It is still shown nightly in hotels and hostels in Eceabat and Canakkale, near where the battle was fought.

For those willing and able to get out of their rockers or recliners here are some of the world's finest military museums. Each has extensive exhibits devoted to WWI related subjects: General George Patton Museum (Fort Knox, Kentucky) specializes in the history and development of armored warfare; National Museum of the Air Force (Dayton, Ohio) has over 350 different aircraft and missile types including a replica of the Wright Brothers' 1909 Military Flyer; and The National

World War I Museum at Liberty Memorial (Kansas City, Missouri) is no doubt the best WWI museum in the western hemisphere. The Imperial War Museum (London and other locations, England) The original museum is housed in the former Bedlam Royal Hospital, the first devoted to mental diseases, is the best military museum in Europe. L'Hotel national des Invalides (Paris, France) is actually much more than just a museum, all dedicated to French military history. There's the Musee des Plans-Reliefs (a museum of three-dimensional models of cities fortified for military purposes ((think Vauban and Maginot Line!)), the Musee d'Historie Contemporaine (a museum of contemporary history), the Musee de l'Armee (that's where Napoleon and other French war heroes are buried), and a hospital and retirement home for war veterans. Bundeswehr Military History Museum (Dresden, Germany) is the newest of these museums. It opened in 2011 in a 136 year old former military arsenal, after the German military spent \$86 million on it. The museum contains the original Brandtaucher, the first German submarine, built in Kiel in 1850, but no mention of Rudolf Diesel is to be found. The Arms Museum (Liege, Belgium) and Citadel (Namur, Belgium) jointly offer a look at this small country's big role in WWI. The Citadel was also the site of the 1999 World DipCon.



For the more adventuresome it's easy to spend a week or more on the Western Front. Here's how.

August 2014 marks the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of what came to be known as the "war to end all wars" --- a reference that is now used ironically, because the devastation was soon overshadowed by the near-Armageddon of World War II.

When the first war ended, some nine million combatants were dead, and in the parts of eastern France and western Belgium that make up the Western Front it can seem like every road leads to a cemetery. But it is also a beautiful region, with gently flowing rivers, picturesque villages and noble Gothic cathedrals.

The areas where some of the most famous fighting took place --- Verdun and Somme in France and Ieper (also known as Ypres) over the Belgian border --- can easily be toured by car over a week, with side excursions to Champagne houses in Epernay and cathedrals at Amiens and Reims. Starting next year, big commemorations will be held, perhaps for the last time. Go soon to avoid the crowds, or at least start planning --- many hotels in the Somme are already booked for July 2016, the anniversary of the Somme offensive.

In February 1916, the Germans attacked the fortress of Verdun, gateway to the heart of France, and nearby strongholds. Both sides suffered horrendous losses; when the bloodletting was over, 300 days later, 300,000 were dead. Plan to visit the Memorial de Verdun, Fort Douaumont and Fort Vaux, and the French National Cemetery and Douaumont Ossuary, where the bones of 130,000 unknown French and German soldiers are interred.

The Somme is a region of sloping fields, woods and quaint villages. It was also the site of the bloodiest offensive of the Western Front. There were some 620,000 French and British Commonwealth casualties at the Battle of the Somme, with 600,000 Germans killed or wounded.

After the war, a decision was made (By whom?) not to repatriate British bodies. As a result there are 280 graveyards and memorials honoring the dead from South Africa, Newfoundland and other regions. The Thiepval Memorial to the Battle of the Somme carries the names of more than 72,000 missing soldiers. The Museum of the Great War is an impressive collection of artifacts in a castle in Peronne. No nostalgia. No notion of the glory of battle.

Five major battles were fought in and around the once-sleepy medieval cloth town of Ypres. The Third Battle of Ypres, in 1917, also called the Battle of Passchendaele, represents the folly of World War I. The British suffered appalling losses to gain control of the muddy ridges near the village from the Germans, only to abandon them a few months later. Tyne Cot (Commonwealth) and Langemark (German) are the two most famous cemeteries.

Named for the famous war poem, the In Flanders Fields Museum, housed in the reconstructed Cloth Hall in Ieper, may be the best World War I museum in the region. Films and reenactments are used to tell the story. The Menin Gate in Ieper is a memorial to the missing from the bloody battles in the region. Every night at 2000 hrs (8:00 p.m.) a local fire department volunteer bugle corps plays Last Post at the Gate.

Not as well known to Americans or Brits, you might consider a walking tour of the Vosges. Spectacular in their scenery, matched only by the sheer scale of the tangible evidence that still covers the ground. A contested region that had been part of Germany since 1870, the French were keen to regain lost territory as soon as hostilities began. The two armies pitched some of their most elite troops into the fighting, notably the proud Alpine Chasse troops coming face to face with German Jager troops committed to defending ground they considered to be German.

Largely undeveloped today the battlefield is littered with trenches, bunkers, barbed wire, memorials and cemeteries on a scale not seen elsewhere on the Western Front. The tour covers the three main battlefields of Le Lingé, Têtes Des Faux and Hartmannswillkerkopf.

The real WWI buff might opt for a ten day tour focusing on Gallipoli from initial landings to the evacuation. A small group (14 people) tour using 3 and 4-star hotels in August 2014 will cost about USD3,800. This particular tour is sponsored by the US National Museum of WWI and hosted by the British-based Battle Honours tour group. Gallipoli is proof, if any is needed, that the stupidity of the British generals (and admirals) wasn't confined to the Western Front, and that the bravery found in the trenches of the West was just as prevalent in the gullies and on the beaches of Gallipoli.

After all that blood and gore, or perhaps as an alternative to it, the serious Dipper might want to consider a non-battlefield tour to celebrate World DipCons'25th year. Past European host cities for the event include Birmingham, England (three times!), Paris, France (three times, including this year), Gothenburg, Sweden; Namur, Belgium; Berlin, Germany; Lockenhaus, Austria; and The Hague, Netherlands. Actually, you could do a lot worse than base a European "Grand Dip Tour" based on these choices. Birmingham is where it all started and although it's England's "second" city it has a lot to offer in its own right. As for Paris, who needs an excuse to visit Paris? Still, it's home to one of the world's most vibrant Diplomacy hobbies (After all, French is the language of Diplomacy.) and the only city anywhere to host a museum devoted to diplomacy! Gothenburg is another "second city" trying to make good. Not to worry, it can stop trying. It is good. One of the nice things about the city is that it was smart enough to stay out of WWI and WWII, so what you see is really what you get, unlike a lot of cities where much of the historic centers are post-war reproductions. I have to

confess that I hate a soft spot in my heart for Namur. After all, my ancestors came from an arrow's shot distance away. Still, the whole area of Liege-Namur just reeks of diplomacy and Diplomacy. Not well known and certainly not admitted in Paris, the 1999 Namur WDC was the site of France's greatest Diplomacy defeat ever! Not only did the French players (who out-numbered everybody else put together) fail to take the top three individual tournament positions (1 and 2 to Swedes, 3 to a Brit).. well, Sacre Bleu! The Germans worked long and hard to persuade the English and French hobbies to let them host a WDC event, which they did in 2006. The French, just to remind their hosts that they hadn't entirely forgotten the past, reciprocated by taking all top three of the individual tournament positions. Well, with players like Cyrille Sevin and Yann Clouet what can you expect? In 2008 the Germans tried the same thing the French had tried when they got Namur to stand in for Paris in 1999, but it worked better for the Germans. The Austrian's hosted the event in Lockenhaus (right on the border of Hungary, 2,000 population; think Chapel Hill, North Carolina!) and the Germans took two of the top three individual spots. Leave it to the French (e.g. Cyrille) to spoil the German plans by taking one of the top spots. And then there's The Hague. Leave it to the Dutch to host a WDC and then let the French and Germans walk away with the honors...Actually, The Hague is a perfect place for a WDC: home to the International Court of Justice (Where else can you see Serbian war crime criminals dripping blood proclaiming their innocence?). The Hague is also the home to the Mauritshuis. If you don't know what the Mauritshuis is, you definitely need to try a WDC in Europe.

And, if you're an American and you think we're the best Dippers in the world, I've got news for you. These guys are good. Real good. Trust me. The halls of Europe are filled with blood from the stab wounds I endured. Binder is going, which makes him dead meat for the Europeans. After all, he's the current champion. Birsan and I are going (!!!) which means the Old Farts Will Rule! That means it's all riding on you, Matt Shields! And then there's you. Whether you think you're the next John. J. Pershing, John Hay (After all, he negotiated the Treaty of Paris in 1898, so why can't you do the same?) or just looking for a spiffy title to jazz up your next uni app, resume or CV why don't you join us?

The less the rest of you write, the more Larry Peery I publish. Got it? Larry is also a former long-time Lead Editor and Publisher of Diplomacy World. Jack McHugh says Larry is a very fun guy in person, so go to World DipCon and prove him right.

Ask the GM

An Advice Column for Diplomacy World

By The GM

Dear GM:

I can't stand playing with one certain other player and yet every time I come to a convention there he is...in fact I often get placed on the very same board with him.

What can I do to avoid this Diplomacy player and keep him from getting into my games???

Signed,
Plagued by Diplomacy Pest

Dear Pest,

Do what all great Diplomacy players do, make sure you destroy him immediately in any game you are in. Soon he will come to realize that you don't like him or his kind and stay out of your Diplomacy games.

Any other response is simply unworthy of a great Diplomacy player, which I assume you are from reading DW and writing to me for advice.

Your Pal,
The GM

Dear GM,

What's the proper response to a player who is using my ID in a game that I am in and talking to other players as if he were me. He isn't letter passing since he only gets

notes sent to him as me and he isn't spoofing the GM so he is not violating any house rules.

I want to report him but I've got nothing to report since technically he hasn't done anything illegal. What should I do?

Signed,
Catfished

Dear Catfish,

Almost any problem in Diplomacy can be solved by either getting even or applying superior firepower or both. In fact most of the time they are both the same as is true in this case.

First, don't waste the GM or the other players time with your sob story—no one cares, this is Diplomacy, everything short of deceiving the GM is allowed so stop crying and get to work.

Second, start writing the other players as him claiming your computer was completely wiped out by a virus so you needed to get a new email address and ask them to send you the complete record of your supposed correspondence. Once you have this you can his world upside down.

Your Pal,
The GM

Selected Upcoming Conventions

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

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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:Dave.Simpson) - Website: <http://www.midcon.org.uk>

XXIIIrd WORLD DIPLOMACY CHAMPIONSHIP 2013

Paris, France - Friday, 23 August to Sunday, 25 August, 2013

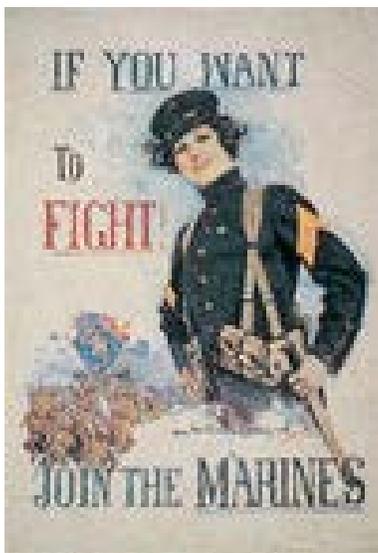
By Larry Peery



Twenty-five years ago the first WDC was held in Birmingham, England. I was fortunate to be there. It proved to be one of the most memorable experiences of my Diplomacy career. And this year I'm inviting you to join me and the other members of Team North America for the 23rd WDC event in Paris, France. Headed by Team "Captain North America" Michael "Doc" Binder (the current World Diplomacy Champion), our group will include: Edi Birsan, Chris Brand, Matt Shields, myself (Larry Peery) and, we hope, you! And the more of you the better. This is your chance to play Diplomacy with some of the best players in the world.

This is the third WDC to be held in Paris and the French have proven they know how to host a great event in The City of Lights! No doubt this will be their best WDC ever. The program includes a gunboat event, multi-round individual tournament with a top players' final round, and a team event; as well as plenty of socializing. Plan to come early and/or stay late and see this fascinating city. Several Team members are bringing their families to make it a memorable summer vacation. That's a great idea. A world class Diplomacy event in a world class city: what more could you ask for?

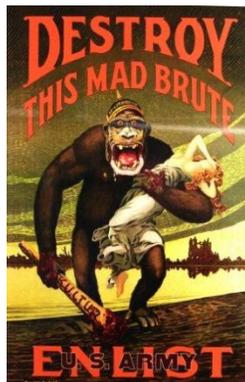
The hosts are offering free registration and housing to players coming from across the seas, and that means us. All you have to do is get yourself there.



This year's Team North America is on a mission. No North American individual has ever placed in the top three positions in an overseas WDC event. Why? Because although our players have done well, we've lacked the sheer numbers to carry the board and bring home the Championship. We're hoping by recruiting more Dot Snatchers to join us we'll improve our chances of winning the Championship and some of the other awards and prizes. Naturally we want the best North American players to join us. We need you. But we also encourage new and younger players to come along as well. We want you. The future of the hobby and the event lies in your hands. And speaking of prizes, awards and such; the Paris WDC event Champion will, as is traditional, be the guest of next year's WDC event in Chapel Hill with event costs paid. In addition, members of this year's Team North America will receive a free Team tee shirt.

For more info: <http://www.worlddipcon.com/en/world-diplomacy-championship-2013.php> If you have other questions feel free to email me at peery@ix.netcom.com Register today on the web site and contact me if you need help with your travel plans. Oh, and don't forget your passport. You'll need that to get home. And think about this:

WOULDN'T A WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP TITLE LOOK GOOD ON YOUR RESUME??



Diplomacy World Demo Game “Thanks for the Roses” – 2013B

The Players:

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

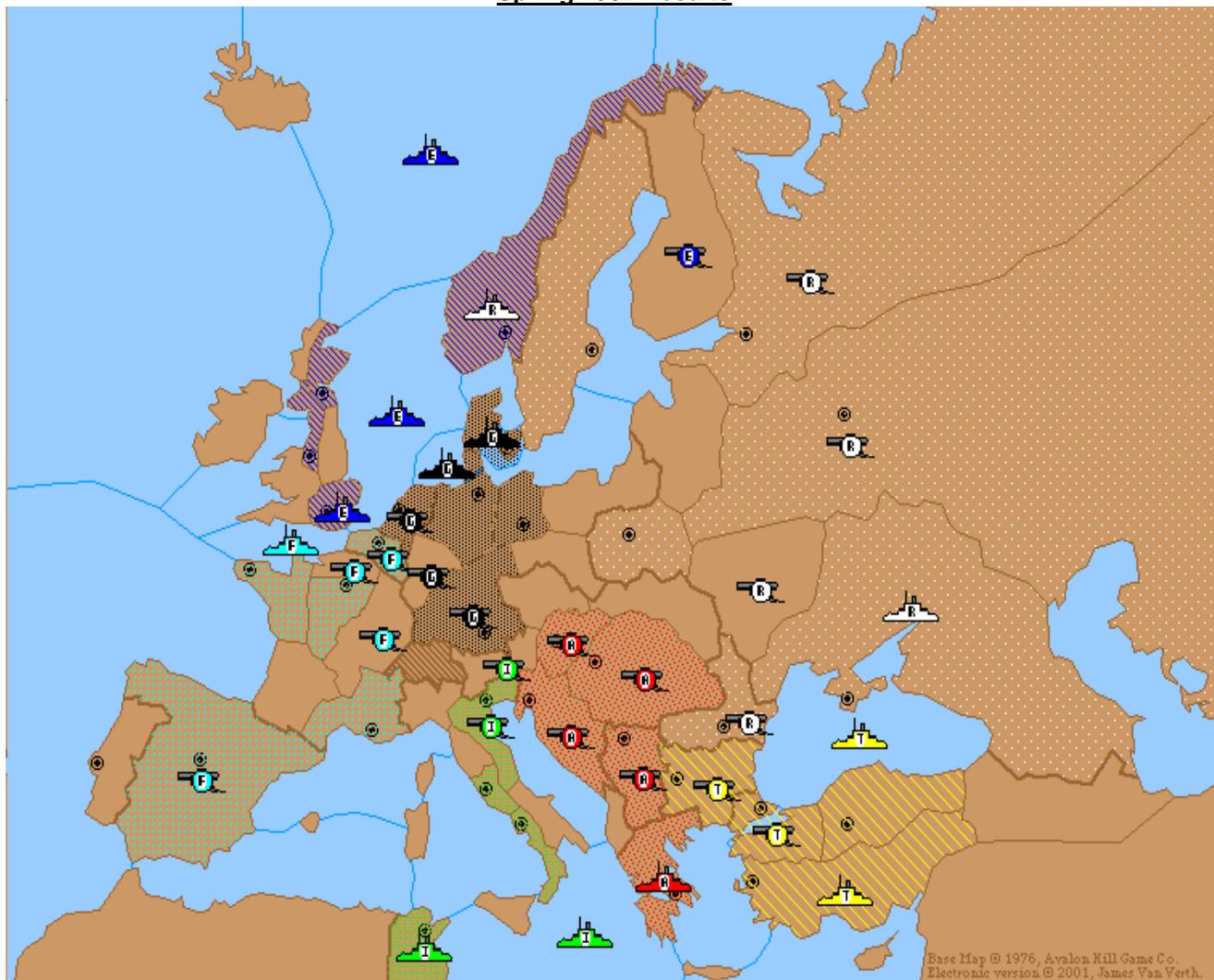
The Commentators:

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

The GM:

Douglas Kent

Spring 1902 Results



A lot of bashing heads, but no retreats...

Austria: A Budapest Supports A Trieste, F Greece - Aegean Sea (*Bounce*), A Serbia - Bulgaria (*Bounce*), A Trieste Supports A Vienna – Tyrolia, A Vienna - Tyrolia (*Fails*).

England: F Edinburgh - North Sea, F London Supports F Edinburgh - North Sea, A Norway – Finland, F Norwegian Sea - Norway (*Fails*).

France: A Belgium Supports A Marseilles – Burgundy, F English Channel - North Sea (*Fails*), A Marseilles – Burgundy, A Paris – Picardy, A Spain Hold.

Germany: A Berlin – Munich, F Denmark Hold, A Holland Supports A Munich – Ruhr, F Kiel - Helgoland Bight, A Munich - Ruhr.

Italy: F Naples - Ionian Sea, F Tunis Supports F Naples - Ionian Sea, A Tyrolia Hold, A Venice Supports A Tyrolia.
Russia: A Moscow - Sevastopol (*Fails*), A Rumania - Bulgaria (*Bounce*), F Sevastopol - Black Sea (*Fails*),
A St Petersburg Supports F Sweden – Norway, F Sweden – Norway, A Warsaw - Ukraine.
Turkey: F Black Sea Supports A Bulgaria - Rumania (*Cut*), A Bulgaria - Rumania (*Fails*),
A Constantinople - Bulgaria (*Bounce*), F Smyrna - Aegean Sea (*Bounce*).

PRESS

Ministers from the Central European Alliance met in the Galacian mountain town of Beskid. The CEA is a loose econo-political union of the Central European States aimed at securing peace between its members through mutual exchanges in goods and labour. Despite significant language barriers the Alliance has been able to negotiate the free movement of goods between member states and is negotiating on the free movement of labour. If the later is achieved, they will have built an alliance greater than that of the Holy Roman Empire.

Poles, Jews, Roma, Hungarians, Bosnians, Croats, Slavs, Cosacks, and many lesser known cultural groups are citizens of the alliance, which is only now beginning to enter the modern age of industrialisation. Yet the alliance is rich in resorces of coal, iron, oil and copper. If these can be exploited efficiently and without the threat

of war, the Alliance itself could quickly become stronger than any state in the world.

To avoid conflict, the CEA has stated that it will be open to new members joining provided they agree to the same terms and conditions they have agreed amongst themselves. Is this the new dawn Europe has been waiting for? After the rapid unification of Germany and of Italy, is a United States of Europe the solution to industrial blight and urban poverty?

Anonymous Press:

On to the next move.
The Juggernaut seems certain.
Can the West unite?

Spring 1902 Commentary:

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

Well, this was certainly a telling move. That's usually the case for Spring 1902.

Yes, the Spring 1902 point is where the rubber hits the road for expansions after the neutrals are taken. Whoever the "anonymous" presser is, he was particularly out of touch with the relatively low likelihood we actually were going to see a real juggernaut. This is of course unless you're going to argue that all that bouncing and attacking between Russia and Turkey is a smokescreen for their juggernaut. I don't think so, but more in the specifics below. These also are all really good dynamic players, I know I'm looking forward to a really good dynamic game with this being only step one in a whole host of alliance shifts.

Going to do this left to right, roughly.

France: after building no fleets at all, France tried to move the one fleet he has to the North Sea. That's odd. And it looks like it wasn't coordinated with anybody. Perhaps this was done to help the Russians? Aside from that he's manned the Maginot line and is sitting in spite, working up the courage to go to Portugal in the Fall. Tactically solid but I wonder what will happen next? Had he, say, convoyed to Wales his position would be

looking far more interesting. Make this game interesting for observers! I don't care about the risk!

(clears throat)

OK, on to England: He's move to Finland! I'm not quite sure why. I mean, I suppose that might have kept the Russians from moving there, but only if Russia had been trying to do that without support. I guess if Russia had simply sat still the English position might have been more interesting. But as a result of these moves, the Russians are in Norway, and England will have to pull off a good guess to get it back.

Well, that's not entirely true. He could force Norway if he didn't care about losing the North Sea.

But I see nothing to suggest that England has any warm feelings towards either Germany or Russia. And the French are in the Channel and facing a German wall in the Ruhr. England's not looking good here. He's playing aggressive tactically but he seems to be on his own. In my experience, England is better off with the opposite approach.

I want to comment on England and France together. So, this really was quite strange what they both did. France didn't build fleets, which surely had

Germany's hackles up; however, then France tried to move to North Sea and almost surely asked for German support from that unmoving fleet in Denmark. He didn't get it. We know that now Germany has moved a fleet up, and so the Maginot line is now blocked, unless England helps to break it. That is possible since he didn't try to convoy to Wales and England didn't protect against it, but then why, as Rick asks, did France try to move to the North Sea. Probably one of those merry-go-rounds between the three of them. Recall, that IF England were making a flip choice to move the London fleet to Wales, then the North Sea move would have bounced England. And then, when you negotiate up a few levels, you say "I'm moving to North Sea, you support yourself in, and you'll get it, while seeing I don't convoy to Wales". I think that's actually what happened.

Now to England. I also don't get the move to Finland. And perhaps it really is England and France working together here, really. So then England CAN take back Norway and with French help keep the North Sea. And you're doing it with a bit of misdirection, which I like. But I'm probably overthinking the position (unless you see that's precisely what happens, in which case, you can call me prescient.

Germany: He's got a line set up to repulse any kind of E/F alliance. But if there is such an alliance, it's not very efficient. At least it seems like Germany and Russia think there's an E/F accord. Germany might have to worry about Munich if he thinks the French will support an Italian attack. Or he could try to take the North Sea. That would put pressure on England. Or Germany could try to poach Sweden. I mean "defend Sweden from the English". That's actually not a terrible idea.

Correct, that does seem like this is what people think will be happening. Italy is under NO pressure from France, so Italy may be amenable to working on Munich. There are interesting choices here.

From a strategic standpoint, the French line is strong so Germany kind of has to go North if he's going to go anywhere.

I agree with Rick's comments in the West, England has a weak position is out of position to attack anyone except Russia and he is not in a good position there either with an army stranded in Fin but no fleet in Bar.

France and Germany look like they are ready to face off with three armies each facing each other. The only thing I don't understand is France has a fleet in

the Eng and Germany has fleet in Hel which normally means each power is anti-English, however the rest of their moves are more anti-each other, not England. Weird.

Yes, but...

Russia has an intriguing position. It's certainly better to be in an opponent's SC in the Spring, even if his own SC is empty. England can either try to take Sweden or put all his effort into retaking Norway. Either way, England will have at most 4 SCs, and the G/R position will be better after this move.

If Russia is his ally, it is unclear what he gets. If the alliance structure presently IS EF/GR, then it will stalemate until something shifts. As usual in Diplomacy, Italy is a key linchpin in that.

The South is uninteresting for Russia. Turkey cannot force Rumania and won't even try. Well, it's not quite that simple. A/R could try to work together against Bulgaria. But somebody ought to support somebody there.

Yeah, so there doesn't seem to be a Juggernaut, does there? Russia has little to gain there, but if he gets Norway, then maybe something will happen.

Italy seems to have decided that he wants to work with Turkey against Austria. At least, that's how I interpret the combination of a supported move to the Ionian with the continued presence in Tyrolia. But I'm picturing a Fall move to Eastern Med...a slow Lepanto, surely, but it's a possibility. Since France didn't build any fleets at all, Italy has a bit more time to play with than usual. But starting a land war with Austria is a curious proposition. Greece is surely vulnerable, but aside from that, what's the long-term strategy?

I agree with Rick here, the alliance structure presently is more or less RA vs. IT, mostly off of who knows each other coming in, but that will have to change, I think. And I don't think everyone did precisely what they said they would do this turn anyway.

The Austrian moves indicate a lack of any kind of diplomatic progress with Italy. Getting them out of Tyrolia might be a pain - perhaps the Germans will help? And I frown at the lack of coordination regarding Bulgaria. If either Austria or Russia had supported the other's attack, the Turkish army would have been popped. Don't expect another chance in the Fall move.

Agreed, there could be some regrets here.

And that brings us to Turkey. It's not a good sign when all of your orders fail. Did he expect Austrian support into Rumania? Aside from another attempt to get to the Aegean, I'm not seeing much here. If he's working with Italy, they can get two fleets on Greece this move. Of course, the Austrians could also slide an army up to Albania. The brute force potential of I/T isn't that great. If I were Turkey here I would hold onto Bul with support and try to get the Italians into Greece. As long as Turkey can stay alive until the mid-game, he's going to get opportunities to break out eventually. Of course, if he leaves Bulgaria unsupported again, we may see worse seasons than this one.

Jonathan is patient, and patience seems to be what is called for here.

In the East, it's kind of a mirror image but here there is tentative Austria-Italian detente facing an equally tepid Russian-Turkish understanding. Both sides are have so many units covering their asses in the rear, not much is really happening at the front.

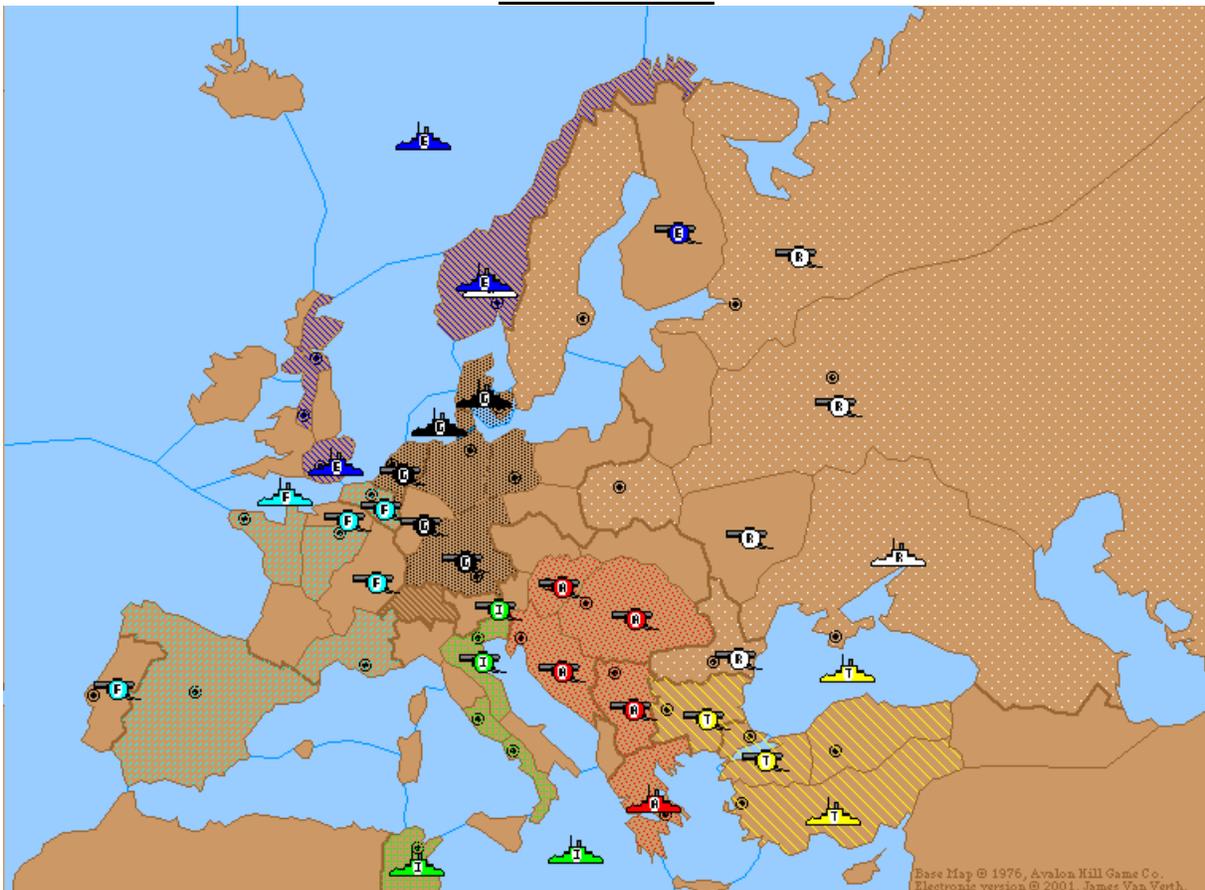
Again, I agree with Rick except I wouldn't go so far as to call these eastern groupings alliances---they look to me like preferences, e.g. Italy would like to work with Austria, Turkey would like to work with Russia. As long as all these powers need to keep units watching each other I find it hard to take their alliances very seriously.

I hope these powers will reveal more with their fall moves, right now I only see one definite war going on England versus Russia.

On the whole, I like the French position the best and the English the least. We haven't seen much coordination between any two powers yet. This Fall phase could contain all sorts of surprises. Usually this is when the first knife is drawn.

I don't think I agree, no one really has any sort of upper hand yet, certainly not the French, though the English appear to be in the most trouble. We will see much more action to comment on in the fall.

Fall 1902 Results



With all the bounces(and a mis-order) I'm surprised anything moved at all...

Austria: A Budapest Supports A Trieste and A Budapest Supports A Bulgaria – Rumania (Multiple Orders, so Holds), F Greece Hold, A Serbia Supports A Bulgaria – Rumania, A Trieste Supports A Tyrolia – Far Far Away (Holds), A Vienna Unordered.

England: A Finland Supports F North Sea – Norway, F London - North Sea (*Bounce*), F North Sea – Norway, F Norwegian Sea Supports F North Sea - Norway.

France: A Belgium - Ruhr (*Fails*), A Burgundy Supports A Tyrolia - Munich (*Cut*), F English Channel Supports A Picardy - Belgium (*Fails*), A Picardy - Belgium (*Bounce*), A Spain - Portugal.

Germany: F Denmark - Sweden (*Bounce*), F Helgoland Bight - North Sea (*Bounce*), A Holland - Belgium (*Bounce*), A Munich Supports A Ruhr - Burgundy (*Cut*), A Ruhr - Burgundy (*Fails*).

Italy: F Ionian Sea - Eastern Mediterranean (*Bounce*), F Tunis - Ionian Sea (*Fails*), A Tyrolia - Munich (*Fails*), A Venice Hold.

Russia: A Moscow - St Petersburg (*Fails*), F Norway – Sweden (*Dislodged*, retreat to Barents Sea or Skagerrak or OTB), A Rumania Supports A Serbia - Bulgaria (*Void*), F Sevastopol - Black Sea (*Fails*), A St Petersburg - Norway (*Fails*), A Ukraine Supports A Rumania.

Turkey: F Black Sea Supports A Bulgaria - Rumania (*Cut*), A Bulgaria - Rumania (*Fails*), A Constantinople - Bulgaria (*Fails*), F Smyrna - Eastern Mediterranean (*Bounce*).

PRESS

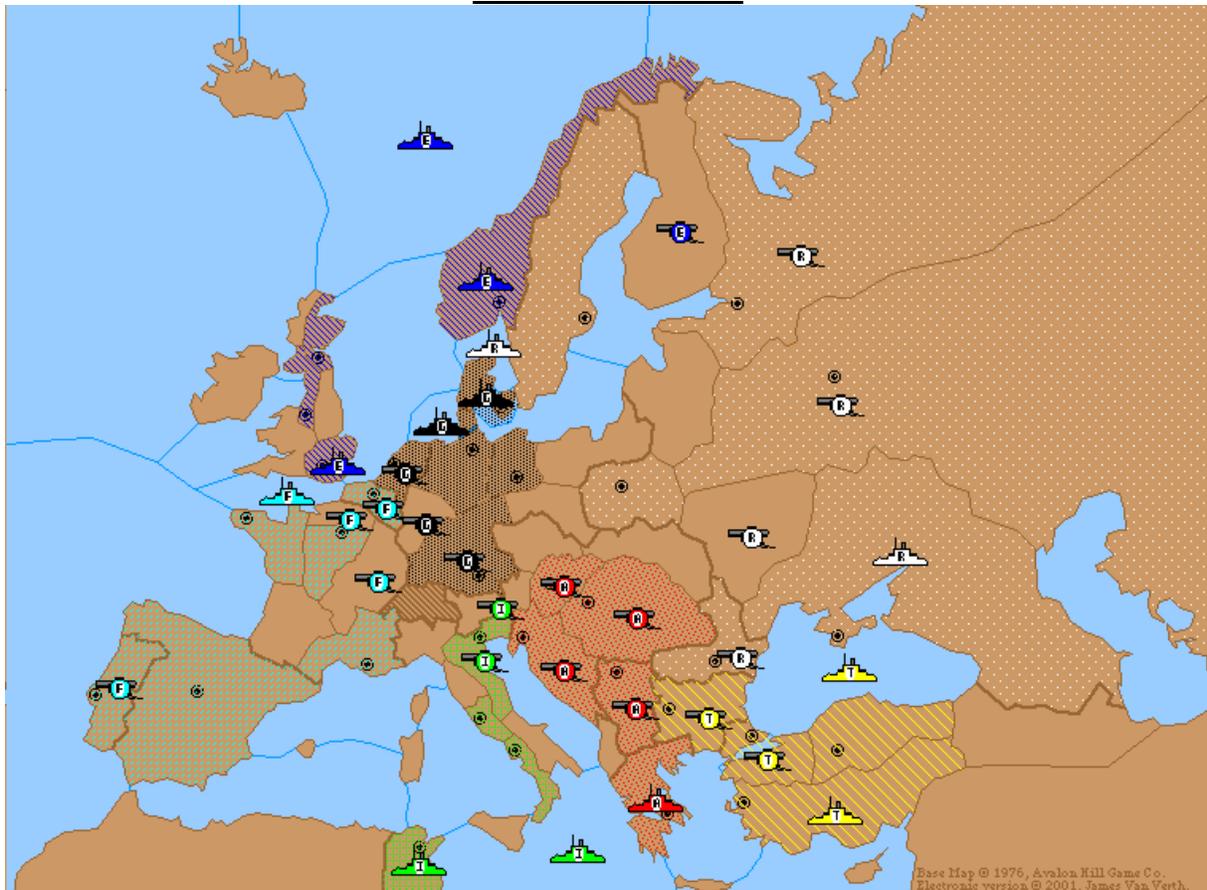
Anonymous Press

Who will be the first
Tipping the scales of power
The East is rising

Anonymous Press:

Silence for two weeks
Flurries of press at deadline
Heron strikes at dawn

Autumn 1902 Results



You had a 33% chance of guessing where the retreat would go...

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

England: Has A Finland, F London, F Norway, F Norwegian Sea.

France: Has A Belgium, A Burgundy, F English Channel, A Picardy, A Portugal.

Germany: Has F Denmark, F Helgoland Bight, A Holland, A Munich, A Ruhr.

Italy: Has F Ionian Sea, F Tunis, A Tyrolia, A Venice.

Russia: Retreat F Norway - Skagerrak..Has A Moscow, A Rumania, F Sevastopol, F Skagerrak, A St Petersburg, A Ukraine.

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

Supply Center Chart

Austria: Budapest, Greece, Serbia, Trieste, Vienna=5, Even

England: Edinburgh, Liverpool, London, Norway=4, Even

France: Belgium, Brest, Marseilles, Paris, Portugal, Spain=6, Build 1

Germany: Berlin, Denmark, Holland, Kiel, Munich=5, Even

Italy: Naples, Rome, Tunis, Venice=4, Even

Russia: Moscow, Rumania, Sevastopol, St Petersburg, Sweden, Warsaw=6, Even

Turkey: Ankara, Bulgaria, Constantinople, Smyrna=4, Even

Fall and Autumn 1902 Commentary:

Jim Burgess (**BOLD**)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Jack McHugh (Comic Sans MS)

Let's see...

I will start backwards with the Autumn results and then what happened that led up to them. First off, this is a set of very experienced, very tactically adept players warily eyeing each other. Think about seven wrestlers maneuvering around the mat looking for a take-down. For this build season, only France has a build, and that was Portugal that he plotted to take in 1902 back in 1901 and no one really had anything to say about it. Since that is the one "new thing", let's ask whether it allows the game to be shaken up? Here are the options. He could build F Brest, which would potentially put five fleets against the three English fleets, but that would surprise me, since that's not the way this game is going -- isolating against one player. The German "wall" though, that would benefit from an army to allow the F Eng freedom to move so Belgium and Burgundy are supported without Picardy having to guess which one to support. I am not sure which place he might build, I would think A Paris. This gives options and we will see what happens. F Eng then could ensure England gets back into the North Sea, OR support the reverse. That is the leverage that will keep the French moving forward diplomatically in this game.

Then there is the Russian retreat. First off, it probably HAD to be Skagerrak. Going to Barents probably would have just ensured annihilation since it had no supporting fleet. We would expect from Skagerrak that Russia can get supported by Germany back to Sweden, or possibly assist Germany in trying to get into the North Sea. All these are good options. Now back to the "how more or less nothing happened in Fall" that got us here.

Austria writes two orders for Army Budapest and thereby fails to support the Turks into Rumania. Had the support order been valid, Turkey would have taken Rumania. So...gee, should we comment on this? Well, hell, it's not like this is a game being played by newbies.

There's a chance here that the misorder was intentional. There's an even larger chance that it will be interpreted as intentional, regardless of that was Chris's intent. I don't think I'm giving away a magician's sleight of hand here.

I'd go further and insist that the "patience is a virtue" is going on here. The dancer is still dancing. Note that HAD Austria done this, that would have been the only "real" center change on the board this year, and it would NOT have been an Austrian build.

It's also worth saying that none of the Austrian forces moved at all. That's not good.

Yes, well pretty much no one moved of much consequence elsewhere. And NOTHING moved anywhere around Austria, so I'm not sure why we pick on Chris. He clearly was getting the pressure in both directions (Russia and Turkey) and he does NOT want them to Juggernaut, so he danced. Dance on, let the band play on.

I'm not picking on Chris so much as pointing out that central powers don't have the same pressures that corner powers have. It's OK for Turkey to be stuck at 4 if he's in the Black Sea and has kept Italy out of the Eastern Med. It's less OK for Austria to be immobile.

England performed the set of orders that guaranteed his recapture of Norway, even though it left the North Sea open. This seems to have been coordinated with Germany, as the French fleet in the Channel is blocked from taking either London or the North Sea. But maybe it wasn't a coordinated move?

I agree, it does set up the North Sea as a real battleground for 1903 though. It is a fascinating tactical setup at the moment that I cannot remember seeing before. We have three English fleets, two German fleets, one Russian fleet, and one French fleet bordering on it. All sorts of possibilities, should be fun to see how the diplomacy sorts out.

France appears to be taking an aggressive approach to the board. With the capture of Portugal he's at 6 and he's sitting in both the English Channel and Burgundy. Seems to be working with Italy, but the attack on Munich failed because Germany didn't use a static defense.

Agreed, this is a chain reaction though, noting how in Diplomacy, the WHOLE board matters. Austria is trying to keep RT from forming, so Italy wants to avoid getting in Austria's way, so that frees A Tyo to assist France. So Germany sees that this all is happening, so he makes the active defense he needs to avoid having the Italian support be decisive. This is REALLY good play....

Speaking of which, the German defense here is a good object lesson for tactical newbies. He's only got one army to support Munich, and that support could be cut. But instead of ordering A Ruhr S A Munich, Michael orders A Ruhr - Burgundy to keep Army Burgundy from supporting the Italian attack.

And, he knew that without another French army behind, that this is what France/Italy would be doing. What happens now after there is a new French A Paris? Could then France afford to MOVE A Bur-Mun with support of the Italian, while cutting the Ruhr support? Yes, probably, and is there anything that can be done to stop that? Would Austria be willing to cut that support to stop French expansion? Would Italy be willing to let France get that far ahead? How does THAT affect the battle over the North Sea? AND, finally, do RT go ahead and form a Juggernaut or do they keep jousting with Austria??????? That's more than enough questions for a great 1903.

At least the Italian tried to move his forces, trying to sneak into the Eastern Med as well as Munich. Sadly, neither move succeeded.

Russia is putting up some effort in the North, but the coordination between England and Germany doesn't

bode well for his prospects over the new future. Who knows what is going on in the South?

Will that persist? How does Russia team with France and Italy and maybe even Austria to counter all that??

As for Turkey, he's trying to attack Russia, holding back the Italians, but not really getting anywhere...yet.

Turkey (and Russia) can afford to be patient as long as there is not movement elsewhere.... we are set for a fascinating 1903.

Settle in gents, this game is going to be a long one as no one on this board is willing to trust anyone else for even one season. Based on their moves, their paranoia is completely justified as I haven't seen this much stabbing since my time at Brad Wilson's old Vertigo Games in the early 90's.

Let's start in the West, the only power that made any head way was England who managed, after some heavy lifting and no help from Germany, to wrest Norway from Russia—although the English failed to get a build as they remain even at four units. However, England's position remains precarious as the North Sea is now unoccupied—why Russia failed to retreat into it and gain enormous leverage over England, is beyond me—and France continuous to occupy the Channel.

The only thing I really like about England's position tactically is he has three fleets on the North Sea so he should be able to take it back come the spring without too much difficulty. Strategically, England is stalemated like the rest of West since there are not two powers leveraging their position against the third power.

Germany's position makes the least sense to me as it looks like he was trying to attack both England and France simultaneously without any allies. Perhaps Germany was double-crossed by Italy or Russia or both—I will be curious to read what happened in the end game statement.

France's position was more logical and it looks like France and Italy botched an attack on Munich that would have gotten the Italians into Munich. France and Germany are butting heads in the west in series

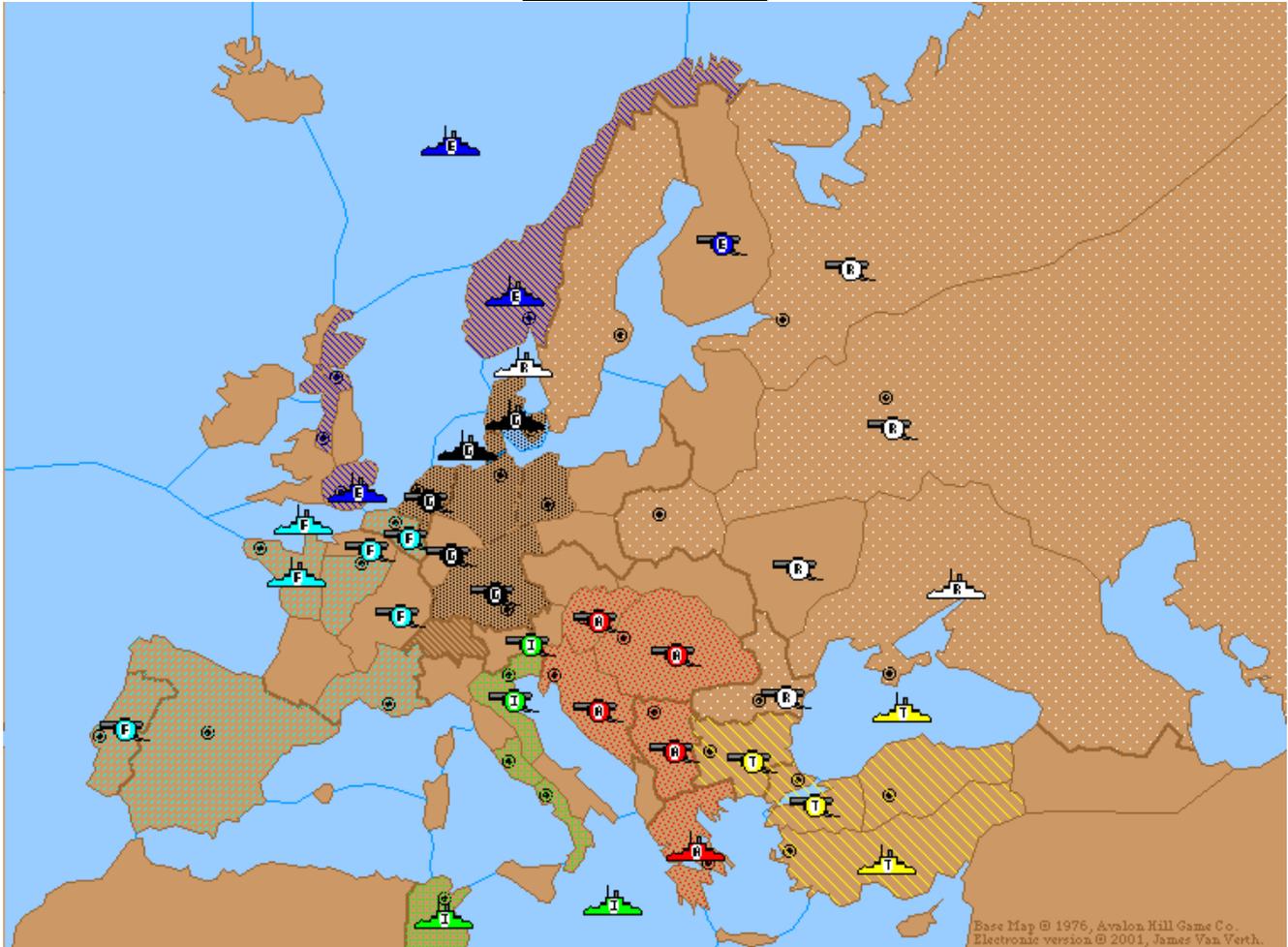
of moves that both Joffre and Falkenhayn would recognize and approve, although politically it represents a failure to reach any sort of an accommodation with one's neighbors.

In the East we see more of the same, as Turkey makes a rather weak stab of Russia attempting to swipe Rum from the Tsar. Besides Italy's tentative push into Bavaria, Austria and Italy do virtually nothing to help themselves vis-à-vis Russia or Turkey

and continue to suspiciously eye each other over their Alpine trenches.

All this means that only France picked up one build, the last remaining neutral as French are currently undistracted in Iberia as the English have gone north and the Italians are still trying to set up for a possible Lepanto. With no centers changing hands this could be a rather slow moving game unless we see some movement diplomatically among these players.

Winter 1902 Results



Onward and upward!

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

England: Has A Finland, F London, F Norway, F Norwegian Sea.

France: Build F Brest..Has F Brest, A Belgium, A Burgundy, F English Channel, A Picardy, A Portugal.

Germany: Has F Denmark, F Helgoland Bight, A Holland, A Munich, A Ruhr.

Italy: Has F Ionian Sea, F Tunis, A Tyrolia, A Venice.

Russia: Has A Moscow, A Rumania, F Sevastopol, F Skagerrak, A St Petersburg, A Ukraine.

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

Winter 1902 Commentary:

Jim Burgess (**BOLD**)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Jack McHugh (Comic Sans MS)

Well, color me purple, we have the F Brest! Since we think Italy and France are working together, there wasn't going to be a build in Marseilles, but now there are a host of anti-English possibilities. The worst of them for England, of course, is losing the North Sea right now. Reminder: I didn't expect that since Italy and France tried to take Munich in fall, and quite possibly could have taken it this year if Italy was willing to give it to France. Perhaps Italy wasn't willing to do that, maybe (remember us commentators have no idea what the players actually are saying to each other). Perhaps Germany is promising to support France to the North Sea (though I doubt that). I wonder what happens next, we still have what I think will be a fascinating 1903.

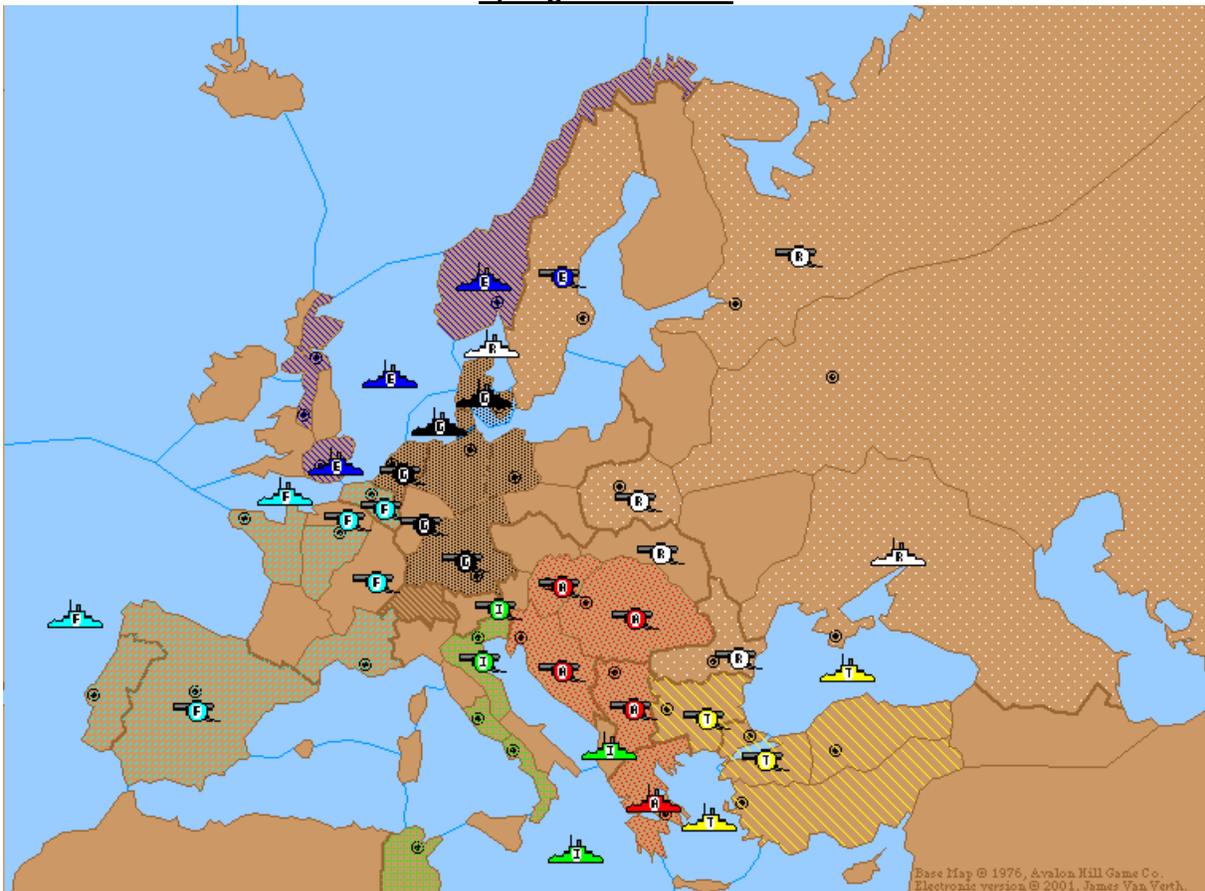
We didn't really think France was going to try to play with five armies and one fleet, did we?

I doubt Germany is promising anything to France. Not after the attack on Munich.

The coming year should be very interesting. England has to worry about the North Sea, about Liverpool, and about Norway. I suspect the first order of business will be getting the German into Sweden.

The fleet build in Bre doesn't really tell me all that much as I agree with Rick--France pretty much had to build a fleet and since the situation up north is so unsettled and France appears to be trying to work with Italy, F Mar build doesn't make much sense.

Spring 1903 Results



It seems popular opinion was that there should be an English F Nth

Austria: A Budapest Supports A Serbia – Rumania, F Greece Hold, A Serbia - Rumania (*Fails*), A Trieste Hold, A Vienna Supports A Trieste.

England: A Finland – Sweden, F London Supports F Norwegian Sea - North Sea, F Norway Supports A Finland – Sweden, F Norwegian Sea - North Sea.

France: A Belgium - Ruhr (*Fails*), F Brest - Mid-Atlantic Ocean, A Burgundy Supports A Belgium – Ruhr, F English Channel Supports F Norwegian Sea - North Sea, A Picardy - Belgium (*Fails*), A Portugal - Spain.

Germany: F Denmark Supports A Finland – Sweden, F Helgoland Bight Supports F Norwegian Sea - North Sea, A Holland Supports A Ruhr, A Munich Supports A Ruhr, A Ruhr Supports A Munich (*Cut*).

Italy: F Ionian Sea – Albania, F Tunis - Ionian Sea, A Tyrolia Supports A Vienna - Bohemia (*Void*), A Venice Supports A Tyrolia.

Russia: A Moscow – Warsaw, A Rumania Supports A Ukraine - Galicia (*Cut*), F Sevastopol Supports A Rumania, F Skagerrak - North Sea (*Fails*), A St Petersburg Hold, A Ukraine - Galicia.

Turkey: F Black Sea Supports A Bulgaria, A Bulgaria Hold, A Constantinople Supports A Bulgaria, F Smyrna - Aegean Sea.

PRESS

Anonymous Press

France deploys a fleet
English citizens question
German brand vodkaNone.

Spring 1903 Commentary:

Jim Burgess (**BOLD**)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Jack McHugh (Comic Sans MS)

Spring 03 gives us some noteworthy changes on the diplomatic fronts. In particular, the peace between Austria-Hungary and Russia has collapsed. Russia appears to have responded negatively to the supports A-H offered last move to Turkey.

Russia does need to be a bit careful if he drives AT together right now. Rumania could fall in the fall.... and then Sevastopol after that. But A-H HAS to offer support to Turkey, that's the best play to avoid IA vs. RT as a battle that Austria eventually loses.

We have Russians in Galicia. Also, the Italians have landed their fleet in Albania, where it could go against either Greece or Trieste. Meanwhile, the Turk has simply sailed into the Aegean. With fleets in both the Black Sea and the Aegean, he could go against either Greece or Rumania in the Fall.

The key here for Italy is who to support, not who to attack.

One thing worth noting is an Italian supporting of an imaginary Austrian move to Bohemia. We shouldn't read this as anything more than wishful thinking on the Italians part. An army in Bohemia would make the Italian incursion easier.

In other areas: the French have tried the move to Ruhr that would have worked last Fall. And of course, it fails. Even with the extra fleet and an open backdoor in Liverpool, France appears to be focused more on Germany. England is hardly upset at this, and has taken

Sweden, at least for the moment. Russia tried to move to the North Sea, but whatever support he was expecting was not forthcoming, as both Germany and France supported the English instead.

While that happened, one does not sense it is part of any sort of Western Triple, I see tactical and diplomatic maneuvering continuing there.

My early guess is that the East is going to develop more quickly than the West. This looks very bad for Austria.

Well, Chris can console himself with his victory this past weekend at the Weasel Moot.

Indeed, what Rick is referring to is that Chris Martin got a solo at the June 22-23, 2013 Weasel Moot and squeaked out a Tournament win over the other weekend soloist. This gives Chris another tourney championship and sets him up well going into DipCon in the Fall toward a Grand Prix Championship for the year. All you reading this, get out and play some tourney dip somewhere near you (or far!) soon.

I agree with Rick except I'd point out that although Russia appears to moving on Austria--his alliance from Turkey is far from secure. It is apparent from the moves of R/T that neither really trusts the other. Italy also appears to be ready to bolster Austria or

move in for his cut of the corpse of the Hapsburg dynasty.

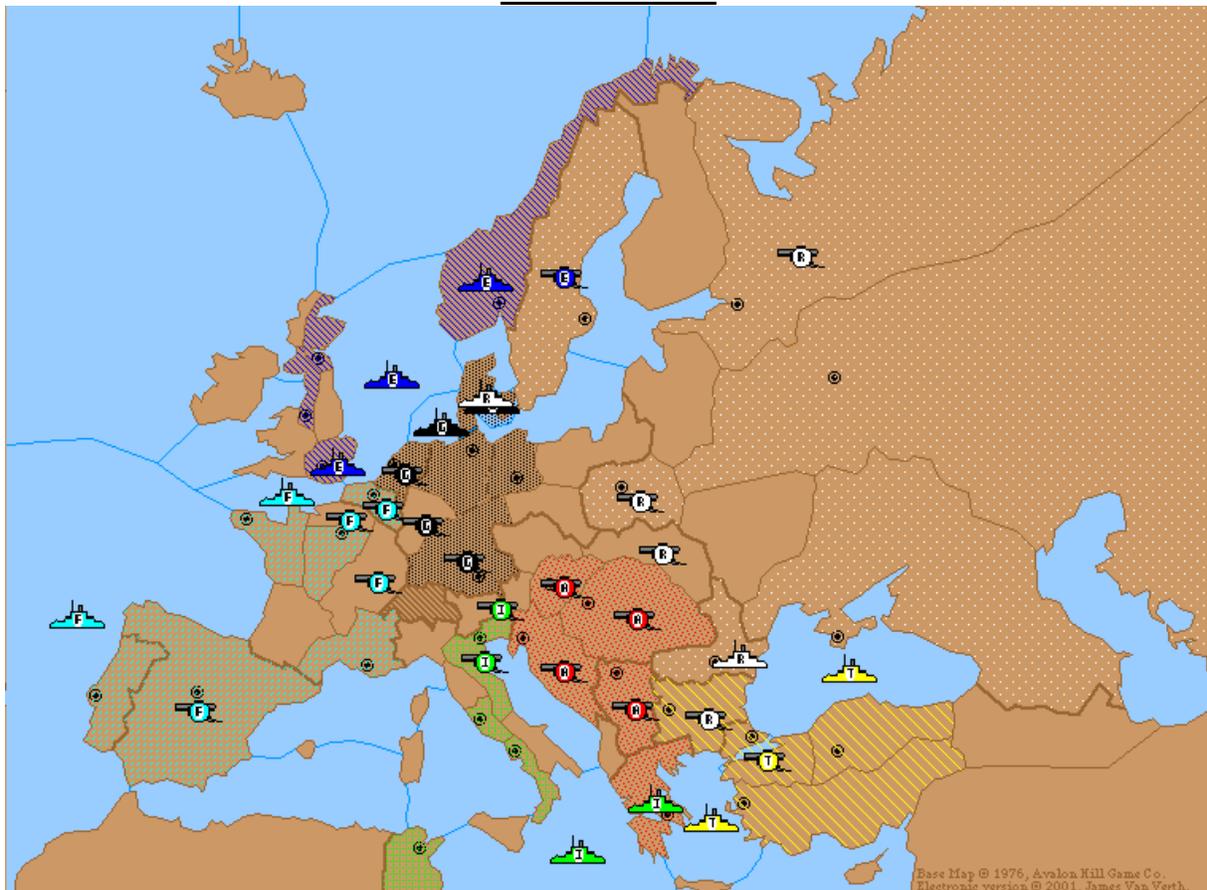
The classic issue here is that Italy needs to make sure that IF he takes Austrian centers it is not in the face of an RT Juggernaut. I see everyone as doing a bit of a delicate dance around all that.

In the West, it still looks wide open to me. All countries are playing their cards so close to the vest I'm not sure who is allied to who against whom. It still looks like a Mexican standoff to me.

Agreed, there is NO clean alliance in the west and NO movement toward Western Triple. The question is, which of the three has an upper hand against one of the others, and how to dance toward that.

Too bad the East isn't developing faster, the West is in ideal situation for some alliance from the East to take advantage of it.

Fall 1903 Results



This is where things get interesting!

Austria: A Budapest - Vienna (*Fails*), F Greece - Aegean Sea (*Disbanded*), A Serbia Supports A Rumania - Bulgaria, A Trieste Supports A Budapest - Vienna (*Fails*), A Vienna - Bohemia (*Bounce*).

England: F London Supports F North Sea, F North Sea Supports A Holland - Belgium, F Norway Supports A Sweden (*Cut*), A Sweden Supports F Skagerrak - Denmark.

France: A Belgium Supports A Spain - Holland, A Burgundy - Ruhr (*Fails*), F English Channel Convoys A Spain - Holland, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean Convoys A Spain - Holland, A Picardy Supports A Belgium, A Spain - Holland (*Fails*).

Germany: F Denmark Hold (*Dislodged*, retreat to Kiel or Baltic Sea or OTB), F Helgoland Bight - Holland (*Fails*), A Holland - Belgium (*Fails*), A Munich - Tyrolia (*Bounce*), A Ruhr Supports A Holland - Belgium (*Cut*).

Italy: F Albania - Greece, F Ionian Sea Supports F Albania - Greece, A Tyrolia - Bohemia (*Bounce*), A Venice - Tyrolia (*Bounce*).

Russia: A Munich-Silesia (No Such Unit), A Warsaw Unordered, A Galicia - Budapest (*Fails*), A Rumania - Bulgaria,

F Sevastopol – Rumania, F Skagerrak – Denmark, A St Petersburg - Norway (*Fails*).

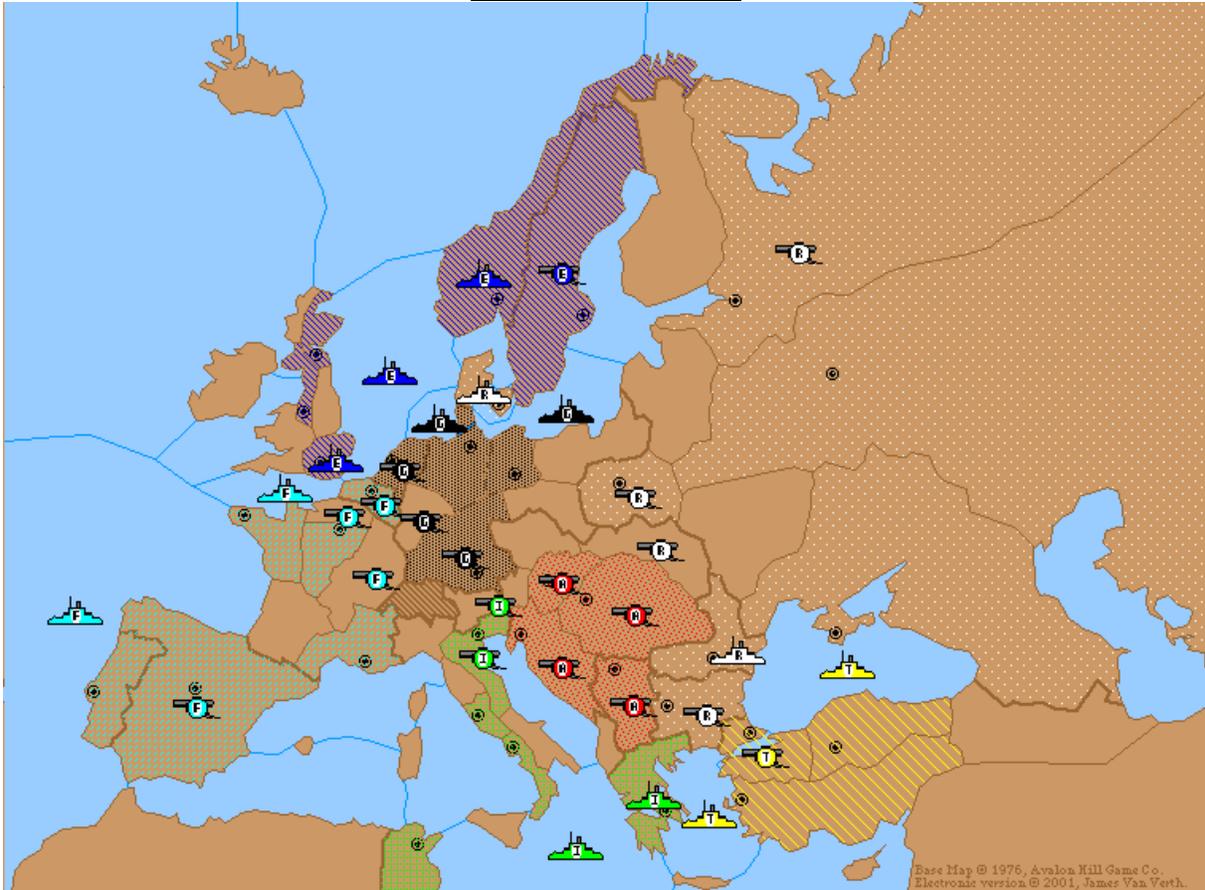
Turkey: F Aegean Sea Convoys A Constantinople – Greece, F Black Sea Supports F Sevastopol – Rumania, ~~A Bulgaria Supports A Rumania – Serbia~~ (*Disbanded*), A Constantinople - Greece (*Fails*).

PRESS

Anonymous press:

Now smoke and mirrors
In the South yield to action:
Someone's goose is cooked.

Autumn 1903 Results



Okay, so Autumn is not usually as exciting as other seasons....

Austria: Has A Budapest, A Serbia, A Trieste, A Vienna.

England: Has F London, F North Sea, F Norway, A Sweden.

France: Has A Belgium, A Burgundy, F English Channel, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, A Picardy, A Spain.

Germany: Retreat F Denmark - Baltic Sea..Has F Baltic Sea, F Helgoland Bight, A Holland, A Munich, A Ruhr.

Italy: Has F Greece, F Ionian Sea, A Tyrolia, A Venice.

Russia: Has A Bulgaria, F Denmark, A Galicia, F Rumania, A St Petersburg, A Warsaw.

Turkey: Has F Aegean Sea, F Black Sea, A Constantinople.

Supply Center Chart

Austria: Budapest, Serbia, Trieste, Vienna=4, Even

England: Edinburgh, Liverpool, London, Norway, Sweden=5, Build 1

France: Belgium, Brest, Marseilles, Paris, Portugal, Spain=6, Even

Germany: Berlin, Holland, Kiel, Munich=4, Remove 1

Italy: Greece, Naples, Rome, Tunis, Venice=5, Build 1
Russia: Bulgaria, Denmark, Moscow, Rumania, Sevastopol, St Petersburg, Warsaw=7, Build 1
Turkey: Ankara, Constantinople, Smyrna=3, Even

Fall/Autumn 1903 Commentary:

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



Right, good summary, and the surprise to me was Bulgaria, which I never thought would go to Russia, kudos to the Russian persuasion here.

Turkey is the odd man out here. It's worth saying that a three-way rending of A-H could have knocked him down to 2 SCs, but Russia instead left him alone, took his support into Bulgaria, and sold out the Italians, telling Chris how to block his move. Turkey lost Bulgaria even though he had 3 forces that could support the army there.

Note how this is good play by Russia, sometimes you can get what CAN be defended, precisely because they don't expect you to try.

Of course, if A & R are working together, Italy could work with Turkey to make a counter-attack on Bulgaria.

I agree, I don't think anyone should see set alliances here. Turkey should be able to get Austria's help now if Italy and Russia are tightening up.

At least this side is interesting.

Yeah, much more interesting than the other side of the board.

Meanwhile next store things aren't looking very promising for the Austrian hedgehog position as Italy and Russia both hem the Hapsburg empire in a little tighter. Although Italy's attempt to slip into Boh and Tyr failed and Russia's disorder spared Austria the loss of any centers, it still leaves Austria with little room to maneuver both geographically and diplomatically.

Russia's disorder hurts him on the German front. But he managed to convince the English to support him into Denmark (while getting Austrian support into Bulgaria) so he ends up with the best year.

A clearer picture of the alliance situation also emerges from the fog that has obscured the western powers as well. England and France are working against Germany as France tries to convoy an army

Finally the other shoe has dropped in the East and it looks like we've got a less than standard alliance in R/I rather than the more conventional R/T or I/T or even I/T or A/I. Russia has taken Bulgaria, a profoundly anti-Turkish move while Italy has moved his fleet into Greece a head of the planned Turkish landing there this turn. Good news for Russia and Italy, for Turkey, not so much.

But really rather predictable in what was a good choice for Italy! The surprise to me (recall that I said this last turn) was why Austria and Turkey didn't collaborate more explicitly in anticipation of this.

Well, let's summarize:

Russia took Bulgaria with Austrian support.

Italy took Greece by himself.

Turkey tried to support the Russians into Serbia.

Italy tried to get into Bohemia, but was blocked by Austria.

Austria was facing possible attacks on all five of his SCs and only defended Vienna with support.

from Spa-Bel and England supports Russia into Den. Russia gets some surprising and effective support from England.

This not to say England is completely happy with French. England hedges her bets by supporting Germany's move by A Hol-Bel---it fails due to France's uncut support from Pic. Although England and France are working together, clearly England is the more reluctant ally and he's doing his best to keep both Germany and France weak and in need of an ally—a clever plan if he can pull it off. Right now it is working well with Germany, but not so well with France since France, unlike Germany, is not being attacked by another power and threatened by a third.

I'm not sure I get what France is doing in all this, my best guess is a bit of treading water, waiting for something to break.

France is doing very little. Again, we can draw some inferences about who expected what. France thought the English were going to help him take Holland. But that wasn't happening. Germany tried to take Belgium with only one support even though France had three guys that could support it. Then again, I could say the same thing about Bulgaria.

Right, so it was worth the try.

It seems like everybody wants to attack Germany. Don't see how this will end well.

In the East, Russia goes up one to seven dots on Bulgaria and Denmark but loses Swe while Italy goes up one to five by taking Greece and England also goes up to five by taking Sweden from Russia.

As far as the board goes: France and England are well positioned against Germany although I predict England will build F Lvp to counter French F MAO and F Cha, Italy and Russia are positioned to crack the

Austrian nut this year if they can work together, although Russia's build will have to be F or A Sev since there is a Turkish F Bla—I predict a F Sev since an army would not be able to pin that F Bla in place. Turkey and Austria need to convince France to move against Italy and England to move Russia ASAP while deciding how to combine to slow down R/I.

Not sure there's an actual R/I. I don't really see signs of real cooperation here on anyone's part.

I agree, there might be an R/I but there might not. There should be intense interest by everyone on this for next game year.

England, Russia, and Italy all grow while Austria, Turkey, and Germany all shrink. France is even but looks to be making no progress on the diplomatic front. Of course, as a 6-SC France he can get away with that for a little while.

Allying with R/I would be very powerful right now for France.

I'm also curious to see how France will react to England's attempt to sabotage their attack on Germany—the obvious way, besides direct negotiation with England, is to revive the French-Italian alliance again or, bolder still, negotiations with Germany or Russia or both.

As for Italy's build, I expect it to be F Nap assuming things remain as they are since there is no room against Austria to deploy an army and build of an fleet or army in Rom would be mostly likely be seen by the rest of the board as anti-French.

I'm not sure it counts as "sabotage". The French orders were incredibly unrealistic.

On the whole, it was certainly an interesting move.

Agreed!!

Winter 1903 Results

Austria: Has A Budapest, A Serbia, A Trieste, A Vienna.

England: Build F Liverpool..Has F London, F North Sea, F Norway, A Sweden, F Liverpool.

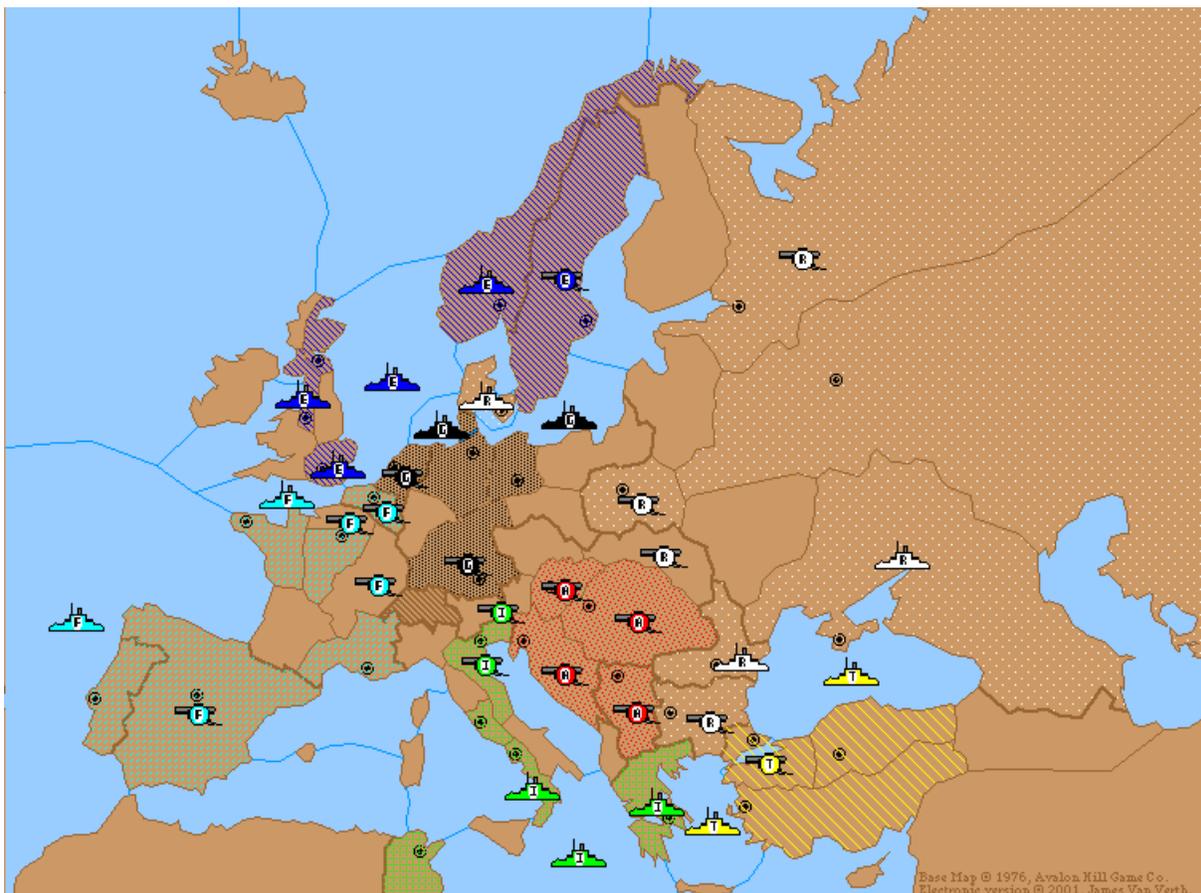
France: Has A Belgium, A Burgundy, F English Channel, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, A Picardy, A Spain.

Germany: Remove A Ruhr...Has F Baltic Sea, F Helgoland Bight, A Holland, A Munich.

Italy: Build F Naples..Has F Greece, F Ionian Sea, A Tyrolia, A Venice, F Naples.

Russia: Build F Sevastopol..Has A Bulgaria, F Denmark, A Galicia, F Rumania, A St Petersburg, A Warsaw, F Sevastopol.

Turkey: Has F Aegean Sea, F Black Sea, A Constantinople.



See, Winter is a little more exciting.

Winter 1903 Commentary:

Jim Burgess (**BOLD**)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Jack McHugh (Comic Sans MS)

Builds were all as I expected but Germany's removal of A Ruhr is interesting. Apparently he has decided that France, and not England, will be getting most of his centers if the Kaiser has anything to say about it.

I've tried this diplomatic gambit before but it rarely works as most players are too invested or lazy to reorient themselves over a victim's attempt to throw dots to allies.

Let's do an end of game year check on where everyone is with these adjustments.

First, I'll start where Jack did in the West.

France surely is set with Italy (as is common on these sorts of games), but it IS possible for Italy/France to send units into the western mediterranean. but really what we have is the tradeoff Jack noted, Germany needs for France to go

with him against England, so he removed A Ruhr in the attempt to signal. We will see this game year if it works. As I noted over the last game year, France has the choices and options.

England is committed now, and in VERY good shape if France goes with him, less good shape if he doesn't. The Russian Fleet in Denmark is the other wild card. Russia SHOULD make the move with France, whatever that is, doesn't mean he WILL do it, but for long term strategic advantage, that is best for the later midgame. So, does France choose England or Germany? That affects Russia and that fleet too.

Then, in the East, Turkey is in a boatload of trouble unless he gets a strong ally. My view has been and continues to be that this ally is Austria, but the AT strategic situation is considerably weaker this game year than it was last game year. As I noted above. Italy is unlikely to hold off or hold back, OR be attacked by France. So, there we are, the long term powers in the best shape are Italy, Russia and

France. I will not be surprised if that becomes more clear this game year. BUT, if the other four powers can come to terms with that and oppose those alliances, then we still can have a lot of movement. With players of this caliber, expect some more of the unexpected.

I would just add that I don't see England or France stabbing each other since both are well positioned to fight it off and both can see it would just bog down in a stalemate. This is very bad for Germany as both E and F are much better positions to continue their offensive against Germany.

I agree with Jim that Turkey is the big loser in the East right now--Austria is at least better situated defensively and it will take some serious cooperation between Italy and Russia to collapse the Austrian position. The Sultan, on the other hand, is much more vulnerable having one less dot and facing more units over a longer front.

I still think France could be a key for both Russia, as Jim points out above, as well as for Austria and Turkey if France moves on Italy. The question is will the situation continue in the West to allow France to move to the East if the French wish to do so?

One more question--if France does work with Russia, what becomes of Anglo-Russian relations? The English seem to only be using the Russians to hold down the Germans--what happens if England fully commits to an alliance with England, does he still need the Russians and will he continue his offensive in Scandinavia?

First, the adjustments.

I really hate the German removal. Army Ruhr was his most useful force. It bordered three of his four SCs and, indeed, was crucial to the defense of Munich. Even if he wanted to hurt England the most, he would have been better off keeping A Ruhr over A Mun.

The builds were all fleets! F Lvp is a sign that England isn't all that happy with France, F Nap is the typical fifth force for Italy, and F Sev should get the Russians into the Black Sea ASAP.

As to who is working with whom:

Germany is working with nobody.

France will work with Italy again to get Italy in Munich.

England may be working with Russia.

Austria is dependent on Russia.

Turkey and Italy should start working together, but who knows?

I expect Russia to take the Black Sea in the Spring, possibly losing Bulgaria. Germany will surely lose Munich. Everything else is up in the air.

