

Issue #123 - Fall 2013
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Diplomacy *World*



Notes from the Editor

Welcome to the latest issue of **Diplomacy World**, the Fall 2013 issue. It's hard to believe that I began my second tenure as Lead Editor 6 ½ years ago. As self-critical as I can be when it comes to the work I do for **Diplomacy World** (and the occasional articles I provide) I do have to admit that over the last 26 issues we've had some really terrific issues. One of the beauties of **Diplomacy World** is that everyone who reads it can have their own favorite issue, based mainly on what kind of articles they enjoy the most. It's impossible to please everybody, but I do strive to provide a range of topics in every issue. My goal is for there to be something in each issue for everyone, even though I know in most cases there are some articles in each issue that you personally have no real interest in.



From my end, there are a few things I would like to see more of on a regular basis. To begin with, there hasn't even BEEN a letter column the last two issues. That's because feedback has been terribly hard to come by. I always hope that the articles in a given issue will encourage some thoughts or responses from the readers, but sadly – despite encouragement – that never occurs as often as I'd like.

There are also certain types of articles I am unable to recruit people to write. In this issue you'll find some very interesting reports from recent **Diplomacy** events; we can always use more of those. In fact, the Club and Tournament Editor post remains empty, as it has been for some time. I've looked on my inability to fill that spot as a personal failure, but now I am beginning to wonder if the face-to-face hobby is not as strong as it was just a few years ago. Graeme Murphy and Larry Peery each weigh in on that elsewhere in this issue. I'd love to hear more opinions. And I **NEVER** understand why those who organize **Diplomacy** events don't take advantage of

Diplomacy World by submitting a one-page flyer promoting their event. It's free, and each issue is downloaded literally thousands of times before the next one comes out! (And continues to be downloaded after that)

Variant articles are also too difficult to come by. Whether it's reviewing a variant (or more than one), introducing a newly designed one to the public, or offering strategy tips for your personal favorite, I think variants just don't get enough attention these days. And there are quite a few fantastic variants that have fallen by the wayside...ones that were very popular a decade or two ago are barely known by today's players. Does anyone think a second Demo Game, featuring a classic variant, would be a welcome regular feature?

Hobby history is another topic I wish we printed more about. I blame myself for not writing about that; after all, I have spent a lot of time working on my Postal **Diplomacy** Zine Archive (which can be found at <http://www.whiningkentpigs.com/DW/>) but I haven't written more than one or two articles about the contents therein. Granted, I still have a number of boxes of old zines to scan and post (and a ton of zines I am missing, that I hope to get from others someday), but if there is interest from **Diplomacy World** readers, I could make more of an effort to write about some of the treasures you can find there. Any thoughts?

The final type of article I wish we had more of in **Diplomacy World** would be humorous. In the heyday of the postal hobby, zine publishers and frequent contributors displayed their personality all over the page, and humor (light, dark, and sarcastic) was everywhere. These days everything often seems far too serious. I think articles that contain at least some humor – or perhaps straight fictional pieces that touch on **Diplomacy** – would help bridge some of the gaps in the hobby today. If you can't laugh at things, and at yourself, you're forgetting two important points: this is just a hobby, and **Diplomacy** is (in the end) just a game.

So, if nothing else in this issue gets you to send in a letter, a question, or an article of your own, perhaps my personal musings might elicit a response or two? We'll see!

I'll close by reminding you the next deadline for Diplomacy World submissions is January 1st, 2014. 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!

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

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Guide to Openings: Austria

By Marc Seguin

As a brief prologue, this article (and the ones to follow) will explore each power's initial pieces, what you can do with them, why certain moves are preferred over others, and how other countries will react to your moves. No mention is made of the end game at all, and only some to the middle game, but most of the work is focused on the first 2 years of gameplay, where lines are drawn, alliances made, and backstabs prepped. We want to see where you are going to be in two years' time under most circumstances barring unfortunate circumstances. I have noticed from my time playing Diplomacy that a new player will choose an opening set of moves that is strongly geared towards the destruction of one nation, yet they are sometimes perplexed as to why others react the way they do.

I also plan on labeling units in one of three ways:

- Fixed unit (unit only has 1 good move)
- Flex unit (unit has 2 good moves)
- Swing unit (unit has 3+ good moves)

Austria's three units are a fleet on Trieste (flex), and an army in Budapest (fixed) and Vienna (swing). Looking around, you have Italy to your west, Russia to the north, and Turkey to the east. Your only source of unoccupied territories is the Balkans, a rich haven for supply centers. How do you begin?

Let's start with Budapest, the easiest piece you have to move. It has five different moves and one support, Vienna to Galicia, which it can do. My argument is the only good move for this piece is to Serbia. A move to Rumania, if bounced by Russia, will make it very difficult to get Serbia in Summer 01 unless you also do A Vie – Tri and F Tri – Alb. Technically you don't need this to happen, but Turkey is going to get Bulgaria, and there's a good chance he's not getting Greece just yet, so a poke at Serbia is his next best bet. A move to the interior (Trieste or Vienna) is an anti-Italy maneuver as you're risking letting a center fall to try a move on Italy right away. The same logic regarding Turkey in Bulgaria holds, but this time your goal might be to support a block of a Russian advance into Vienna or Budapest more than to capture a supply center.

Your next piece, and possibly your most important, is your fleet in Trieste. I argue this is your most important piece because this piece is the one that really dictates your first two years. You have the option of going to Albania with the idea of going to Greece (probably with support from Serbia), you can hold to prevent a stab from Venice, you can stab Italy yourself, or you can go to the Adriatic.

Moving to the Adriatic is not as efficient as the other moves as you're not directly moving on (or holding) a center, but you are increasing its mobility for later. My feeling here is that a move to the sea is best if and only if you plan an all-out assault on Italy and you want the fleet to tickle Venice right now. The downside to this is that you leave the Balkans wide open for Turkey and Russia to feast upon unless things go very well for you.

The option to move to Albania is a pro-active move that signals trust of Italy (usually, at least for now) and intentions against the Balkans directly (and Turkey indirectly). It also activates the fleet towards open water. Austria is probably the hardest power to start growing fleets with, so an active fleet early enhances its usefulness for later. It puts pressure on Greece, it puts pressure on the Ionian Sea, and it gives you a strong say if you attack Italy or Turkey from the start. The only problem with moving it, as you'll see soon, is what do you do about Trieste and perhaps Venice?



Both holding the fleet in Trieste and moving it to Venice signal negative intentions towards Italy, either through blatant attack (F Tri – Ven) or mistrust (F Tri Hold). I argue a thrust into Venice is weak; you gain 1 center but 100% animosity from your closest neighbor until the end of the game most likely. If it doesn't work (e.g. A Ven hold or A Ven – Tri/Tyr), which are not uncommon moves, you'll have made little to no active progress towards growth, you'll have antagonized Italy, and others will likely see weakness. In rebuttal to my own comment, a thrust F Tri – Ven is very strong if you suspect Italy is going A Ven – Tyr and A Rom – Ven. Then your move blocks two of Italy's moves. You'll notice a lot of F Tri

options depend on what you think of Italy as a friend or foe.

Lastly I'd like to take a look at A Vie. Without going into the possible moves, take a moment and ask yourself "who is my target". You can't be friends with everyone, and this unit's move strongly signals your thoughts on that person. The first person I'll take a look at is Germany, as they are a possible target with two provinces to choose from to hit Munich, assuming the shortest path. The reason I do not like this move at all is that you will have a very difficult time support the unit as the fleet in Trieste can't help and the army in Bud, if it comes to help via Vie or Gal you can't assist in taking Munich in the first year, and you leave the Balkans wide open for Turkey and Russia to split. Let's bring us to another target which holds a similar problem but is more feasible.

Attacking Italy is very similar to attacking Germany, but the difference it is can work. A Vie-Tri (along with F Tri – Ven or F Tri – Adr) is a quick stab into Italy. You leave the Balkans open, as before, but the difference is you have a direct attack vs. a center right now. The biggest underlying problem is if Italy doesn't trust you and holds in Venice or attacks Tri himself. You now have a wasted fleet and a wasted army move to consider. This approach is very risky but can pay dividends, especially if you can grab and hold Serbia without losing Budapest.

Let's look at A Vie – Gal. You are telling Russia "I do not trust you hovering over my centers." Conversely this tells Turkey, "I will support you vs. Russia." This is a solid move if you are looking at taking the fight to Russia with help from Turkey, or you might be able to mend fences with Russia later (a stand-off move). What you must suspect here is this unit will be stationed in Vie for the fall, as the Russian move A Ukr – Gal is a very common maneuver. In this case, A Vie can't support any offensive moves and is now used as a defensive piece against impure Italian intentions for Tri.

The next target we need to look at is Turkey. Like you, Turkey's main source of supply centers in the first 2 years is the Balkans. To this end, if you wish to fight for the Balkans, and Turkey as such, A Vie – Bud is your best answer. The reason is it aims at Rumania with support from Serbia. With the possible addition of the fleet moving to Albania then Greece, you have everything pointed at the Balkans. However, as is the case with Austria, you have Italy looking at your centers without a lot there to stop him. This approach means that you must have good trust with Italy not to stab you and to look for other attractive targets like Turkey.

Agree or disagree with anything Marc wrote? Let us know!

Hungary for Heresy

A musing about Austro-Ottoman relations, fears, and a challenge to come up with viable alternatives to one of the game's most daunting diplomatic dogmas.

By Zachary Jarvie

The "daunting diplomatic dogma" that I refer to, in my overly verbose subtitle, is an entrenched notion that Austria and Turkey cannot form a stable, long term, alliance. So I've decided to issue a challenge to the more adventurous readers of this zine. Can you dig deep into the recesses of your twisted imagination and come up with a plan for an alliance that you actually would follow regardless of which of the two counties you were playing?

Of course, this is all clearly madness, and the reason is fairly obvious. Both players are covetous of, and believe they simply cannot do without, those beautifully enchanting Balkan supply centers. There can be no compromise on this matter, and so the battle is joined! I personally believe there is also another, equally important, though often less understood or articulated barrier to the Austro-Ottoman alliance;

Occidentophobia (the fear of the West). You see, the eastern powers are obsessed with the belief that (like "Winter" in A Game of Thrones) the west "is coming." And whether it's a western triple or the possibility that two western powers will efficiently eliminate the third, it

really is quite often the case that western powers are indeed coming more quickly than the east would like. So how do you prepare? The consensus, that is often reached, is that you need to quickly eliminate an eastern power and split the spoils between the other three. But you can't just target any one of the four. Italy is not going anywhere, so don't even try (perhaps that's a dogma for another day). You can kill Russia very quickly but Italy can't help and you're going to have to share the spoils of war with England and possibly Germany. No, the only proper way for three eastern powers to cannibalize a fourth is to stick either Austria or Turkey on the chopping block right from the start. In these situations the survival of Austria and the survival of Turkey become mutually exclusive principles and cooperation between the two just seems like a non-starter. Clearly finding an effective treatment for *Occidentophobia* will be an important part of any plan to get the Sultan and the Archduke to sit at table with one another.

Like many of you, I have seen after action reports from an online game (or two) in which a pair of yahoo's set

out two make the map into a bull's-eye of red units surrounded by a rim of yellow. Let me state right now; I am simply not interested in learning about the process of taking Austria and Turkey (or any two countries, for that matter) all the way to a two way draw that eliminates all the other players. A few of you poor tormented tournament veterans may have even seen something similar attempted in a face to face game. The people who have had to play against such alliances have my sympathy. I can only imagine how frustrating it must be to play a game in which the two most natural enemies on the board have each abandoned what you perceive to be their own self-interest in order to peruse a ridiculously contrived alliance, against you, that seems driven simply by the desire to see if it can actually be done.

We can wax long about the various objectives and goals, other than winning, that people sometimes will have. But what if all the players really are only concerned about trying to get to 18 centers, or failing that, at least preventing any other player from getting to 18 centers themselves. The question is, in a framework of such unspoiled motivations can a meaningful alliance between Austria and Turkey not only exist, but persist right through to the end of the game? Maybe the key is to embrace the fact that this truly shouldn't happen. Maybe we need a situation in which something ridiculously contrived is, genuinely, what is in the best interest of both the Austrian and the Turkish players. I do not consider myself knowledgeable enough to theorize as to what specific set of diplomatic circumstances would actually drive an Austro-Ottoman alliance. I leave that kind of postulation to those more capable or adventuresome than myself. But I'd like to ask the readers of this article to imagine themselves in the following situation.

You're an experienced player and you have just now sat down for the second round of one of the year's biggest tournaments. The countries get assigned and you pull either Turkey or Austria (it really doesn't matter which). You're familiar with all the other players on the board. Familiar enough to come to the astonishing realization that the best choice you can make, to optimize your tournament results, is to try to form a stable alliance with the player on the other side of the Balkans. As crazy as it may sound, the more you examine the situation the clearer it becomes. You genuinely believe (for whatever reason) that the best possible candidate to be your ally is the one who will play your countries arch nemesis.

Now you have the unenviable task of proposing the unthinkable, an alliance between Austria and Turkey. Make no mistake, both of you want to get to 18

centers and if the opportunity presents its self your each willing to stab an ally to make it happen. But you're soon to be ally is not so gullible as to just let you take advantage of him. You can't just offer up the kind of fairy story about Austro-Ottoman cooperation that gets routinely told to hobby newbie's or the perpetually gullible. Fortunately, you both read Diplomacy World.

The challenge I am issuing to the readership of Diplomacy World is this:

Submit an article, for the next issue of Diplomacy World, outlining your plan for a stable, long term, alliance between Austrian and Turkey.

Yes, I want you to actually write the article that you would cite as a point of reference when trying to convince another player (who obviously also reads this zine) that an alliance between Austria and Turkey is a viable option, no matter which of the two powers he is playing. I suspect Douglas will be happy to publish them all, as he is always looking for more material.

As I stated earlier, I'm not asking for a step by step plan to get you to a 2-way draw with 17 centers apace. I want something more realistic. Your mission (should you choose to accept it) is to create a frame work of principles under which both Austria and Turkey can work together to insure that both take part, as major players, in a 3-5 player draw. This should include an opening strategy for 1901 and a set of diplomatic and tactical goals for 1902 and 1903 as well. But beyond that we don't need specific plans, only principles for going forward. Also no "Janissary-alliances", please. Both Turkey and Austria should each retain possession of their own home centers. Each power must have some kind of protection (however limited) against betrayal. The whole point is to create a plan that is, believable, doable, and not just an obvious set up for a stab. Beyond these, fairly reasonable, restrictions I have nothing further to say about what such an alliance should look like or how it you think it should be proceed. Your plan can be as conventional or unconventional as you like. Are you up for the challenge?

You might ask, "Who is this silly person and why doesn't he just develop and publish his own plan? Why is he asking us to do all the leg work?" The Answer is this, I just think it's more fun this way. That, and I actually did pull out my board and try to think up a solution to this problem. While I have some vague ideas, I'm more or less stumped! Can you help me out?

So do you have any ideas? Write them up and send them in for next issue!

UK Face to Face Diplomacy NMRs: Civil Disorder Inevitable!

By Graeme Murphy

It's a dramatic headline isn't it, but sadly it reflects the current health of the UK face to face Diplomacy hobby.

In my opinion, the UK hobby has effectively 'NMR'd' following the poor attendances at recent UK tournaments. This article is part of a number of initiatives being taken by the UK Face to Face Diplomacy Group that will try to identify why UK players are not attending events. The hope is that by understanding why people aren't coming along to play, and by trying to find out what would lure them back into a game, we can avoid the resulting 'Civil Disorder' that would be the inevitable consequence of continued poor attendance and from which, the UK hobby would find it hard to recover from.

Time to reminisce...

I was introduced to Diplomacy at secondary school. Lunchtimes at the 'Past & Present Society' were an education in Dip and it is telling that there would often be three games underway simultaneously with up to two years being completed every lunchtime amidst a mass of fizzy drinks and salmon paste sarnies. I remember the top players at school... Barry Haymon, Graham Dyke and Simon Stansfield. If 'Stanny' pulled out the yellow piece you knew you were in trouble and 'Stanny' had unnervingly color sensitive fingers.

I was hooked immediately and I spent my birthday money obtaining a copy of the game in a city center toy store. Now I could play on a weekend and over the summer holidays although I suspect that I may have spent more time and effort looking for six other friends who could cope with the length of the game and its 'nasty' side than actually playing as I recall my younger and, at the time irritating brother, constantly taunting me with what must have been my catchphrase 'Do you want a game of Diplomacy'. I must have got some games in however, and been relatively successful apparently, as my best friend at the time, Pete Waltham, referred to me none too kindly as 'Wormtongue' when it suited him. (Usually just as a new game was to start and within earshot of the other players).

Alas, schooldays don't last forever and the 'Past & Present Society' morphed into a more general wargames and boardgames club with the result that, by the time I reached the sixth form Diplomacy was rarely played as other games that looked glossier, required less players, and took less time, became the games of choice. (Perhaps therein lies the lesson...). Games with friends in their parents garage also became rarer and rarer as we all discovered the opposite sex or the local pub and, in the case of Martin Russell, both at the same

time. At this time convoys across the North Sea and bounces in Holland had more to do with overnight ferry trips to Amsterdam than games of Dip.

Adult life was arriving faster than a Turkish army into Bulgaria. With my school days behind me I entered the world of work and the diplomatic intrigues of early 20th century Europe no longer seemed as important as I quickly had to learn about the joys of fatherhood and the trials and tribulations of making ends meet. My life in the diplomatic service became but a distant memory and it wasn't until, in May 2006, over thirty years since my last game, I was browsing the internet and I came across the Dip2000 website. I looked a bit further, became more and more interested and signed up for my first email game; 'Gonzalo', GM'd by Richard Hucknall. I had a blast and came out with a respectable two way draw. More importantly I was hooked once more and after a number of games on the Dip2000 site I started to yearn for the thrill of the face to face challenge once more.

At this point I returned to the challenges of the school summer holidays. Where do you find six other players prepared to spend hours on end playing a game where there is the potential to be badly treated by your 'so called friends' and every possibility that you will be ejected from the game quite quickly. Well, the workplace obviously...

I enlisted some works colleagues and the premises of a local ICT training company whose manager was keen to play and kindly put on some nibbles to ease the pain of elimination. The game went well but after three hours, several people had to leave and the game was left hanging. I felt distinctly unsatisfied and decided that this wasn't really scratching my itch for a real reunion with face to face Diplomacy and decided to visit the font of all knowledge – Google !

This was 2008 and my search of the world wide interweb led me to the Manorcon website where I discovered that they held an annual Diplomacy tournament. I wasn't sure that I was necessarily tournament material but I paid my hard earned cash, said goodbye to the missus and set off down the M1 to deepest Leicestershire to give it a try.

I have to admit to being extremely nervous about my first time at a Dip tournament. There were a number of people who obviously knew each other well and I was the virgin on her wedding night. I smiled the smile of 'Stanny' however as I drew out the yellow army of the Sultan and then proceeded to spend almost the entire game bashing heads with the master tactician that lives within Steve Agg who, as Russia, couldn't quite see

things from anything but a Russian perspective. Mark Wightman topped the board with a twelve center France and I came in second with a six center Turkey but the result was less important than the fact that on a warm Friday night in July there had been three games of Dip going on simultaneously and I had enjoyed every minute of it.

I finished the tournament in 11th place having had a 1909 elimination as Russia on the Saturday and six center Italy on the Sunday but I had made some new friends, had a great time and swore I'd be back the following year.



Unfortunately the following year was not to live up to expectations despite finishing second and eliminating Gwen Maggi's France with my English types in 1907 on the Sunday.

It would seem that I had arrived on the UK Face to Face Diplomacy scene at about the same time that the curtain was about to close with only eight players taking part in the three day Dip competition over the 2009 Manorcon weekend.

After the trophies had been awarded most of the players sat around and bemoaned the lack of players. It was at this point that I started to hear just how big the

Diplomacy competition had been at Manorcon, indeed that the Diplomacy Competition WAS Manorcon and that the other boardgames had only started to appear because Diplomacy players brought them along to cover downtime in between games and those times when excellent Diplomacy had been thwarted by 'superior tactics' and 'weight of numbers' with the inevitable elimination leaving some spare time for reflection and a game of Acquire, 18XX and the latest from SPI, Avalon Hill etc.

A quick search of the web reveals the popularity of Diplomacy at Manorcon with the introductory text for one event stating that 'Diplomacy is usually the largest tournament at ManorCon, with typically 70 to 80 people entering.' This same event also had tournaments for a number of what are now referred to as Euro games so it cannot have been posted that long ago and yet it seems that I had missed it all.

There were several others who sat forlornly around the table that July afternoon in 2009 and we decided something needed to be done and be done sharpish. We would resurrect the MidCon tournament, we would put on new tournaments in Edinburgh and Brighton, we would create a UK Face to Face Diplomacy Group and introduce a 'Tour of Britain' Diplomacy circuit with the aim of attracting new blood to the hobby and bringing some of the old salts back to the table. Diplomacy in the UK was not dead, we were not going to let it die!

Things got off to a good start and there were some notable successes. We aimed to make the games as welcoming as possible and to encourage new faces to come along and give it a try. We had a website and put on the European Diplomacy Championships at Derby in 2011 but, whilst new faces came and unfortunately went, the old hands continued to wish us well, continue to check on how the games were going, provide sagely advice on tactics and reminisce in a rose colored style over bygone days before slinking back to their games of Settlers of Catan, St Petersburg, Puerto Rico and every other Euro game you could shake a stick at.

Which brings us to Manorcon 2013.

The Diplomacy tournament at Manorcon in 2013 effectively brings us back to where we were in 2009 with only 8 people actually taking part over the weekend and the Sunday hosting a post-mortem over the state of the UK hobby and what needs to be done to bring us back from the brink.

This post-mortem was soul-searching of the hardest kind with contributions by not only those who had taken part but also some of those biggest names in the UK hobby who happily travel to play in Diplomacy events abroad but no longer play at the UK events. The discussion inevitably touched on the catch-22 of 'people don't play

at UK Dip tournaments because people don't play at UK Dip tournaments' but there was also talk of the length of the game (Manorcon is played to the end of 1909 and 1911), the length of the turns, the scoring systems, whether Diplomacy tournament should be separate from a general boardgames event and even whether people are staying away from UK events because the players are too friendly with each other (which is different from being 'friends' with each other.)

It's fair to say there were a number of differing views on what is currently wrong with the UK hobby and why it isn't attracting and retaining players who actually want to play but, with MidCon the next event on the horizon (The Diplomacy is Friday 8th November 2013 – Sunday the 10th) it was clear that something needed to be done.

Shortly after Manorcon, Dave Simpson, who has done more than anyone to try to resurrect Face to Face Dip in the UK since 2009, sent out a survey to a large number of contacts across the country. This survey is still open at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Z9NTT3D> and Dave and I would urge anyone who has not already responded to visit the site and let us know what they think.

The UK Face to Face Diplomacy Group are open to any suggestions whether they be for shorter games using the C-Diplo scoring system, Dip only events and 'practice' games for new players and we have already had some interesting comments from players. These include suggestions about offering prize money, an offer to run an event for us by someone who failed to leave their name and several people who said they don't play because there aren't enough other people playing which is the catch-22 situation we are already aware of.

In response to what we have been told so far and, in an effort to get more players playing Dip at Midcon in November, we are currently reviewing the arrangements for the Dip tournament there. Whilst details have yet to be finalized it is almost certain that the Diplomacy will start later on the Friday night to give people time to get to the event. This will be especially pertinent with regards to a number of players from outside the UK who are being encouraged to come along and support the event. The games will be shorter (ending after the Autumn 1907 turn) and will probably use a different scoring system. It is also hoped that there will be a game specifically to players new to the game. This will allow them to learn the mechanics of the game and will be gunboat initially to remove the pressure of involved negotiations. This will take place on the Saturday and will not form part of the actual tournament so will be without the pressures and nuances that are introduced when tournament points are at stake.



Looking further ahead we will make the results of the survey available at Midcon and publish them on the UK Face to Face Diplomacy website (www.ukf2fdip.org). We will look to plan for a schedule of tournaments in 2014 that will almost certainly involve some Diplomacy only events in response to some of the feedback received. I, for one, am talking to the appropriate people in the University where I work to see if we could host and provide accommodation for an event during the out of semester periods at a reasonable cost. Those respondents who indicated they'd be willing to host an event and were unwise enough to leave their names may also be receiving a 'virtual' knock on the door in the middle of the night.

At the end of the day however the UK Face to Face Diplomacy Group can only do so much to make the events attractive to players and eventually it behooves those people who are currently hovering on the fringes, offering advice, wishing us well, checking on the progress of the games and even offering to stand in as a 'reserve', to stop saving the Universe, Mayan Civilizations or the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company and make a solid commitment to play. The players are out there, many are still interested in the game but, if face to face Diplomacy in the UK isn't to be outsourced to off-shore providers, they need to make a conscious decision to support the hobby and play some Dip.

Diplomacy in the UK needs its players and it needs them now. It needs YOU now ! Come along to MidCon, play some Dip and enjoy the greatest game in the world once again.

WDC in Paris 2013

aka RED (Retired Extremely Dangerous) 3

by Cyrille Sevin

So here I am, writing an article about Diplomacy.

This event actually started for me in spring 2013. By then I realized that the next WDC (World Diplomacy Championship) was to be in Paris, at the end of August. I had already booked four full weeks of vacation (remember I am European, we are used to ;-) in the South of France, namely Narbonne, nice city located between Spain South Coast and Gascony ;-)

In the last 14 months, I had played only 2 games of Diplomacy, the French Masters 2010 and 2011. Partly due to the strong lobbying of the always so enthusiastic Toby Harris, whom I am proud to call my friend, I convinced myself to attend the WDC in Paris, after some years of nearly complete retirement. If I was to make one tournament, it had to be this one.



But convincing me was of course the easiest part... I now also had to convince my wife (mostly) and my 2 year old daughter (but she is more easily corrupted ;-). Having won the negotiation, I booked the train tickets Narbonne-Paris and back. I become strangely highly

motivated before the event... It was also the first time in years that I made such a trip just for playing diplomacy.

Afterwards, I can really say that there were several similarities with my 2nd WDC title in 2001. It was in Paris as well, the number of players was similar, as well as the percentage of outstanding quality players and of foreign players was really high -- WDC oblige -- compared to the standard French tournaments. And most of all I hadn't really played in the last few years (in 2001, it was even less as I came back without having played any diplomacy games since 1998, at the end of which I had a really severe car accident). So in both cases I was pretty hungry!

So then I arrive in Paris for the convention, and after a short visit to my sister who lives in the suburb of Paris (though not so close and in the opposite direction to the convention), I am not really sure where I am to sleep, probably at Xavier's Hotel. I then immediately meet a lot of well-known faces, always one of the most enjoyable parts of the tournaments, and also the reason why I play only --with a few exceptions-- FtF Diplomacy. As announced, perhaps if less than Toby Harris were coming, a lot of old international players from the US, Australia, Scandinavia were there -- even if among them I did really miss some, with maybe Niclas Perez and Leif Bergman above all. The Brits also were numerous, as were the Germans and the Belgians. No less than 7 WDC winners (for 9 titles in total) were present. Among the French, a lot of old good players also made their comebacks, sometimes just for playing one board and see some friends, but at least they were there. Being myself an old player, definitely knowing more foreign dip players than current French players, this combination was also certainly an advantage for me.

Shortly after, I was invited by Pascal Montagna (former WDC Champion) to stay at his place overnight along with others. I gladly accepted but it didn't protect him from being attacked roughly by me on that very afternoon, but after all, we all know that life can be cruel... especially at Diplomacy. I will come back later to that. So before going into the details of the boards, some words on the convention itself. As usual in France and in Europe --with a few exceptions when the owner of the place is a Dip player ;-)-, it was not organized in a hotel, but in a place obtained through sponsorship. We played this time in a catholic college (high school in US), located in one of the richest parts of Paris (the 16th), thanks to Emmanuel du Pontavice, a Diplomacy player teaching there. It was there that the WAC-EDC 2010 was organized. As the lady director was enthusiastic

about it, permission was granted to organize the WDC 2013.

The venue was nice, we were of course the only ones there –as it was summer holidays in France- and we were all located in the same floor, in only 2 rooms separated by big opened window-doors. The playing area was comfortable and practical; the boards were reasonably well spaced out with more than enough space to negotiate without having to take care of not being heard by another player at your board;-)

The tournament was run by Laurent Joly. Laurent belongs to one of the most important category of diplomacy players in the world, like David Norman in the UK for instance. He is at least as interested (I would even say more) in organizing the tournaments than in playing them. As usual with Laurent, the adjudication, scoring and results were superbly managed, with a big screen for information.

The trophies and awards were generous, as were the bottles of Champagne from our sponsor Xavier Blanchot (who also provided discounted hotel rooms, as he is the owner of the hotel La Louisiane, in the center of Paris).

The organization of the top table also was fantastic. It was nicely separated from the rest of the room, a bit higher while not too close but also not too far, whilst allowing spectators a place to watch the latest position. A table located between the top table and the other boards was indeed reproducing all the moves of the top table. All in all, those were excellent conditions to play Diplomacy.

With so many foreigners (especially on Friday rounds 1 and 2, as many French living in Paris didn't take their day off, even if there were more on the afternoon), the games were also very interesting and well mixed. I actually played all my games with 3 foreigners and 3 French on them. With me being French living in Germany that was a good mix.

The WDC Database

Most of this paragraph has actually been copied (just slightly adapted with my experience at the Husky Con) from the latest Diplomacy letter from Toby Harris. It could anyway hardly have been described better.

I must give mention to the wonderful website Laurent Joly maintains here:

<http://world-diplomacy-database.com>

This has pretty much everything you ever wanted to know about any player or tournament in history. And the WDC 2013 results are in there too:

http://world-diplomacy-database.com/php/results/tournament_class.php?id_tournament=1413

This is an Aladdin's cave of information, the Who's Who of Diplomacy. So take a peek and ask yourself "who should I look at first?" And then make like everyone else and check your own stats first ;-)

Yep, whoever you are, you are in there. It has pretty much all the information from all the FTF tournaments is on this website.



The website can tell you everything from player rankings, who played who, what country and when. All kind of statistics are also available. Who Remember that game you had years ago against so-and-so? It has it ...

I remember a couple of years before, it was then my first Husky Con, this great convention organized by the Woodring family in August in their house near the Long Island Sound on Long Island. 3 days of great fun, games, kayaking and swimming, all offered by our guests... And I am not speaking about the wine cellar of Donald, with its hundreds of good bottles! As my wife two best friends were living nearby, one in NYC, one in New-Jersey, and with no child at this time, I easily convinced my wife to do the trip, which we combined with a 3 days trip to Las Vegas. We actually just slept two nights in Vegas, shortly after arrival and before returning to NYC, as the trip was mainly organized to

visit the Grand Canyon... It was really great, and I advise all my American friends to visit this place and to stay there for a night at least, it is wonderful. So coming back to the Husky Con, shortly upon arrival Don and I thought we may have played together. Considering it was my first time in the US, it had to be in Europe, and we find the place, date and even the board thanks to Laurent's Database. It was at a former WDC in England, Manorcon 2004, Round 1. I was playing France to Don's England. I was attacked by both him, Vick Hall in Germany and Gwen Maggi (it was his first tournament) in Italy. I finally managed to end the game as France owning one center -London- and with a fleet in NTH (and the goodwill of Don who had been stabbed by Vick). Even if it was my worth result for this WDC (I still managed to end 3rd of this WDC), it was maybe my best souvenir of the tournament. Since this day also, I never let BUR open as France in Spring 1901 ;-)

So if you want a trip down memory lane, this site has your own history too.

Rounds 1 – 4 (actually 1 to 3)

I already discussed the similarities with the WDC in 2001 (the last I won). This time again, the whole tournament ran like on a dream, and I actually was always soon pretty confident that I would win –in Europe it just means "top"- my boards. And this despite the fact that my two first picked countries were the weakest for European games... I mean Italy and Austria. This confidence was actually uncommon for me because a lot of people know that I tend to be easily and fast pessimistic, one of my most famous sentences being "the game is over"... and by then I never mean that I am to win it!

Round 1

It was a tough allocation for me to draw Italy in a first consideration. Italy in our 7 year C-Diplo game is on average the worst country. I knew all players but England from past tournaments. I had Frank Oschmiansky and Stefan Unger, two strong German players, as respectively Germany and Austria. I also had a very strong French player Quentin Luck as France and a beginner Julien Grandjanny in England. Having two strong players and one beginner in the western corner is always dangerous for all others, so I knew I would have to be cautious. In Turkey was Steve Agg, an experienced UK player.

The key as often with Italy would be my understanding with Austria. Pretty soon things turned well for me, with Stefan quickly agreeing for me to take TRI and build 2 fleets. So I jumped in TRI while also opening Lepanto-like with APU and ION in spring 1901. At the same time, Russia and Turkey opened in Juggernaut, with Black

Sea empty and Fleet in CON. I then somehow convinced Turkey not to build a Fleet, my best diplomacy in this game. I just told him: "I have TRI guaranteed, so I offer you not to bounce you in AEG if you promise not to build a fleet in ANK. Of course you can lie to me, but we will just both knew it". And he bought it, even if after the game he came to me and told me that he just couldn't believe that he did it ;-)

I kept my word, didn't bounce him in AEG, "just" taking TUN and TRI in 1901, and then building my 2 fleets. In the West, things turned out perfectly as well, with EG ganging against F... which we all know takes a lot of time when F is a decent player, which he was. Also, both Austria and Russia were happy to fight against Turkey and to work with me. Shortly after, I had then to make a choice between those 2 guys. The emerging EG pushed me to choose Russia, who needed support for his Northern fight, so I stabbed Austria before finishing Turkey. I even allowed myself to send forces in the West (the plan was of course to support France... but once you have units there... who knows what would happen) while threatening also Munich with Russia.

This is when I called a draw. In the scoring system played, topping the board was needed, with bonuses according to the gap to the next players, a gap of at least 3 SCs giving you the maximum bonus. I took the draw then, for 83 points (while any additional SC would have brought me only 2 pts) and stopped the game in 1906. My ally (I admit only the one I kept, but who plays all game long with several allies??) ending 2nd, I thought it was also pretty fair.

Round 1 Board 4				
Country	FirstName	LastName	SCs	Score
Austria	Stefan	UNGER	0 c.	5
England	Julien	GRANDJANNY	6 c.	22
France	Quentin	LUCK	5 c.	20
Germany	Frank	OSCHMIANSKY	6 c.	22
Italy	Cyrille	SEVIN	11 c.	83
Russia	Louis Clément	AZAIS	6 c.	22
Turkey	Steve	AGG	0 c.	6

Round 2 – The Team Round - pitched me against players I all knew well. Pascal was in Turkey, Millis Miller in Russia and Laurent in Italy. Matt Shields was in France, Luca Pazzaglia, former European Champ in Germany, and Stephane Viglielmo in England, a strong player as well. Having to play Austria after Italy, I was at first disappointed. The nice thing was that the 2 worst countries would have been played... which could only be good for the rest of the tournament! But soon enough I didn't care anymore, and anyway the game once again turned ideally for me.

Laurent immediately offered me his allegiance, going Lepanto while moving VEN-TYR, with option for BOH afterwards. Of course there was a small threat for me, but I took the deal... Especially as both R and T told me they were opening Juggernaut (also called Steamroller). Here again I was pretty lucky. Laurent kept his word, so did Pascal, but incredibly Millis didn't. He opened straight into the Black Sea, without having told anyone it seems... And of course a Turkey pissed against a Russia without ally can only be good for Austria, especially as Italy was fully supporting me without claiming any of my centers.

In the meantime in the West, France was under attack by E and G (same scheme than first game, so good for AI). At this point, as it was the team round, I had to check my team mates... Toby Harris and Gwen Maggi were doing great, Gihan Bandaraika a bit less, but we both encouraged him. We were playing 1903 or 1904 and I asked Toby, without naming the players, which option he could advise me. I had a really good Austria with lots of potential against either Turkey or Italy. I asked "who do I stab?". Toby took one look at the board, Italy was all over the place; with no armies at home (places like Bohemia and Syr) and a solitary fleet in Naples with nothing around it for as far as the eye could see. Toby had no idea at the time that Italy was Laurent, nor Turkey Pascal, but he told me "With an Italy like that you should save him for later". Well, this gave me the excuse I probably needed to stab Pascal. In the same time, I moved armies up to support France and put pressure on Germany. Stephane in England, which is a very opportunistic player, stabbed Germany as well to take the 2nd place. I then called for a draw in 1906 which was accepted by all. At this stage I could have had taken several centers from my allies France (a bit) and Italy (a lot), but this wouldn't have been so fair and was clearly not needed. It was also the team round and who knows what could have happened after. So I took the result, which also nearly guaranteed my presence at the top board. It gave Laurent more time for organization... and for me another full house on the Super Pastis points used in this tournament.

Round 2 Board 5

Country	FirstName LastName	SCs	Score
Austria	Cyrille SEVIN	11 c.	83
England	Stéphane VIGLIELMO	7 c.	24
France	Matt SHIELDS	7 c.	24
Germany	Luca PAZZAGLIA	1 c.	12
Italy	Laurent JOLY	6 c.	22
Russia	Millis MILLER	2 c.	14
Turkey	Pascal MONTAGNA	0 c.	4

So about the rest of the team...

Toby topped with an impressive 14:10:8:2 and Gwen grabbed a 10:8:7 for a third team victory. Gihan fought for survival with 3 centers, in a board where Fabian Straub topped with 15 centers as France. Toby and I consoled Gihan afterwards. Toby explained that he mustn't walk up to the podium to collect his team trophy with head bowed low; instead it's far better to wave fists in the air and pretend that the team won solely as a result of his work. Also Fabian and his German team were incredibly close to ours on points (it was only Andre Ilievics on Toby's board who didn't win his game, though Stefan Unger got an equal top). So Gihan's 16 points were, I believed, vital to our team's success. It is actually funny to see that in the end we only had a small margin on the German team which ended 2nd. With only 10 boards, two teams managed to top 6 boards (one being a tied win).

So the results of the team tournament are here

http://world-diplomacy-database.com/php/results/tournament_team.php?id_tournament=1413

Round 3

I did sleep fairly well on Friday night. Fortunately the time where I always mentally replay the games on my first night of the tournaments was over.

When I arrived, I discovered that I was 2nd behind Toby, which was maybe not bad as Toby had to wear a Yellow Shirt with flashing lights for the day ;-)

When the boards were adjudicated, I was to play France. Even if Germany is by far my most favorite country in Diplomacy, Turkey and above all France are really the countries which give you a strong tactical advantage in this 7 year C-Diplo game. France is the strongest defensive country, and in attack as well; everyone knows than in a 1-to-1 against England, France wins. Once again, I more or less knew all the players, even if I am not sure if I'd played before against Vincent (England) or Sacha (Italy). I also didn't remember Pierre in Russia at all... except that 30 minutes before the game, he came to me and told me that we had played together for his first and only tournament until today... in Paris at the WDC 2001 that I had won!!!

So once again, all were friendly to me in this game and I got proposals from England and Germany to ally with them, as well as from Russia. I picked Germany, mainly because for me France is more a maritime country; also because it allowed me to work with Russia, which gave me both a bit of leverage against Germany and help against England. On top of this were personal reasons, as I had stabbed and crushed Philippe so many times in our past games that I wanted to amend myself...

especially at this small cost. I disguised my attack against England (funny I did nearly the same in the final), by waving my 3rd build in 1901 (I often do it), gliding in Spring in MAO and SPAsc, telling both my neighbors in Italy and England that I would go the other direction but had to disguise my moves, and took the NAO with an army in GAS ready for convoy in HIG or LPL. I just love this move.

So at the end of 1902 I was already in a killing position regarding England. In Fall 1903 I immediately sent the MAO fleet against Italy, which Italy had not expected at all. I had also negotiated in the South so that I knew TUN would then be free for me.

In the meantime, my two allies (Germany and Russia) were doing well, until Russia made a weak stab of Germany, with Austria's help. At this time, my 9 SCs were very strong, while Russian's 9 SCs were much more unsafe. I was convinced anyway to call for a draw in... 1904 (I believe this is the earliest draw I ever made!)... This left me enough time to go visiting my sister and my brother with their families, in the Far East suburb of Paris. As the Final Round wasn't planned until 1015am the next morning, it was fine. Immediately after the draw anyway, I realized that I had given away at least some 30+ points and this troubled me until the next morning ;-)

So the result was

Round 3 Board 7			
Country	FirstName LastName	SCs	Score
Austria	André ILIEVICS	5 c.	20
England	Vincent KOWALCZYK	2 c.	14
France	Cyrille SEVIN	9 c.	52
Germany	Philippe DUMAY	3 c.	16
Italy	Sacha DAOUT	3 c.	16
Russia	Pierre BLOUVAC	9 c.	52
Turkey	Romain PARMANTIER	3 c.	16

The WDC Final Table

Contrary to Friday evening, I didn't sleep so well Saturday night. I was wondering whether I should have continued playing 2 or 3 more years, which would have given me most certainly at least 30 additional points. I was even wondering whether I would really be on the final board (which was indeed really pessimistic!!).

Choosing countries at a top table is as important as the game itself; board positioning can determine a game from the outset. The 7th placed player going into the final places his name-card on the table. The 6th then chooses whether to place their name-card in front or behind the

7th player, and so-on. Finally, the tournament leader chooses where he wants to be in the positioning. Quite often, tournament leaders will opt to choose first. Countries are then chosen in that order. The incentive not to pick early is that supply center ties at game-end are resolved in reverse order of choosing. So by picking first you lose all tie-breaks, but do choose a favorable country.

When arriving on Sunday, I discovered (surprisingly but pleasantly) that not only was I on the final board (which in a second thought was nearly certain), but I was still leading the tournament, giving me the choice to play the country I wanted: France. Indeed, since this variant of final board is played, no player who decided to pick the country first –I mean a player who ends the qualification rounds first picking first, not a player ending 2nd or 3rd who picked first due to the other players deciding to pick after him- has ever picked another country than France. As my primary goal was to ensure a 6th Top Three at a WDC, I knew France would be the best for this. So whatever the position of the other players, my choice was clear. I was also happy to see there was no clique of players who always played together on the board, nor (and this unfortunately happens also on final boards) players that you know are not going to try to win, but will just help another player on the board.

From the players I expected to see on this board, few were missing, maybe Fabian Straub above all (EDC Champ at this same place in 2010).

My lucky Edi was there. Actually Edi was also playing on the two WDC final boards I won. In 1997 in Gothenburg, I was Turkey and he was Italy. His attack on Austria (Jean-Louis Delattre) clearly helped me, while I was pushing Borger Borgersen in Russia against Germany at the same time. Actually I hardly remembered this game, until yesterday when a look at Laurent's database even showed me that the attack of Edi on JLD was in 1907 (the game was played until 1909, uncommon in European tournament play... which was also good for me as Turkey!). Concerning the WDC 2001 my memory was better. Edi was France to my Germany and I felt so bad for the Italian player (Thomas Sebeyran) that I just offered him MUN so that he could attack Edi in France afterwards. It worked perfectly, and I won the WDC final board having given MUN in 1901 (this is a good Diplomacy souvenir ;-)... When I say I won, it is partly true only. I actually did tie with 8 SCs with Brian Dennehy in Turkey, and this WDC was the first and probably the last with this crazy rule that in case of tie the winner would have to be elected by the survivors! There were 3 of them, 2 French guys and Edi. I knew Pierre Malherbaud in Russia would have voted for me and Thomas Sebeyran in Italy would have voted for Brian, but for Edi I was not sure. In order to avoid ambiguities, and a 2 against 1 syndrome, Edi convinced the 2 others that unanimity was required. He did

organize votes among them based on several criteria... and at the end I was elected with 3 votes. As Edi was also NOT on the 3 other WDC final boards I played but didn't win, I believe I can really say he was my lucky Edi ;-)... even if we never really played as allies.

Only one player was unknown to me: Pascal Maguy, maybe the outsider of this final. I knew he was a solid player anyway. Nicolas Sahuguet (also past WDC & EDC Champion) and René van Rooijen were completing the board.

So the ranking (and so the order of choice) before the final board was:

1. Cyrille Sevin 218 Pts
2. Gwen Maggi 206.8 Pts
3. Toby Toby Harris 198,2 Pts
4. René van rooijen 194.4 Pts
5. Edi Edi Birsan 179.6 Pts
6. Pascal maguy 169.6 Pts
7. Nicolas Sahuguet 168 Pts

Nicolas and Pascal stayed in their positions (as usual), then Edi placed himself above them as 1st (or 5th at least depending how you see this). René placed himself 2nd after Edi, then Toby did the same between Edi and René, and finally Gwen placed himself after Toby. Without a doubt I picked as agreed with myself the first place and announced it to be France.

So we had the following situation:

- 1) Cyrille (France)
- 2) Edi
- 3) Toby
- 4) Gwen
- 5) René
- 6) Pascal
- 7) Nicolas

I then saw Edi taking immediately England, which surprised me a bit, but not so much than seeing Toby picking Germany, and Gwen picking Italy, even if both after thought for a while first. Well, so all of my neighboring countries were picked by the 3 players choosing after me, letting strong countries like Russia and Turkey to places 5 and 6... Indeed, the strangest was for me Italy. It is usually the 6th or 7th choice, and to see Gwen taking it was no good news for me.

I felt somehow honored that all these players wanted to play near me ;-). I also knew those three players very well, and was confident that they would not unbalance a final table by a crazy early move. The following choices were then Russia for René, Turkey for Pascal (strong country for a 6th choice) and Austria for Nicolas. Funny to see also that the only player I didn't know was the one I was likely to talk to the least in this game. Despite the

fact that I knew that Pascal had really helped Nicolas to go to the final board, I knew from reputation that he was willing to take his chances in this game, so was not so afraid of the combination.

On second thought, having Edi in England was good. He is a very reasonable player, and I felt unlikely that he would stab me if I was not already in a weak situation. The same was valid for Toby, so some basic defensive moves (like not letting BUR free early on) should be enough, at least for the beginning. Toby knew I would put everything against him had he stabbed me so early (what Toby calls the Pascal's triangle, aka "*never let the guy who stabs you win*" which is actually something I was raised with, also in my earlier game club the "*Pourquoi Pas*", whereas in some countries, people will usually just ask for a survival). When I get stabbed, I usually punish, even if with age I have grown a bit more reasonable. But it truly can be a powerful deterrent. I remember having done this to Mark Wightman at a Manorcon. He just couldn't believe that he finally ended with so little SCs... But at the end he told me that he would remember and think twice before stabbing me another time.



So the game begins, and as usual Edi came first with some interesting suggestions. He indeed was willing to go for a kind of Western triple... which is always great for France. As Toby agreed (maybe did he feel forced to agree, but whatever...), I thought it could be good. It just implied a big risk in Spring 1901, as it involved me moving to PIE. I hesitated in a first approach, but it was clear that it was not arranged by both Edi and Toby to put me out (this is the kind of thing you see more easily

in FtF than by Email, as you SEE where and when the players are talking ;-), and as I made clear my decision to cover BUR anyway, the risks were limited). The plan suggested by Edi was me moving into PIE, while Toby moved into TYR. Pretty soon it was clear that there would be a bounce in TYR, which was actually fine for me. MY REAL plan became then soon (actually as soon as it was clear that Italy and Germany would bounce in TYR) the classical move from France against England which worked so well in my 3rd game (see above)... And it actually worked nearly the same way. To make it more believable, I even organized a fake attack against Toby, with me moving to BUR and TYR attacking MUN... In addition to helping me convince Edi that I was not moving against him, this had the additional advantage of making it virtually impossible for Toby to attack me ;-). Luckily enough, Austria and Italy were also really busy facing a Juggernaut with a Turkish Fleet in Aegean in 1901.

As soon as I glided into MAO and NAO, while having my usual army GAS (this was in Fall 1902), I also moved TYR back to PIE, as at least one army was needed in France. In the meantime, Edi had been convinced to convoy his army in NWY and even to move to BAR with the fleet, so the situation was gorgeous for me.



In 1903 and even more 1904 I then made a choice which surprised a lot many people, including me actually ;-). And this was not to take any center from Edi in 1903 (I convoyed to LPL but moved then to YOR and NWS). I should probably have taken at least one. More important

was the Spring 1904. I had A LPL, F NWS and F ENG, with no English units in Great-Britain. Toby suggested I take all 3 SCs... Well I still believe it may have been too dangerous (as a retreat of NTH into ENG would have been more than annoying), but I should have at least taken one, and should have insisted on Edi to take NWY with his fleet NTH (not sure he would have done it anyway cause it was his last chance).

But instead I was convinced by Edi to take NWY myself with my army. Edi actually did it simply. I came to him and he asked "what do you think is the best?" I then forgot to play MY game but answered as a team, with a simple tactical view... So I answered that yes obviously the best FOR US was to convoy the army... even if it was definitely weaker FOR ME to have an army in NWY surrounded by 4 or 5 foreign units than in YOR or LON or EDI alone ;-). Why did I think that? Maybe out of respect for Edi, or maybe because he took my stab so well that I imagined –wrongly of course- that he had given up... I had to live with that.

So I made this choice, and at the same time Toby moved into BUR, a move he probably did not expect to be a success, as Gwen took MUN at the same time. As for myself I was playing the bounce into RUH, which was maybe stupid as Toby told me he didn't want it... maybe I was stressed. Anyway then both Toby and I were pissed, and in a tricky situation with a French Army in RUH and a German Army in BUR... Gwen, on the other hand, felt like he was back in the game, and it is always really dangerous with Gwen (he built a fleet which was obviously meant for me). Edi also saw my weakness and quickly managed to find an agreement with René in the North and moved back against me, while Gwen was coming as well.

This bad year 1904 (for me) made the rest of the game more interesting for all, but I should probably have finished the game earlier.

Fortunately I made good guesses, and as Gwen got attacked by Nicolas and Pascal he had to move back, giving me the opportunity to grab TUN while having lost only BEL. Toby was also under pressure in the North-East by Edi and René, and needed to take MUN back.

The final year was intense in diplomacy, with Edi, Toby and I struggling for BEL, knowing that in the current situation, it would mean either a 6-6-5 or a 7-6-4 for Toby or me. The choice was purely diplomatic, as we all had 2 units against BEL. I took the advantage in the Spring 1907, which brought nothing really but I always think that in those cases, it can only be a psychological advantage to sit on the supply center everybody wants ;-).

Spring 1907 went well for Nicolas and Toby as well, so the final turn left just three players in contention for the

title. In a typical move from Edi, he started to argue that we should agree to give BEL to the one deserving it most (I believe he expected us to agree on his name ;-). For my part I emphasized that if Edi would have BEL it would then not be enough, unless we also agreed to throw him one center like SWE (he couldn't take both SWE and BEL normally) as another player having picked later would likely pass him (it would have been the case with Nicolas)...

I also used the argument that a 3rd win from me will be *legen...dary* ;-). Maybe it was too much, I don't know, but I had to try those arguments. With a European, I may have tried differently, like "*I didn't kill you while I had the opportunity*". But with Edi I knew I had to find something above the game.

For his part, Toby knew that me having BEL would mean no title for him, so he convinced Edi to accept his support on BEL (he was then hoping that no one would also have 6 SCs but me, as he would have won a tie but only if said tie was with me) ... and it looked long like Edi would accept this support... until the last 30 seconds, when he changed his orders and let me keep BEL... Fair as usual anyway, Edi also didn't take SWE from Toby, which by the way allowed Toby to finish 2nd of the WDC.

In the East, something I hadn't considered at all could have happened, meaning that Nicolas could have won the game. It is only thanks –for me- to an inconsistency in his defense against Gwen (he did change it to the correct defense eventually, but was just not consistent with it for one of his move) that he didn't end with 7 SCs. I was confident Gwen would do his job, as he was also fighting for the 2nd place of the WDC, but I didn't see that it was possible for Nicolas to reach 7 (actually with some help from the undefended Turkish centers that I was also not expecting ;-). It is true that I didn't really cooperate with Turkey in this game... but hey, I was France!

So the final board was indeed a very close final board, mainly because of my choice not to take the English centers in 1903. No player ever reached 7 nor went below 4, until the last year where I finally got this 7th center.

At the end, after the congratulations, I think all the spectators had one big question in the mouth: did I make the right choice by not stabbing Edi?

I thought a lot about it, but when considering it backwards, I can now only say that my choice not to kill Edi was the right one (as the result couldn't have been better, and you never know what could have happened)... but at the time being, when playing 1906 or 1907, I was not so confident and thought that I could have let my chance pass...

So the result was

Round 5 Board 1				
Country	FirstName LastName	SCs	Score	
Austria	Nicolas SAHUGUET	6 c.	34	
England	Edi BIRSAN	4 c.	21	
France	Cyrille SEVIN	7 c.	63	
Germany	Toby HARRIS	6 c.	34	
Italy	Gwen MAGGI	4 c.	21	
Russia	René VAN ROOIJEN	5 c.	26	
Turkey	Pascal MAGUY	2 c.	14	

I am also including the final rankings, but something should be pointed out: while this was my third WDC win, this was the first time I had the highest score.

In 1997, Toby Harris had more points than me, and so did Brian Dennehy in 2001... but both times I won the final table, so was champion anyway. This time, I won all my 4 games. In my defense, I must say anyway that one of my 2nd places –in 2008 in Vienna- was also achieved with more points than the winner, and that one I did NOT win.

And now what? Well, while getting older I become fond of statistics. I did win a WDC in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd ten of them. Also one in the 1990s, one in the 2000s and one in the 2010s... which also means that I will now have to wait a while... but I just hope I will be still there to win one in the 2020's too ;-). I think I just proved that, despite my years of little to no playing, that Diplomacy is like the bicycle: once you learn to ride one, you never forget.

Rank	FirstName LastName	Score
1	Cyrille SEVIN	323.15
2	Toby HARRIS	267.03
3	Gwen MAGGI	261.97
4	René VAN ROOIJEN	253.46
5	Nicolas SAHUGUET	232.3
6	Edi BIRSAN	230.69
7	Pascal MAGUY	211.14
8	Emmanuel DU PONTAVICE	200.97
9	Luca PARDINI	189.8
10	Andrew GOFF	189.6

The moral of this tale is probably: watch out if you are sitting across from Cyrille on the top board somewhere!

The Philadelphia Massacre

By Rick Desper

There has been a good amount of concern about the state of the East Coast hobby in the past couple of years. (And by "East Coast" I obviously mean "Northeast" as is common for the mainstream media. Somehow North Carolina isn't on the East Coast. But I digress.) Last year saw the last celebration of the beloved HuskyCon on Long Island, DC's Tempest in a Teapot has been lightly attended the past two years, WBC has suffered from its movement away from Baltimore, and the con known as Boston Massacre has seen its last days.

Or so one might have thought. For while Boston's con burned to a crisp, it has arisen from its ashes like a phoenix. Behold the Phoenix Massacre! OK, it's actually in Philadelphia. Under the leadership of savvy veteran Christian Pedone, a new Diplomacy convention was born in Philadelphia on the first weekend of July. The gaming took place at the DoubleTree Hilton on Broad Street, just a few blocks from City Hall in the center of town.

With the hope of attracting more East Coast players to this Fall's DipCon @ Tempest, a half dozen or so DC area players (including myself) made the 2 ½ hour drive to Philly to see what was brewing in Philadelphia. We were joined by players from the Midwest, from New York, from New England, and even from North Carolina and the People's Republic of Florida. (Ha ha, as if Doc Binder would be caught dead living in a Communist country.) And the local hobby provided some veterans including the legendary email player 'Why is there a '4' in your name?' Ry4an Brase and a gaggle of high-school aged players recruited by their teacher, our esteemed tournament director.

Dave Maletsky and I had both made a standing offer to Christian to play or not play depending on the number of players available. But in the first round, with the clock ticking past the start time and Brian Ecton still looking for parking, the round started with me in and Dave out. But just as I was gearing up to figure out what to do with Russia, Brian walked in, and I handed him the keys to the Empire. I sat with Dave and Christian and we tried to figure out what to do. Dave ended up taking the evening to sight-see with a friend while Christian and I were to play my first game of Twilight Struggle.

Well, the best laid plans...

Again, before I made a single move, circumstances changed. When the Spring 1901 orders were read and adjudicated, one of the players had managed to write only one legal order for his three French forces. I am suppressing his name here not to protect the innocent

(he wasn't) but largely because I've forgotten it. In any case, he had written

Army Burgundy Supports English -> Belgium
Army Spain Supports Fleet MAO -> Portugal

He had not written any order for F MAO. The support order was obviously ambiguous (since either an army or a fleet could have gone to Belgium) and was thus void. One could argue that the second order implied the movement of the fleet. But really, it's far more common to not use inference rules like that in tournament play. Christian ruled that the fleet in MAO did not move. So the guy playing France quit the tournament.

Oh well. So I took over.

I thought France was in fine shape. Italy had engaged with Austria, while England and Germany had just bounced in Belgium. I had Portugal to pick up as an easy build in 1902 and there were no alliances set against me.

Since I knew both the English player (Robert Rouse) and the German player (Ry4an), I suggested to both that we do a Western Triple. Robert was enthusiastic, and while Ry4an was less so, he understood that neither of the other two was going to be interested in cross-Channel war, so he went along with the idea. So after we collected the remaining neutrals (Spain and Belgium) in 1902, we implemented the triple in 1903, with the other two hitting Russia in the North, while I went after the lightly defended Tunis. Germany moved to Tyrolia to help the cause.

Often Western triples lead to massively coordinated Eastern responses. But, perhaps because the triple was so slow to develop, there was no coordinated response this time. Or perhaps it had to do with the relative inexperience of the Eastern players. I quickly developed a rapport with the Italian player, a young guy by the name of Angelo Dellomargio. Even after I started the process of stealing Tunis and invading the Boot, we got along marvelously.

Eventually Robert and I stole some dots from Ry4an and sought a draw. The original plan was to end on the same number of SCs, but somehow France kept ending up ahead. ☺

The other two boards ended with Peter Yeargin topping his board with a 10-SC Germany, while Graham Woodring took the early lead with a 15-SC Germany. Note the pattern of Western powers topping their boards.

On Saturday, a few new players showed up. Since I was in 2nd place after the first round, Christian thought I might want to play, but I decided to stick with my plan of taking the day off to get in a short run and do some other types of activities. It was very hot, so I cut my planned run in half.

Aside: apparently the montage of Rocky's run in Rocky II would lead us to believe he ran more than 28 miles! See also <http://www.phillymag.com/news/2013/09/18/rocky-training-run-rocky-ii/> for an explanation.

I don't remember much about the 2nd round boards, except that there was one board with three of the players from the Top Board of last year's World DipCon, namely Doc Binder, Peter Yeargin, and Adam Sigal. And not just any three players, these three included the guy who won, the guy who finished second, and the guy who decided very early in the game to help Doc win. I would have liked to see how that played out. But the power assignments didn't work to maximize the drama, as Adam was off in England while Peter, Doc, and tournament leader Graham Woodring had to deal with each other as Eastern powers. Adam took the board top, but given the level of his competition, there was really no hope of a solo.

Also, the trend of Western domination continued. My hope of a Best France award went down when local hotshot Joel finished with a 13-SC France to top his board. But then Brian Ecton finished with a 16-SC France to finish the last board of the day. At this point we had had 6 boards, one topped by England, two by Germany, and three by France.

We all took the evening off to unwind a bit. Activities included a second trip to Pat's for cheese steaks, as well as other kinds of bar-going. We ended up at a place called Time, which really confused my temporal-spatial understanding of the universe. I ended the night with a brief visit to the sauna and another one of the delicious DoubleTree chocolate chip cookies. Got to sleep before midnight, a rare happening for me at a Diplomacy convention. (It's far more common that I *start* a game of Here I Stand at that hour.)

Sunday we started early. Some of Saturday's players were absent, so both Dave and I ended up playing. I ended up drawing England on a board with Adam as Germany, Jason Mastbaum as France, and Carl Ellis as Russia. I have had issues with Carl in the past in games where he simply threw his forces at me without regard to his defense against other large powers. I say "games" but really it was only one game at a HuskyCon several years ago, and it was a Gunboat game at that. But my initial thinking was that I should work with Adam against Carl, and then we would swing against Jason. About 2/3 of the way through the S01 negotiations, it occurred to me that I was being a bit too casual about things. In particular, at one point after a discussion between Adam

and Jason ended, Jason immediately and loudly called for Carl.

That's known as a "tell." It means that they are trying to arrange an anti-English opening. My problem was that I couldn't put together an effective counter-strategy. Even though I bounced the Channel in S01 and told Jason that this was going to be a bad idea for him, he never strayed from his initial ideas. When all was said and done, I lost all my SCs while Jason took only Liverpool. But he lost Liverpool to Adam even before I lost London. It was one of those frustrating situations where I tell a player exactly what's going to happen if he isn't more diplomatically flexible, I am ignored, and then things play out exactly as I say.

Well, after a couple of years as Adam's Janissary as a 1-SC Mayor of London, I decided to go to Philly's Reading Terminal Market with Brent Waddington, who had been eliminated as Austria. I told Adam to take London and mop up. He was happy to do so, even while he said he had been willing to keep his word and keep me around since he had promised to do so.

Before leaving I looked at the other boards. The tournament was shaping up to be a contest between Graham, Peter, and Adam. Graham was in the lead and was having another good result in Round 3. Peter was having another good round. But while we walked away from the hotel, I said to Brent "The question isn't *whether* Adam can solo on that board, it's whether he can do so fast enough." The round was scheduled to end at an undetermined time between 2 and 3, and when we left at some time between 1 and 1:30 Adam was still at around 10-11 SCs. But I had just seen Jason convoy his army from Picardy to North Africa and in my mind I saw how things would play out. Jason was intent on running away from Adam, even while Adam was taking all his home SCs. At the point I left, Adam had all of the English SCs, all of the German SCs, the Low Countries, Denmark, Sweden, and Paris. (This makes 11 SCs, but he technically didn't own London yet.) This is still a position that is easily prevented from a solo, but only if the French player defends his home dots. I could see that Jason had little interest in defending, but even with that in mind, I didn't think Adam could get to 18 SCs in an hour.

But when Brent and I got back at a few minutes after 2:00, Adam was squatting on 17 SCs, having taken the rest of France, Spain, Portugal, Norway, and Warsaw. His control of Warsaw put him across the main stalemate line. And there was no way for Russia to maintain control of St. Pete. Adam's only real worry was that he would fail to take St. Pete on the next move and that Christian would call time, forcing an end to the game even though Adam had a position from which he could force a victory in at most two more turns. Well, the

question became moot when Adam took both St. Pete and Moscow with the Fall move. Victory!

In consolation, I won the raffle and the \$35 that went with it. ☺ Not even close to my greatest reward from a Diplomacy tournament – that would still be the free cruise ticket I got from Larry Peery for finishing last at DipCon in 2004. ☺

Philly is a good city for a convention, and the Double Tree Hilton on South Broad Street is central to many

tourist locations. Attendees enjoyed the famous cheesesteaks from Pat's as well as the many possibilities available at Reading Terminal Market.

For Christian's perspective on how the tournament developed, take a look at the TD's report at <http://philadelphiamassacre.com/2013-tournament-report/>

Rick is the Demo Game Editor of Diplomacy World...so he knows what he's doing!

No Solos

By Alfred Nicol

Diplomacy is an incredibly well balanced game and therefore, providing all the people at the table are of more or less equal ability, *it is my contention that the game should not end in a solo*. No one can win the game on their own and there is no significant random element to the game mechanics. Moves are limited by the rules of the game and stalemate lines can block excessive growth. In addition even a nation on the verge of pushing for a solo, say on 14 centers, is still outnumbered by the combined weight of the other forces on the board. However, having a quick look at the Diplomatic Corps web site shows that of 286 games of standard diplomacy 114 have ended in solos. I am surprised by this given my opening claim, hence this article, in which I would like to discuss some common themes that tend to be present in games where a solo is the end result.

Too little too late

This theme is without doubt the most important issue. It is essentially defined by a lack of effective reaction to the growing possibility of a solo. Players on the table become so entrenched in their own theatre and fighting their own "enemy" that they fail to see the writing upon the wall until it is too late. This is not possible to measure numerically and when a nation gets to about 9-10 centers it may seem a long way off from a solo, but if his nearest neighbors are involved elsewhere and are dangerously vulnerable to a stab things can change quickly. For example if France is on 9 centers, England are dead and Germany is preoccupied in the east leaving Ruh and Hol and the Nts exposed, plus Italy is involved in battling for Smyrna leaving Wms, Pie and potentially Tun open; then it is not beyond the realm of possibility that France could grow exponentially in the near future. The other nations have to spot this and act accordingly.

Lack of flexibility

The reason for the response being too little too late may be the tactical ignorance of other players. Perhaps they don't have the experience to see a solo until it is too late.

Perhaps your protestations fall on deaf ears and they will not disentangle themselves from their current conflict because they simply do not believe the threat you are fiercely advertising. Or maybe they think your call to group up and attack a nation is simply motivated by self-interest. However more often than not I think it is simply a lack of flexibility. They have committed to a route and do not have the creativity of tactics to change tack. Imagine an AH that is growing quickly, benefiting from an unresolved conflict between Russia and Turkey. At some point Russia and Turkey will need to bury the hatchet and turn to face the real enemy. If they leave it too late they may not be able to face down a foe too large to rein in. This leads nicely into the third factor that allows a solo, that of fruitless stalemates.



Fruitless stalemates

One of main aims in any game of diplomacy is to try and engineer a pointless stalemate in the other theatre of war. If I am a part of the western triangle I would like to be on the winning side of a swift two against one conflict. However I do not want an equally swift resolution in the east and then a boring four way draw. Once my theatre has been resolved I want to be able to turn on the others before any real progress has been made. How this stalemate is achieved may vary and include a mix of misinformation and promises. Once as AH I managed to persuade my ally Germany to try a convoy to Yorkshire. I told England this might happen and he prepared to counter it. When the inevitable bounce happened I won the confidence of a grateful England and sympathized with Germany at his bad luck; commenting that England was a really good player and all the more reason to attack him. From then on through misinformation I was able to ensure no significant progress happened between the two allowing me the time to finish off Russia and Turkey. Another famous pointless stalemate I have seen is the standoff between Italy and France. Each squabble like mad and if there is little outside intervention it can often be that neither makes any gains against the other: Ideal for AH, Turkey or England.

I have never got a solo, or seen a solo where at some point there was not a fruitless stalemate elsewhere on the board allowing for a discrepant growth between the eventual winner and the remaining players.

Pointless stab

This last point is not always the case but can often lead inadvertently to a solo. Essentially I would define it as

two nations allied facing down a third party who clearly has aims on a solo. Whilst the two allies remain tight the third party cannot achieve a solo, however if they fight it will create an opportunity for a single winner. Imagine a fat Russia on maybe 12-14 centers facing an English-Italian alliance. The central powers have been destroyed and therefore the game looks to be heading for a three way draw. Then, through either greed or foolishness, no doubt encouraged by Russia, one turns on the other. This allows Russia to make his move and take the all-important last few centers. Italy may well have grown from 8 to 10 centers, but they end up with only a survival rather than a draw. Never stab if its most likely consequence is handing someone else a victory, no matter how tempting.

Case Studies

The two examples below are of concurrent games I played. Both sets of examples show an AH in ascendancy in fall 04. The position for AH in both games is almost identical with the omens looking good but the final outcome could not have been more different. The first illustration shows what happens when there is a coalition of the willing. Germany and Russia stopped fighting, Russia made peace with Turkey, and the threat from AH was eliminated giving everyone time to reassess and make new plans. In the second AH, rather than being eliminated, gets a solo principally because there were all four of my above themes present. The outcome of both games was entirely different and inspired this article.

Example One: Solo avoided

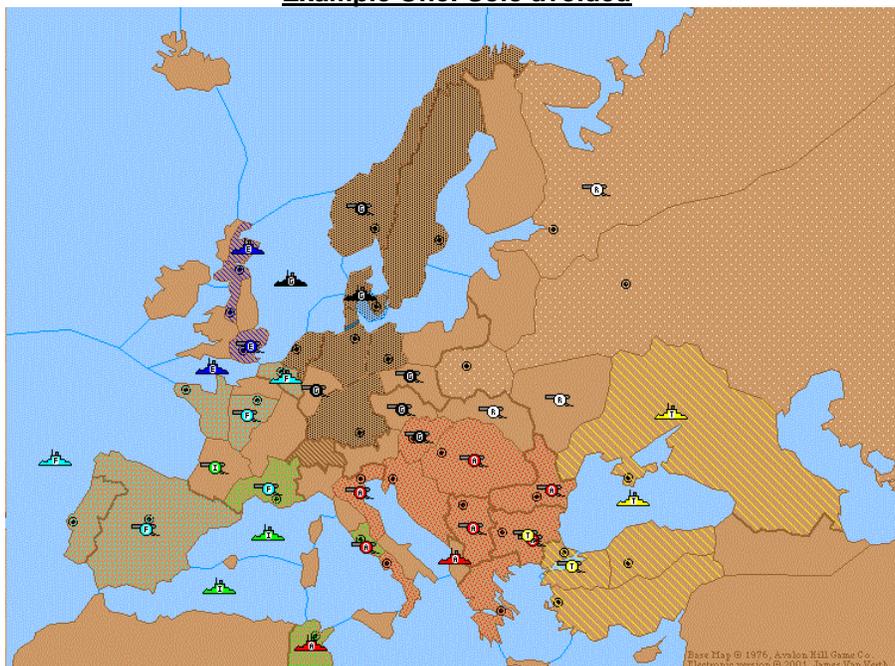


Figure 1 Fall 04 and AH is in the lead with 10 sc

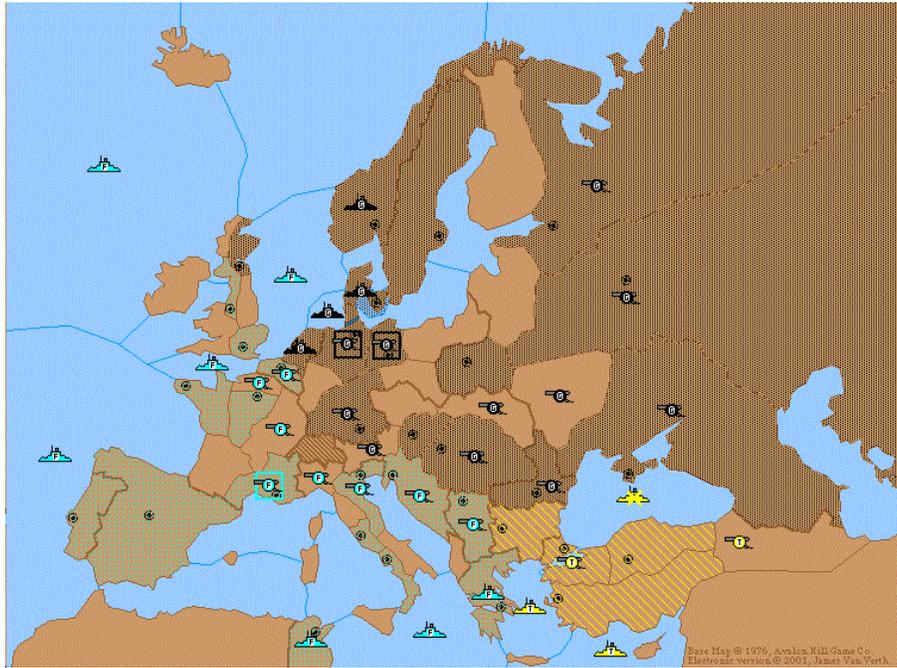


Figure 2 End of game map and AH, due to a united opposition is destroyed, a solo averted, and a two way draw declared

Example Two: Solo achieved



Figure 3 Fall 04 and once again AH is in the ascendancy with 10 sc

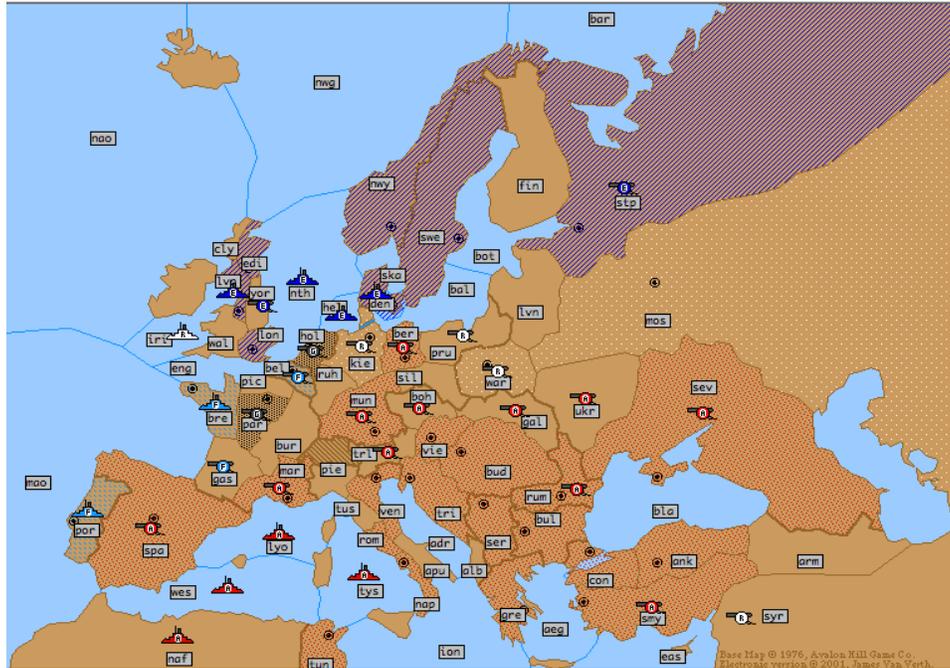


Figure 4 End of game map, and due to a lack of united opposition and stalemates between Germany and England AH gets a solo

Conclusion

Of course there are always exceptions, and people may have different playing styles preferring to take risks and be exciting. I personally would prefer a three way draw compared to being a large nation that achieves merely a survival. Plus I love diplomacy and writing to all players all through the game, making the organizing of an anti-leader coalition easier. Other players feel absurdly loyal to the idea that someone somehow deserves the solo so they will not bash the leader. In my opinion someone only deserves what they get and if can stop a solo I will do all in my power to effect that. Everyone has to approach the game in their own way; this is merely my perception of how solos occur.

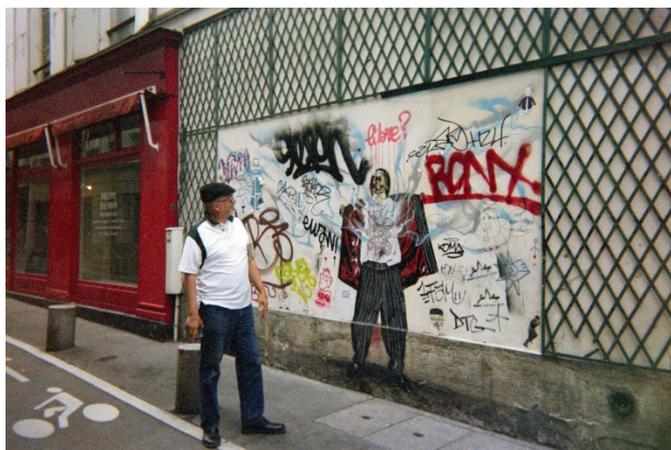


Therefore in order to prevent being on the losing end of someone else's solo try all you can to avoid all four of the above scenarios. Diplomacy is the tool here rather than tactics. The key is in being able to persuade others to see the threat early, to react decisively and flexibly and to never engage in stabs or fruitless conflicts that allow others an advantage. Conversely, when one is after a solo the reverse is obviously true. Try to create pointless stalemates, downplay your own gains and encourage suicidal stabs between allies through any means possible. Please write in next issue with your own thoughts, counter points and examples, I'd love to hear both support and opposition to these ideas. I'm always happy to be proved wrong, but I hate losing!

WDC 2013: A Peerispective

By Larry Peery

My WDC 2013 Paris report turned out to be long for one article in one publication. So to find the complete peeriblah account of what happened you'll need to check out the following: 1) This Peerispective in Diplomacy World; 2) The Games in The Diplomatic Pouch; 3) A Fleet in Paris in A Fleet in Paris; A Foodie's Guide to WDC 2013 in Eternal Sunshine; and various sidebar pieces here and there. Most of the major pieces will be illustrated. My thanx to Edi, Xavier, Laurent and Pascal who made this an especially memorable WDC for me.



Edi Birsan contemplates an original Delacroix near the Museum Delacroix

This peerispective begins with my first Diplomacy adventure in Paris in 1989 although my French roots go back much longer. The first of my branch of the Peery family to come to the United States came to New Orleans from Bordeaux during the mid-1880s. Prior to that the Peerys originated in the town of Peer in the area of Limburg, now a part of Belgium and Holland. Before that, who knows? My first trip to Paris actually began in Birmingham, England in the summer of 1988 when I attended the first WDC. At that event I met many of the French Diplomacy players who had come over for from France for that effect. We clicked, as they say, and when some of them invited me to come over to Paris for the French National Diplomacy Championship the following year I readily agreed. I had started the second year (My first year, 1988, I spent 3 weeks in London and Birmingham, and then three weeks in Rome.) of my Grand Tour of Diplomacy with two weeks in the UK, including the British National Diplomacy Championship in Birmingham. From there it was off to The Netherlands for a week where I met more Dippers, and then a week in Belgium where I met members of their Diplomacy hobby. Finally, it was a train ride to Paris from Bruxelles to meet up with some of the French players I had met the year before in Birmingham. I knew from the moment

I got off the train that the French did Dip differently than the Americans or the Brits. The night train from Bruxelles to Paris is a long one and since most of the French who were there to "meet and greet" me had never seen me before they adopted the stratagem of having one of their people stand by the doorway of each train car carrying and waving a copy of the latest Diplomacy World! That way I could find one of them with no problem. One can do a lot in Paris in a week with a virtually unlimited budget, good health, and lots of enthusiastic local guides. And believe me, we did it all or close to it. The week included the French National Diplomacy Championship, a massive affair involving some 400 players of all ages and all skill levels. The French system tended to group like players together (e.g. beginners at one table, advanced at another) and by language (so that many tables consisted solely of francophones and others consisted of foreign language speakers). They really had to work to put together a board with enough Anglophones to take care of me. If I was impressed in Paris I was wowed in Vienna, my next stop. I was lucky enough to spend three weeks in Vienna which remains one of my favorite European cities. I had a superb host Erik Adenstedt, who guided me about the city and from one magical moment to another. No doubt the highlight of the visit and the entire trip was a chance to see (but not play in) the Austrian National Diplomacy Championship, an event unlike any other I have ever seen. The event was held as part of a huge Austrian gaming show run by Ferdinand de Cassan (Yes, he really is Austrian.) who had built up the event himself because of his personal interest in all kinds of gaming. The event was held just before the Christmas holidays every year and sponsored by the game companies and stores in Austria. The three day event attracted every kid and many adults in Vienna (The Austrians are big table game players, a Sunday afternoon tradition all over the country.). At first I didn't believe him when Ferdinand, giving me a guided tour of the game venue, told me they expected somewhere around 70,000 people for the entire three day affair. They had printed 75,000 tickets and when they were gone, he said, they would just throw open the doors and let any kids or adults with kids into the gaming halls. Interestingly, there were no sales going on at the event. It was assumed kids would try the new games, decide what they liked, go home and twist their parents' arms to buy, and then the new games would appear under the Christmas tree. After the event was over the thousands of games that had been played (or not, as some not-so-popular ones often were) were donated to local orphanages and hospitals. Nothing was ever sold. The first hall in what was called the Messen Palais (The Peoples' Palace) consisted of a huge room, perhaps the size of two football fields, with wooden floors, red carpets, and huge

crystal chandeliers. It was totally filled with thousands of kids and adults sitting at tables, on the floor, on the stairs, in the halls, everywhere playing board games. Then Ferdinand walked me through two more halls just like the first, and informed me that there were seven more of them if I wanted to see them. I was stunned. When he told me that the Messen Palais, located across from the Hofburg, had originally been built as the stables for the Austrian army Calvary; and that the wooden floors and chandeliers were original to the building I was even more impressed. But, I wondered, where were the Dippers? Erik explained to me that the Austrian Diplomacy Championship consisted of a single board for a single game. Six of the players had been determined in a series of preliminary events and the seventh by tradition was the champion from the previous year. As he said this he led me toward one end of one of the halls where a large group of several hundred people were standing behind a red velvet roped fence. Inside, up on a stage, were seven of the strangest looking characters I had ever seen. Another Austrian Diplomacy tradition was that each player in the Championship had to dress in national costume. So the French player was dressed in black suit and bowler; the Austrian in leather shorts and plumed hat; the Russian in a long fur coat and hat (He looked awfully hot and uncomfortable by the time this game was over.), etc. As the game was played the moves were recorded on a large board behind and above the players and the crowds cheered and booed as their favorites' fortunes changed. Amazingly, the local English language radio station, Radio Blue Danube, broadcast seasonal reports on how the game was progressing. This was a really big deal! As I recall the winner's name was Wolfgang Kovac and after talking and playing a game with him later I could see why, after four appearances at the event, he was the champion.

of Diplomacy World online at the Diplom.org website. I do regret to report that the Messen Palais was finally torn down and replaced with an awful ugly modern convention center a few years ago.



Museum Guimet exterior

Five of my six trips to Paris over the last twenty-five years involved Diplomacy. Along with the Dip I tried to get out and about and see things beside the game site and the hotel or wherever I was staying. Over the years I managed to see many interesting and a few not so interesting places in France. Amiens is an industrial city in the far north of France, almost on the Belgian border. It's an industrial city and rather ugly as French cities go. But I got off the train from Bruxelles on one trip with a mission. I wanted to find a bridge, a particular bridge in Amiens. The bridge figured prominently in a painting, "The Cathedral of Amiens," by an American artist Al Mettel. Mettel was a WWI vet who lost one of his legs in The Great War. After the War he stayed in France as a free lance painter, mostly doing landscapes that he sent home to be copied and sold. I had had a copy of his "The Cathedral of Amiens" hanging over my bed no matter where I lived ever since I can remember. I had decided as a kid that if I ever got to France I would go to Amiens, see the Cathedral and find that bridge. Now, at 42, I was achieving a lifelong dream. I found the bridge and as I stood on it in the damp, cold winter fog under the dim yellow lights I heard the sounds of Piaf singing in my head as I wondered what Mettel was thinking as he painted that scene. It was a simple but seminal moment for me.



Larry Peery's original still life, "Paris Fruits"

Although this is an article about Diplomacy in Paris I thought it might be useful to share with you how one of the other, lesser known, Diplomacy hobbies in Europe play their championship game. You can read more and seem some amusing pictures of this trip in back issues

During my travels I saw my share of WWI battlegrounds, cemeteries, and memorials. Somehow they always tore at my heart and stimulated my brain. I visited Bordeaux, a working port and center of France's premier wine country, and met some of my distant cousins. Yes, even separated by miles and generations there definitely was a Peery "look:" blue eyes, gray hair, and pot-belly! Carcassone, with its massive walls and turrets was well worth a visit, as was Chateau neuf du Pape where I discovered the relative merits of California and local wines with the winemakers. Much wine and cheese later

we agreed that all good wine was good for drinking and left it at that. Avignon was, I think, the only place in France that really disappointed me. That huge palace and castle and all that history. How could it go wrong? I was told by the tour guide to not bother taking the expensive tour of the pope's palace because the building was of no interest and anything of interest in the building had been removed and taken back to Rome centuries before. So, instead I sat in a café on the plaza in front of the palace and watched the disappointed tourists as they trooped out of the building and the kids flying their kites. Marseilles, another industrial port, has always been neglected by tourists and perhaps with reason, but recently improvements to the city, especially the port area, have made it both attractive and interesting. Serte, a small harbor to the west of Marseilles gives you a feel of what France, at least on the Mediterranean coast, used to be like. The locals really take their history seriously and almost every weekend there's some kind of pageant going on. When our cruise ship (a small one) pulled into the basin and the captain proceeded to turn the ship around so it could get out of the tiny middle ages harbor I could see him sweating. He told me later that that maneuver was the toughest thing he had to do on that particular cruise. At one point he had a third of a meter of clearance on both sides of the ship. Bravo, captain! St. Tropez and Monaco are stereotypes and they are: think Disneyland and Beverly Hills on steroids. Still, they are fascinating. Two places in France that I've always wanted to see but haven't made it to are Lyon and Strasbourg. Well, perhaps someday.



\$15 million (U.S. Dollars) will get you an apartment in this building

Obviously there's much more to France than what I've seen, but Paris is a different story. When I looked at one of the better guidebooks and noticed its list of "25 places you have to see and things you have to do in Paris" I started counting on my fingers. After much thought I realized I had done all but one of the things on the author's list. If you can guess what that place or thing was and tell me by email or in person at DipCon in Silver Spring this month, I'll present you with a bottle of French wine! Only one person knows the answer. I told him in

Paris. (I'm making this offer just to see how many people have actually read this far into this article. 9)



Palais Chailot/Navy Museum

If French blood runs in your heritage than it also runs in your veins; and Paris has a special place in your heart. And so it is with me. A Dipper's Paris is different from that of the ordinary traveler, as my tale about my visits to the Quai d'Orsay will show. Hobbies, like cities, change in time. The French Dippers in 1989 were mostly young, but not immature. Today they have matured fully, but they are not yet old. Very different than in the United States I suspect. The traditional elements of Diplomacy are: strategy, tactics, and diplomacy; or so I thought in the 60s, 70s, and 80s. Today I would add a fourth: endurance or stamina. There are somewhere between 1665 and 2681 steps to the top of the Eiffel Tower, depending on where you're counting and whose doing the counting, I guess. There are 284 to the top of the Arc de Triomphe. In 1989 I thought nothing of climbing both. In 1995 I took the elevator to the top of the Tower, but climbed the steps in the Arc. By 2001 I was taking the elevator up in both, and walking down the steps. And by 2013 I was struggling to deal with the multiple flights of steps in the Montparnasse stations. That's what getting old does to you.

As I wandered around Paris this last trip I kept thinking of the cliché, "I may not be as good as I once was, but I'm good once as I ever was." That became my mantra for the week. But, as I headed off to the gaming event I wondered if it would hold true in my Diplomacy playing. After all, it had been some ten years since I had played in a tournament of any kind, let alone a World DipCon event.



Playing hall with ever-ticking clock

One Edi Birsan and I were talking, reminiscing as Old Farts tend to do. He started listing all the hobby members who have gone to The Great DipCon in the Sky. Most of the names he mentioned I knew, some of them quite well; and some had been good friends. But when he was done, and I'd added a few I knew of that he hadn't mentioned, I realized that the Old Farts, the real Old Farts, those of the First Golden Age of Diplomacy, are growing fewer and fewer. Maybe those who mentioned in their comments in Diplomacy World about Allan Calhmer's passing were right: Diplomacy does improve one's human interaction skills. It just takes longer for some of us: as Beta and WDC showed me. The only advice my father ever gave me that I remember was, "Remember, you can't set the world on fire with wet matches." That's the same advice I would pass on to hobby newbies.

I love Paris but only in small doses. Twenty-five years ago a small dose was a week. Now it's three days. This trip lasted eight days: two for traveling, three for the WDC, and two to do what I wanted. When you subtract time for sleeping, eating, and local transport that doesn't leave you much time to see or do things. I had to pick and choose carefully. I had decided seeing the French Naval Museum was my top priority (See my story in A Fleet in Paris for a report on that) and I allowed a half day for that. I had also decided that I wanted to focus on "things Asiatic" in this trip to Paris and I had a list of sites to see and visit including the Guimet Museum, one of the largest collections of Asian art outside Asia, the Japan Cultural Center (Think two floors culture and five floors trade promotion.)

I'll mention a bit about the French Naval Museum here for narrative reasons. I got up early in the morning at the Hotel and took the Metro for a short ride to the Trocadero Metro stop which put me right in front of the Chaillot Palais where the Museum was located. I was almost as interested in the buildings (there are two) as I was in the Museum itself. I walked all the way around the complex, which turned out to be quite a challenge, before entering the Museum, one of five in the complex.

The sight of the tourists and I suspect, some local homeless immigrants lying on the lawns around the Chaillot reminded me of Monet's paintings of the French aristocracy taking their leisure in the parks of Paris during the Impressionist days. You can learn more about both the building and Museum at Wikipedia or by doing a Google search for pictures and such.

The Guimet, named for the French industrialist who founded the museum in Lyon in 1875, is an old palace converted to a new use, as many of the city's old buildings are. Guimet, with the imprimatur of the French Government traveled widely buying, stealing, or being gifted works of Asian art of all kinds. The collection moved to Paris in 1885 and in this decade into its new home. The museum, in addition to its original collection, also includes a separate building devoted to statues of Buddha and a Japanese garden, the only one in Paris I believe. While wandering around the museum (Tip: In any museum in Paris expect to do a lot of wandering.) I spotted one Buddha head statue in bronze that looked very much like one in my collection. Ah ha, I thought, it must be Thai-Cambodian and date from around the 1860s. Sure enough, when I looked at the signage I discovered it was indeed Thai-Cambodian from the Mongkut period. Another seminal moment on the trip. Again you can learn more about the Museum at Wikipedia or using Google.

I didn't make it to the Japanese Cultural Center but when we drove by it another time I realized from looking at the outside of the building that bad modern architecture also exists in Paris. It was probably one of the ugliest buildings I saw in central Paris.



Prizes and Awards Display

I did find time to visit the Shangri-la and Peninsula Hotels, however. The Shangri-la is located across directly across the street from the Guimet. Not a coincidence I expect. Depending on who you believe it ranks somewhere between 4.5 and 5 stars and is priced accordingly. The outside façade consists of an older, so-so building and a modern addition joined in an unnatural manner. I was not impressed. Neither the lobby nor the

restaurant impressed me either, but I was told repeatedly that the hotel's service was among the best in Paris and that's what Shangri-la is known for. The Peninsula is not yet officially opened. I wrote up the story of the building and its role in diplomacy and Diplomacy history in a past issue of Diplomacy World or The Diplomatic Pouch and I wanted to see how things were coming with its restoration. Four hundred million dollars (and probably more by now) will buy you a lot of Wow!, even for two hundred suites and two hundred rooms. The whole front of the building, on the Ave. Kleber, has been glass enclosed and an open air restaurant and bar created on the roof. A new spa in the basement with one of the largest indoor pools in Paris and more spa technicians than most resort hotels have been added. The hotel is out to raise the bar among the Paris hotel elites and is aiming for the newly established and coveted 6 star (e.g. Palace) classification on opening. It's priced accordingly and I'm told the cheapest room will run USD 1,600 a night, the cheapest suite double that, and a prix fix dinner for two will run close to USD 1,000. But the first three months are already booked solid, even without a definite opening date! From what everyone said it's obviously the wealthy, very wealthy Arabs and Asians who are keeping 6-star Paris growing. The rest of the city isn't doing so well. Tourism is down 10% this year and this year is already down 10% from the year before. French tourism officials are worried and trying to change the direction of things. Time will tell.

My overall impression is that Paris is a much cleaner city that it was in the 80s and 90s. The trash and poop, and most of the air pollution seem to be gone. It's a more modern city, especially on the north side. You can see the difference taking the RER train from DeGaulle Airport into the city. For the first ten minutes or so of the ride everything is under construction and very modern looking. For the second ten minutes things look to date from the 60s through the 80s, tiny little houses each with a satellite dish for TV, and the occasional large box store or sports facility. Then, as you get closer to the city center you have this combination of classic older Parisian buildings and modern edifices built for the glorification of this or that mayor or French president.

Most of the major icons have had facelifts and, as Edi and I saw at the Museum Delacroix, the French are using the cash cows Louve, Pompidou, and Museum d'Orsay, to finance improvements at smaller museums including elevators, modern toilets, etc. Much has been done, but much more needs to be done, especially in the assimilation of the overseas French (e.g. Africans, Arabs, etc.) into the social and economic and social structure. The Parisians know this and are moving in the right direction, dragging the rest of France, willing or not, with them. Still, the city is a city without direction. Just try asking a local or newly arrived immigrant for directions. You'll do better asking another tourist.

The Louisiane Hotel where the Gunboat Diplomacy Tournament was held and many of the foreigners stayed is a good case in the point. The hundred and fifty year old hotel, and much older building in places, was rather dingy the first time I was stayed there. Today it retains some of its old charm (The hotel elevator moves slower than a French escargot and absolutely refuses to move if more than two people try to use it at once.), but it has upgraded its rooms, plumbing, and moved into the Wi-Fi era. And with a rate one-tenth of the Peninsula, but four fewer stars, it represents good value for the money.

But what of the French Diplomacy hobby? It is doing robustly well. As my report on the WDC 2013 Games shows the French can still put on a very successful WDC event.



Larry Peery celebrates another triumph!

One of the joys of this trip was getting to spend some quality time one on one with Edi. We shared a room, dined together, participated in the Grand Prix de Diplomacy with Jean-Louis Delattre behind the wheel, and wandered the alleys and by-ways of the Latin Quarter looking for the Museum Delacroix which, when we found it, turned out to be inaccessible for me because of the stairs. But if we couldn't see the art in the museum Edi managed to find some art on the street (Well, actually the walls facing the street.) to admire. Together we suffered through a night-long serenade by Gihan and his cohorts singing or shouting in a drunken baritone as the rest of the Dippers and hotel guests tried to sleep on Thursday night. Saturday night we finally cooled off as Paris enjoyed its first rainfall in months. Sunday morning, everything was green and shiny clean for the last day of WDC.

My experiences in the Carrefours Market, my search for the perfect lasagna, and my experiences on the Quai d'Orsay are told elsewhere, but they too are part of this story.



Vincent Dias de Almeida, Best Turkey, holds the Larry Peery Prize



Allan B. Calhamer Memorial and his original work of art tee shirts

Some random thoughts: This was my first DipCon where my wardrobe was most second largest expensive. I spent over \$500 on tee shirts (Not just for myself.). Having I truly become Dipdom's first fashionista? Charles DeGaulle Airport: When I flew into CDG Airport for the first time it was already 15 years old but seemed then to be modern, state of the art, and exciting. Now, twenty-five years later it seems dowdy, cramped, and badly indeed of a facelift. Talk of installing an aquarium in the center of the donut building that is Terminal One is typically French but a bad mistake for practical reasons. Would it better to lighten up the interior and install some seats designed for real people and not interior decorators? The Music of Paris: I Love Paris, Piaf, French military marches of the Revolution and Napoleon and classics of the great French composers still move me, but I missed the music of Farinelli sung by a Vietnamese counter-tenor in Paris'

oldest church. Sniff, sniff. If the French can love Jerry Lewis why can't we love the French Dippers?



Cyrille Sevin, 2013 WDC Champion and only 3-time WDC Champion

I like London better than Paris, but I love Paris more than London; and neither one of them compares to Hong Kong, Seoul, or Taipei for potential Dip magic. It may not happen in my lifetime, but it will happen. The paintings in the Naval Museum, mostly by one artist, combined with the stories in Caro's book (Paris to the Past: Traveling Through French History By Train by Ina Caro.) make for a fascinating "stay at home" holiday tour of the French coast. Walking through the various museums was a fascinating insight into the demographic structure of modern Paris. The top administrators and professionals were "French" French. The secondary level of staff were overseas French, but generally white. And the wait staff and security guards were always from former French African colonies.



Homeward Bound

Rome may yet prove to be the Eternal City, but Paris is hot on its heels. Rome mastered the artful combination of "bread and circuses" to keep its "huddled masses" passive, if not completely satisfied. In the States we call that "foot stamps and NFL." Paris is trying to do the same thing, in its own way. The famous old restaurants

and brasseries are slowly going the way of dinosaurs, being replaced by ever increasing numbers of McDonalds. Even Burger King is returning, cautiously, to France. Paris is filled with stadia designed to offer the locals plenty of football (e.g. soccer) to substitute for the gladiators of old. Subsidies for this and that have raised the income and improved the lifestyles of the not so rich and famous. In the meantime the aristocracy of wealthy France and their Nuevo cousins the Arabs and Asians, live the life most of us only dream of living and wait for

the Peninsula to open so they'll have a new place to play.

So what does all this mean? After living and writing of my experiences in these various trips I've come to this simple conclusion: Whenever World DipCon returns to Paris once again, and I'm sure it will, Paris will be ready and waiting but very different from what it is today, just as it was for me.

Don't Be a Jerk – Strategic Benefits of Keeping It Classy

Joshua Danker-Dake

Let's talk about playing nice. And right off the bat, let me make a distinction. In no way am I suggesting that you give anything less than 100% of your effort toward destroying the other players; this is Diplomacy, and like Herm said, you play to win the game. By all means, destroy them, but be nice about it. Not only is this the upstanding thing to do, it can also have significant strategic benefits. (If you don't like the idea of being "nice," then let's call it "classy." Who doesn't want to be classy?)

Being a classy player doesn't mean offering insincere apologies for your anti-neighborly tendencies. In Diplomacy, as far as the board is concerned, you don't have to apologize for anything. Being classy means *you*. It includes but is not limited to being a gracious winner and a gracious loser – Lord knows you should be doing those things anyway. Indeed, whether you're playing online or face-to-face, it never hurts to stay calm and conversational. Doing so can have strategic benefits in both current and future games.



In this regard, rule number one is this: don't burn any bridges you don't absolutely have to. You gain nothing but momentary self-satisfaction from being needlessly abrasive, from rubbing your rivals' noses in it. Be courteous.

For one thing, when you're a jerk, you become a target for those who have lost hope of winning or sharing in a draw, who are looking for something else "productive" to do. Last issue, I looked at a scenario where hopeless cases France and Germany patched up their differences, took out their frustrations on jerk-contender England, and went home happy losers. If what happened to England happens to you, you probably deserve it. Learn to lord it over your neighbors graciously.

But the converse is true, too (sometimes). If you can keep it friendly when you're doing reasonably well, then, when people say, "Well, I'm not winning this game; screw it, I'ma kill somebody," it's probably not going to be you. When hope is lost, many, many players target the player who offended them most deeply in that game.

The guiding principle behind being a gracious loser is to not take things personally when the game doesn't go your way. Why did your neighbor attack in 1903? Well, he may or may not be an idiot for doing so, but either way, he's trying to win the game just like you are, and unless you've been a jerk, he's probably not out to get *you*, just your supply centers. There's a difference.

If you *do* have to wreck somebody's day ('tis a fine diplomat indeed who can devastatingly stab his neighbor without doing so), do it in as friendly a manner as you can. Don't burn the bridge; dismantle that sucker carefully, piece by piece, like it's your job. It's easier to rebuild that way, should the possibility present itself, and it makes it easier to keep the lines of communication open and friendly.

There are many online players who will stop talking to you after they attack you, or, more commonly, after you attack them. I suspect there are a variety of reasons for

this: they don't see what good it could do, they're worried you'll corrupt them with your desperate lies, they can't be bothered, whatever.

But tuning out the other powers is the sort of inflexibility that holds players back. Yes, remaining in communication with your now-enemies may not result in a turn of your fortunes in that particular game, but you never know. More likely, you might learn something that makes you a better Diplomacy player. *What* happens to you in a game is only half of understanding; good players seek also to know *why*. Here's an example.

In an online game I was a part of, Turkey allied with Italy early; Turkey eventually stabbed him, and ended up in a three-way draw that didn't include Italy. Italy took his stab well ("I would have done the same in your position," Italy said). They kept things friendly, even as Italy got squeezed out of his home centers, and they stayed in communication throughout the game, including after Italy was eliminated.

They discussed the flow of the game, and Turkey told Italy, "You might be interested to know that my original plan was to attack you right after Austria got eliminated – after all, Russia was a reasonable, friendly teammate. But then you did so astonishingly well for yourself going west and Russia turned out to be so infuriatingly conservative that it didn't make sense to do that any longer. So well done on that front."



I'm always interested to hear this sort of thing, as it feeds into the questions I ask myself to improve. How can I be a more attractive ally? How can I better avoid a stab? How can I do better next time? Other players may have insight into a game that you don't, and this insight is best shared in an environment of level-headed sportsmanship. I don't necessarily mean that you ask for help outright (although if you're a new player, don't be ashamed; there are more people than you might think who are genuinely interested in helping you), but the perspectives of others on a game's turning points can be quite illuminating.

I therefore advocate being chatty to the extent that it doesn't hurt you in the game. There's a time and a place for opening up to your opponents about your plans and motives – it's typically not right after a stab happens, but it doesn't always have to be after the game finishes, either. A post-game time for discussion and explanation of in-game decisions is built into many online Diplomacy setups, but a lot of people don't take advantage of it, and bail the instant they don't have orders to put in any longer (and not just because they're upset about what happened in the game). It's too bad.

There are other benefits to classy communication. As I like to say all the time around here: Diplomacy isn't typically played in a vacuum. Whether face-to-face or online, if you play long enough, odds are, you're going to run into the same people again and again, and you may even find people you like to play with regularly. If you can create a reputation as a calm, conversational player, people may be more likely to listen to you and to align with you at the beginning of new games, no matter how ruthless a player you may be (by this, I don't mean metagaming in the big-no-no sense, but people have histories, and good players remember). Which of us online veterans has not played a game where we picked our early-game ally based solely on who replied to their messages in a consistent and timely manner?

(A note for those who play online: I assume that you take a look at who your opponents are, whether you've played in games with them before – maybe you've even been through their previous games to see how frequently they win. If you play on a site like www.playdiplomacy.com, you leave behind a body of work, as do the other players. Even a cursory glance at your prospective ally's last five games, for example, can be quite illuminating. The information is there – use it.)

Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter. Lies, rampages, betrayal, destruction: whether mercilessly giving or ruthlessly receiving, keep it classy. It's the better way to play.

Joshua is the Strategy and Tactics Editor for Diplomacy World

Ask the GM

An Advice Column for Diplomacy World

By The GM

Dear GM:

Now that gas prices are dropping like a stone, I want to drive to the best Diplomacy conventions? Which do you recommend?

Sincerely,
A Dip Starved Player.

Dear Player,

Since the GM doesn't go to too many conventions, the GM doesn't know—generally the GM likes house conventions over the more formal ones as they tend to be more fun. Also any convention that advertises free beer or brats or babes gets my vote.

*Your Pal,
The GM*

Dear GM:

What is better—a solo win in Diplomacy at a face to face tournament or passing up the win to get even.

Sincerely,
One of the Kennedys

Dear Kennedy,

You're a Kennedy and you have to ask??? It's always better to get even, except when it comes to a Diplomacy win—remember the best revenge is to live well...

*Your Pal,
The GM*

Dear GM,

I brought a case of beer to my last game and was able to win when my opponent needed to urinate frequently due to the beer—now he won't let me bring beer anymore. I don't think that's fair so we agreed to let you decide if I could bring beer.

Sincerely,
The Beerman

Dear Beerman,

Love the name by the way—if you're pussy friend is the host he can ban beer, but you should tease him mercilessly and then move the game to some other venue where you can bring beer. And your friend is a weenie who can't hang...crush him in every game until he lifts the beer ban.

*Sincerely,
The GM*

Selected Upcoming Conventions

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

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

DipCon at Tempest 2013 – North American DipCon – Friday October 11th – Sunday October 13th – Sheraton Silver Spring, Silver Spring, MD, <http://ptks.org/> -- Contact

Carnage on the Mountain – Friday November 8th – Sunday November 10th, 2013 – Killington, Vermont <http://www.carnagecon.com/> -- Contact Robert Rouse

*Oddly, this was the **ONLY** convention listed in the online convention calendar at press time. The US people aren't entering their tournaments there any more, when I ask them WHY, they say "no one looks there anyway", I think there is a problem with advertising..... Carnage and Tempest both use the Carnage scoring system which is simple and place/SC based....*

Why I Like Team Events

By Larry Peery

INTRODUCTION

When I decided to return to FTF Diplomacy play in North America after many, many years DIPCON was an obvious choice for my first event. And so I got online made my reservations with UA (That was easy. Signing up for their FFM program was anything but.), contacted Sheratons Reservations online and immediately was plunged into a power struggle between their central reservations office and the local hotel. Fortunately, with help from Jeff Ladd that was resolved in my favor; and I then signed up for the event online at the PTKS website. That was easy enough, I thought, and proceeded to the next step: putting together a team for the team event I assumed was going to happen in Silver Spring. I soon had two volunteers, then three, four, five; and then I realized I had no idea what the size of the teams for the team event would be. So I looked at the event web site and found no mention of a team event. Strange, I thought, so I asked Chris Martin (one of my committed team members, and one of the organizers of the event) what he knew? Not much, he said, but he assured me that there had always been a team event, usually on Saturday. Then I asked Edi Birsan (another perspective team member, and Edi always knows what's going on in the hobby), and he said he didn't know of one. I was starting to worry, so I emailed Jeff Ladd, who I had been told could solve any DipCon problem, and asked him what was up. He replied, and I quote him verbatim, "We really didn't alter our normal Tempest for the DipCon bid." Well, I had no idea what a normal Tempest was like, but I did have a pretty good idea of what a DipCon should be. I informed Bill LaFosse, who was as enthusiastic about the team event as I was, Chris and Edi that apparently there was to be no team event. I then pondered what to do next. What follows is what I decided to do.

I was surprised to learn that there would be no team event at this year's DipCon, but shame on me for not asking. On the other hand, when you sign up to buy a new car you assume you're getting four tires with it. I was even more surprised at how nonchalant those responsible for such things were about that decision. And I was still even more surprised at how defensive those who have used the team event for their own advantage were about having done so. That wasn't from the cat's mouth, but it seemed to be the consensus of multiple reports that "Team events fell out of favor because the best players would form teams amongst themselves in order to avoid having to play each other." Heh, all's fair in war and Dip, right?

IN CONTEXT (e.g. Peeriblah deep background)

It's ironic that in the USA, where team sports like football, baseball, basketball, etc. rule and dominate

sports, individual sports are relatively neglected. Even a macho man individualistic sport like golf still finds the Masters and Ryder Cup fascinating if not completely understandable. How important is the super star on the team? Can you name one other member of any of Michael Phelps Olympics swimming teams? Probably not. And yet in Europe it is the solo athlete that wins respect and highest praise. The individual who climbs a 1,000 foot tall building, or who crosses the Grand Canyon on a wire without a safety belt, or the sailor who crosses the ocean in a kayak alone is praised.



Consider something as simple as sailing around the world alone. Have you ever heard of Captain Joshua Slocum? Probably not unless you're a yachting fanatic or happen to be from Nova Scotia. Sometime around 1900, or slightly before, Slocum became the first person to sail single-handedly around the world aboard the sloop Spray. Read his account of the voyage in *Alone Around the World* (1900). It's one of the truly great sports epics. Move ahead, quickly now to 1966 (and this one I do remember) when to be Sir Francis Chichester set his

sights on the next logical goal --- a racing-style circumnavigation of the world. His goal was to be the fastest ever for a single-handed around-the-world-trip. In 1966, aboard the Gipsy Moth IV he did that that. It took him 226 days sailing time, twice as fast as the previous record. At the age of 65, Chichester had once again revolutionized single-handed sailing. A quarter of a million people greeted his arrival back in England and more than a few hundred jumped into the water with joy! The individual star shines brightly, but the collective efforts of teams shine even brighter.

I remember watching Dennis Connor's (a much disliked fellow in San Diego) team bring the America's Cup back to San Diego from Australia. Even in a jaded sports town like San Diego that was a "big deal." More recently, who among those who saw it will ever forget team Oracle's come-from-behind victory over the New Zealand team Emirates in this year's America's Cup? Even in a jaded sailing town like San Francisco, hundreds of thousands of spectators and fans alike turned out to see that final race.

Yes, team events do get attention.

Finally, let's ask what is the purpose of the team event? Simply put, it is to teach us to plan and work together to achieve a positive goal. Those who think otherwise have a simple alternative---they don't have to play in it.

THE PROBLEM(S)

Next, let us consider, in general terms, some of the problems related to team events at the DipCon level in North America (Europe and Australia don't seem to have a problem with the concept or executing it. There were 17 teams in the team event in Paris at this year's WDC. Why don't Americans like team events? It's simple. It's because they don't like to work together. The "every man for himself" (and God help you if you're a female player) mantra has become a way of life in the USA. You can see it on the mega-level as you read this if you look at what's going on in Washington. I'm sure Bohner and Cantor and the rest are not team players.

Certainly the lack of a team event has kept foreign attendance at our DipCons, including our World DipCons down, and perhaps some Americans like that.

Deceit is the performance enhancing drug of choice of Diplomacy. As long as there are Diplomacy events there will be those who have to try to "play the game or beat the system." And then, when they do beat it, they go around and brag about it. Have they no shame?

Looking at the World Diplomacy Database figures for the last team for the USA I am reminded of some financial advice my grandmother gave me a half-century ago when she bought me my first stocks. One of her cardinal rules was, "Don't ever buy stock in a company that you

can't tell what they do from their name." Following her advice paid off. Today, looking at DipCon event names would you, if you were a parent, send your kid to an event called: The Bar Room Brawl, Massacre, Weasel Moot, BadAss Whipping, or Carnage on the Mountain? I think not. What do these names tell you about the who, what, where or of an event? Not much.

Look at the attendance figures: 7, 26, 35, 16, 23, 17, 15, 15, 13, 28, 22, 15, 7... In a word, pathetic. When a Diplomacy event in San Marino can attract more people than any similar event in the USA; we're in trouble. Where, I ask you, is the new blood? Scared away by the old? Perhaps. Is it more convenient and rewarding for old timers to do the same old things with the same, even older group of people than deal with the challenges and potential defeats of facing a new and younger generation of Dippers?

The Europeans have done away with the open-ended game, and I disagree with that. We've done away with the team event, and I disagree with that. I may be only one hobby Old Fart but that's my opinion.

Why are we afraid to try something so old it may seem new to today's and tomorrow's hobby?

Those who use or believe others use teams to prevent having to face the best players at a team event would do well to remember that there are those who play on teams for more noble reasons.

We should not let our cynicism prevent others from enjoying this kind of Diplomacy. Why deprive others of doing something they enjoy or might enjoy just because some find it inconvenient?

A 7X7 board tournament with 49 players, a team event, a top board and a variety of Diplomacy related events have always been my standard for a "real" DipCon. Is that not reasonable? What happened?

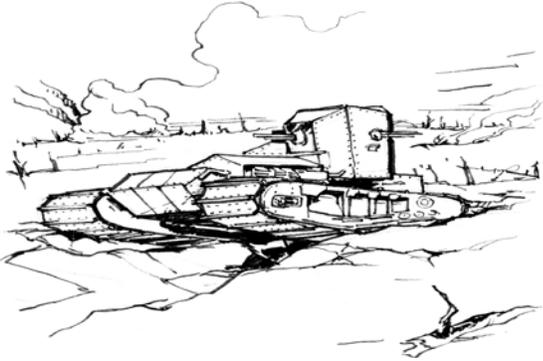
THE SOLUTION(S)

Diplomacy has always consisted of the individual, team and national (or state or community) elements. A healthy balance of all three is necessary to the wellbeing of the hobby. The lack of a team element in the American FTF hobby may help explain its current poor condition.

DipCons have traditionally been built around a singles event with seven or more boards that would lead to a top board event, and a team event. Those were the three pillars of DipCon.

Just because some people don't like it is no reason why we shouldn't be doing it. A whole new generation of players hasn't had an opportunity to experience team play. Who knows, they might actually enjoy it if they tried it.

Yes, teams do build esprit de corps, even if only for a few hours.



The team event provides another path to the awards and prizes. Is that so bad?

The lawyers among us have apparently found time for their event. Why not let the team players do the same? A team event helps bring back drama and excitement to the game, the event and the hobby; and excitement is something we seem to need at the moment.

The online hobby has a new 'zine called A FLEET IN PARIS. It looks promising. Its early issues are filled with goodies from written by newbies, and I have not seen ONE name therein listed in the rosters of this past year's DipCons. Will the old hobby establishment welcome A FLEET IN PARIS or shy away from the competition of and for new blood? I welcome it and I'm putting my words, peeriblah if you will, where my wishes are. We need to do the same thing with newbies to the FTF hobby and, hopefully, new or revitalized older events.

A local or regional Diplomacy event seeking to hold a national or continental Dip event owes it to that event and the hobby as a whole to strive to attain the goals of that event and bring its own event up to the standards of the higher event --- not to merely say, "Come hither and take us as we are."

In summary, we need to revitalize out FTF Diplomacy events. We need new blood to do that. And one way of attracting new blood is to bring give new options. Bringing back the team event is one such option. We've neglected or even abandoned our traditions, and we're paying for it now.

CONCLUSION

I crawled my way back to this DipCon after six hospital visits in three years. I did not do so to attend a wake for DipCon or its team event.

It is time to end a generation's benign neglect of this hobby's pillar event and return it to its rightful place in the DipCon pantheon of events. First we bring back the team event. Then we restore DipCon to its rightful place primus inter pares instead of unus inter multos. I leave you with this question, "Is it that Americans don't like the concept of a team event or is it that they are afraid of it?"

The call to action has been sounded! Will you answer the call? Or will you retreat to the bar in Silver Spring, order another beer, and say: "Let Edi do it;" and then wonder why nobody shows up at DipCon next year? I look forward to a free and open discussion of this subject in Silver Spring. Hopefully if we can keep people out of the bar long enough to have one. Those who were in Birmingham, England for WDC IV will know what I mean.

If you haven't figured it out already, there's no such thing as "a little Larry Peery." I know Larry is REALLY hoping his article gets some response. So write yours up and send it in!

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

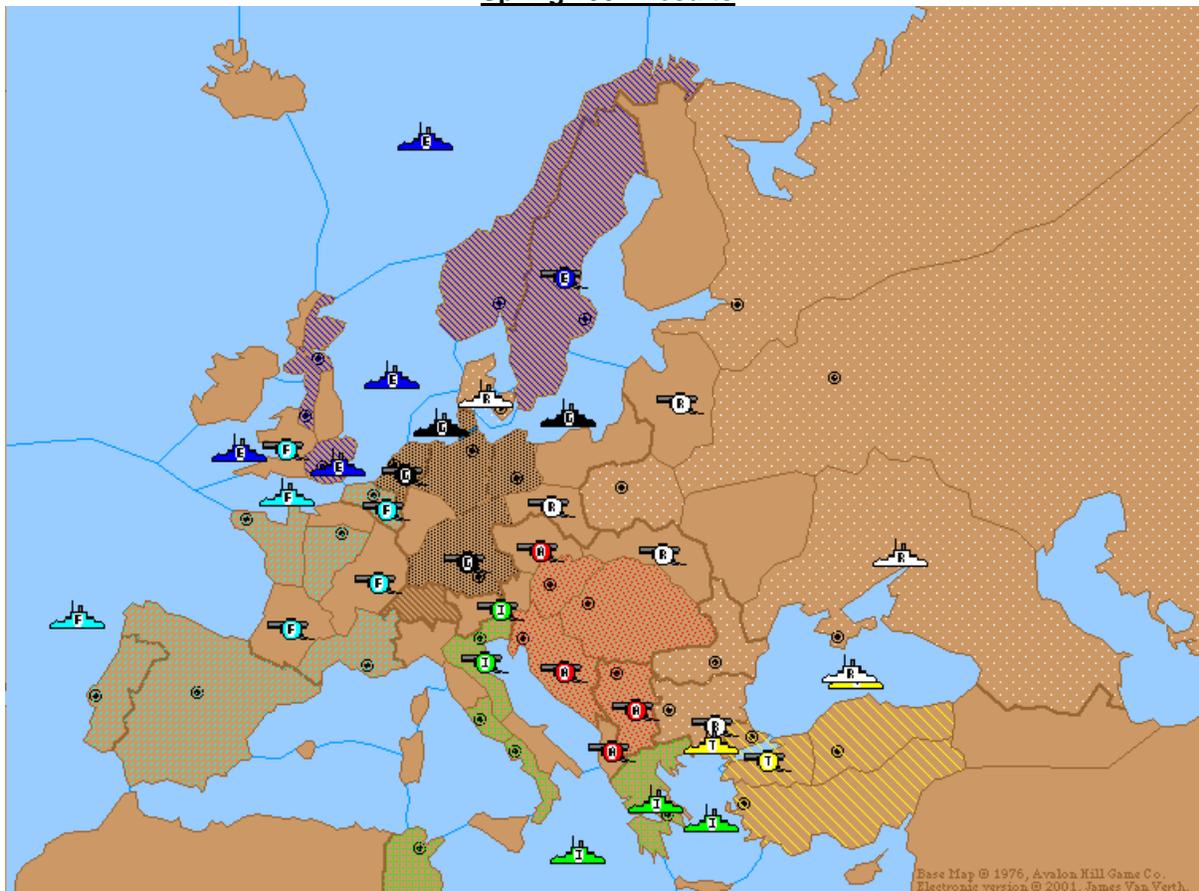
The Commentators:

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

The GM:

Douglas Kent

Spring 1904 Results



Getting some action now...I think the lines of communication are wide open.

Austria: A Budapest – Trieste, A Serbia Supports A Bulgaria, A Trieste – Albania, A Vienna - Bohemia.

England: F Liverpool - Irish Sea, F London Supports F North Sea - English Channel,

F North Sea - English Channel (*Fails*), F Norway - Norwegian Sea, A Sweden Supports F Denmark.

France: A Belgium Hold, A Burgundy Supports A Belgium, F English Channel Convoys A Picardy – Wales,
 F Mid-Atlantic Ocean Supports F English Channel, A Picardy – Wales, A Spain - Gascony.

Germany: F Baltic Sea Supports F Helgoland Bight – Denmark, F Helgoland Bight - Denmark (*Fails*),
 A Holland - Kiel (*Bounce*), A Munich - Kiel (*Bounce*).

Italy: F Greece Supports F Aegean Sea - Bulgaria(sc), F Ionian Sea - Aegean Sea, F Naples - Ionian Sea,
 A Tyrolia Supports A Vienna – Bohemia, A Venice Supports A Tyrolia.

Russia: A Bulgaria Hold (*Dislodged*, retreat to Rumania or OTB), F Denmark Hold,

A Galicia Supports A Warsaw – Silesia, F Rumania - Black Sea, F Sevastopol Supports F Rumania - Black Sea,
 A St Petersburg – Livonia, A Warsaw - Silesia.

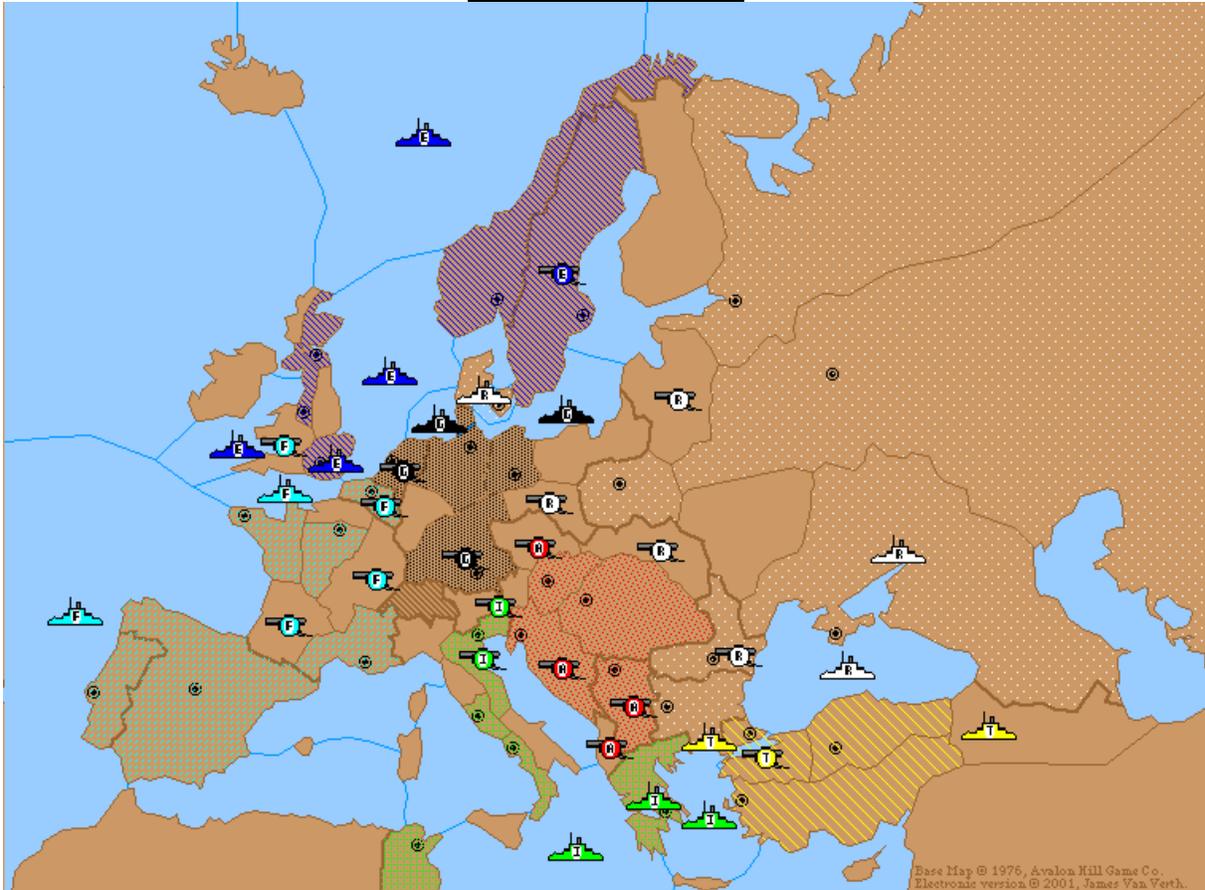
Turkey: F Aegean Sea - Bulgaria(sc), F Black Sea Supports F Aegean Sea – Bulgaria(sc) (*Dislodged*, retreat to
 Ankara or Armenia or OTB), A Constantinople Supports F Aegean Sea - Bulgaria(sc).

PRESS

Anonymous Press:

Splintered alliance
Europe hangs on the abyss
One rises from ash.

Summer 1904 Results



Austria: Has A Albania, A Bohemia, A Serbia, A Trieste.

England: Has F Irish Sea, F London, F North Sea, F Norwegian Sea, A Sweden.

France: Has A Belgium, A Burgundy, F English Channel, A Gascony, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, A Wales

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

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

Russia: Retreat A Bulgaria - Rumania..Has F Black Sea, F Denmark, A Galicia, A Livonia, A Rumania, F Sevastopol, A Silesia.

Turkey: Retreat F Black Sea - Armenia...Has F Armenia, F Bulgaria(sc), A Constantinople.

Spring and Summer 1904 Commentary:

Jim Burgess (**BOLD**)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Jack McHugh (Comic Sans MS)

Austria: one of many who is now next to Munich. To say this bodes poorly for Germany is an understatement.

Austria has concentrated his other forces in the Albania/Serbia area, where he could try to take Greece. Italy's status here is unclear: more on that later. Austria has left himself open to shenanigans from Russia, but

the general sense here is that Turkey is the one in trouble...

Austria feels confident enough of his eastern borders to leave Vie/Bud open with a Russian A Gal, that tells me that there is definitely something going

on there. Austria realizes he cannot be strong everywhere and is concentrating on working with Russia and Italy against Germany which means forgoing an alliance with Turkey for now.

Russia and Austria have used the classic “setup your units in Spring to strike in Fall” approach to allow Turkey to dislodge Bulgaria and other such happenings but I will be shocked if we don’t see a strong RA move this fall. I believe that this turn Italy was working with Turkey (in fact to dislodge Bulgaria) and will continue to do so in the fall. Nevertheless, the diplomatic situation remains extremely fluid and anything can still happen with many options. The German attack is interesting for a number of reasons. First and most importantly to me, Austria/German warfare (the Anschluss relationship) seldom is in either party’s long term interests, and I’m not sure it is here. Nevertheless, I think I agree that it seems to be a price of a Russian relationship that Austria needs. Second, Austria has a hole over Vienna, with two Italians on Venice. Italy also could help Germany keep Munich. Not only that, but there is the question of “what of the French?” Now, the French long term strategic interests align closely with the Russians, so perhaps it will be the Russians and the French that will team up over Munich and Austria will defend. But then Austria doesn’t get much out of it, hence the Anschluss. More to follow below...

Turkey: Yeah, taking Bulgaria in the Spring isn’t necessarily the best outcome. I can’t tell exactly what’s going on here, but he’s certainly not going to hold Bulgaria. And the appearance of a Russian fleet in the Black Sea as well as an Italian in the Aegean means that Turkey is the sick man of Europe. Or Asia, really. Jonathan needs to pay whatever price is necessary to get Peter to go after Chris instead of him. But the retreat to Armenia signals an intent instead to punish Russia. Really don’t like that retreat.

The question of who the odd man out in the Eastern Triple has been answered and it looks like when the music stopped Turkey was left without a seat. I am not sure there is much Turkey can do at this point to change the alliance dynamics—Italy is undoubtedly looking at the F/G alliance against E in the West and realizing he has to get do something to counter that. The best way for Italy counter F/G is with R/A, especially with Turkey still stuck off in the corner of the board. I’m not sure Italy can ally with Turkey at this point even if he wanted to do so. Italy is now the ham in the ham and eggs alliance with Russia, Russia’s chicken is interested but Italy’s pork is committed.

So, here’s some of the fun of commentating, I disagree respectfully with both of my esteemed colleagues. First, Turkey could hold Bulgaria perhaps. And I like Jonathan’s retreat. In my view Italy sees the FG of course. BUT, the FG may or may not hold this season (more on that later), and that is a long term strategic worry, nothing Italy has to worry about right now. So, Italy really needs to make sure that RA doesn’t succeed. So if you think about IT working together across that line, you can see that it is at least possible, even likely, that Bulgaria is held. Then, since the Bulgarian fleet is on the south coast, admittedly it is possible that Armenia could be annihilated; however, then it can be rebuilt as the Army needed to attack Russia. So, I expect Turkey to be at four, possibly with two builds to replace an annihilated unit, but ready to be offensive next year.

Russia: the army which retreated to Rumania can help Russia attack Budapest. Or he could try to retake Bulgaria. Or he could simply force Armenia and figure that this is a win in the long run regardless. In any case, we should soon find out what Italy is up to...

Russia has the second best position on the board—only France has a slightly better strategic position—by using FlapJack’s handy dandy power indicator, namely, the fewer units in or near your country, the more powerful you are, and by that standard Russia is looking pretty well. I only consider France to have a better position due to the fact that she only has one power with units near her border—England but Russia has two, England and Turkey.

The only thing Russia appears to be committed to is taking out Turkey, and, although her moves were highly anti-German the last turn, the Tsar could easily pivot north or south as the situation warrants—an ideal position for any Diplomacy player.

I most definitely agree that Peter is in a strong position with strategic and tactical options. As I hinted above, what is REALLY dangerous for everyone else is that you might have an RF getting ready to start sweeping the board. I think Italy is going to be the one who sounds the alarm on this (not himself attacking France yet), but letting everyone know that it needs to happen. The position, though, suggests that this will not play out this Fall at all yet. Italy must keep Turkey in the game to oppose Russia eventually. Even if we see that the Dancing Queen (that’s Chris) is still whiling away the time with Viennese courtly dances instead of opposing Russia.

Italy: this is the kind of position where the exposure of a secret I/R alliance would quickly settle matters in the East. Italy's got a solid lock on Greece, but what's next? Is he using Turkey to keep A/R in check? Is there a triple that will put him in Munich? Italy really needs to break out, and soon. This brings us to...

Italy's position is crystal clear to me; he's keeping Austria on a tight leash while trying to help Russia take out Turkey so he can pick up some dots in the Balkans. France is on Italy's mind but for now he's got to show as little interest in the West as possible until Italy gets more fleets deployed against France as well as Russia and Austria maneuver armies into position to help with Germany.

So, the answer here is clear, either they are right and I am wrong, or yet something else is going to happen. Any of this is possible. I know I play Italy in a grand balance of power way, that's the way to play it, and so I would be propping up Turkey, not coming to his funeral. But you all are right, we shall see.

Germany: just what the heck is going on in Munich? And is Germany really fighting England, Russia, Austria, Italy, and France? Well, not all of them, obviously. But the fight against Russia is real, and this isn't good. It's going to get real bad if/when Russia moves an army into Prussia. This brings us to...

I want to interject here a bit. I think the key question is Gregory, who recall is the consummate tactician, and whether there ever was or is any sort of FG. One way of seeing the last couple of game years is that Gregory was just waiting to crush Germany until he had Peter's active help. Mike Sims had better be burning up the diplomatic airwaves this turn to reveal and twist these issues to his command. The whole board right now COULD and SHOULD turn anti-RF for a bit. Mike should be emphasizing Anschluss strategic considerations to Chris, and if accepted, that turns around the previously noted surface set-up in the south. SO, this is the place where something else entirely ensues. And it's squarely up to Mike and the German diplomatic department.

England: really needed to stop the convoy to Wales. The move to Irish Sea was pointless in that it was a province that France could have forced had he wished to. If he'd bounced the convoy he would be in much better shape. Now he has to worry about attacks on London and/or Liverpool, as well as the possibility of a move to Yorkshire. The good news is that Russia is

friendly and Germany is beleaguered, leaving the French as the only problem. Speaking of which..

Interjecting again, so did I remind you how relentlessly brilliant Gregory is as a tactician? Any of you questioning his moves earlier should be seeing them come to fruition now. And as some of you noted, he arguably is winning right now. And if I'm right that he also brings down Germany in the process, well, then the game is not afoot, it's close to finished. Now, to England, so you think Russia is friendly "why" precisely? Again, I disagree wholeheartedly. And yes, Frank should have bounced the convoy for sure, but that was probably laid through diplomatic groundwork we didn't see. In my view, Frank needs to make up with Mike, and fast! Like this turn, or they're both in serious trouble. And that could be immediately clear.

France: I want to see France order Wal - Yor combined with the convoy of another army. I have no idea if this is an optimal move, but if it worked, it would be curtains for England. There are other neat options, including an attack on London from the Channel with support from Wales. But that plan requires the German to cut North Sea support, and he might be too busy. In any case, France shouldn't want Munich to fall to anybody.

The West is much easier to figure out F/G are going after E, the problem is that R/A/I have wised up to this and are moving into take some of Germany's dots which will offset any French or German gains vis-à-vis England.

England and Germany have lost most of their ability to maneuver diplomatically due to having units on top of their home centers—both powers have no choice but to play defense and everyone knows it.

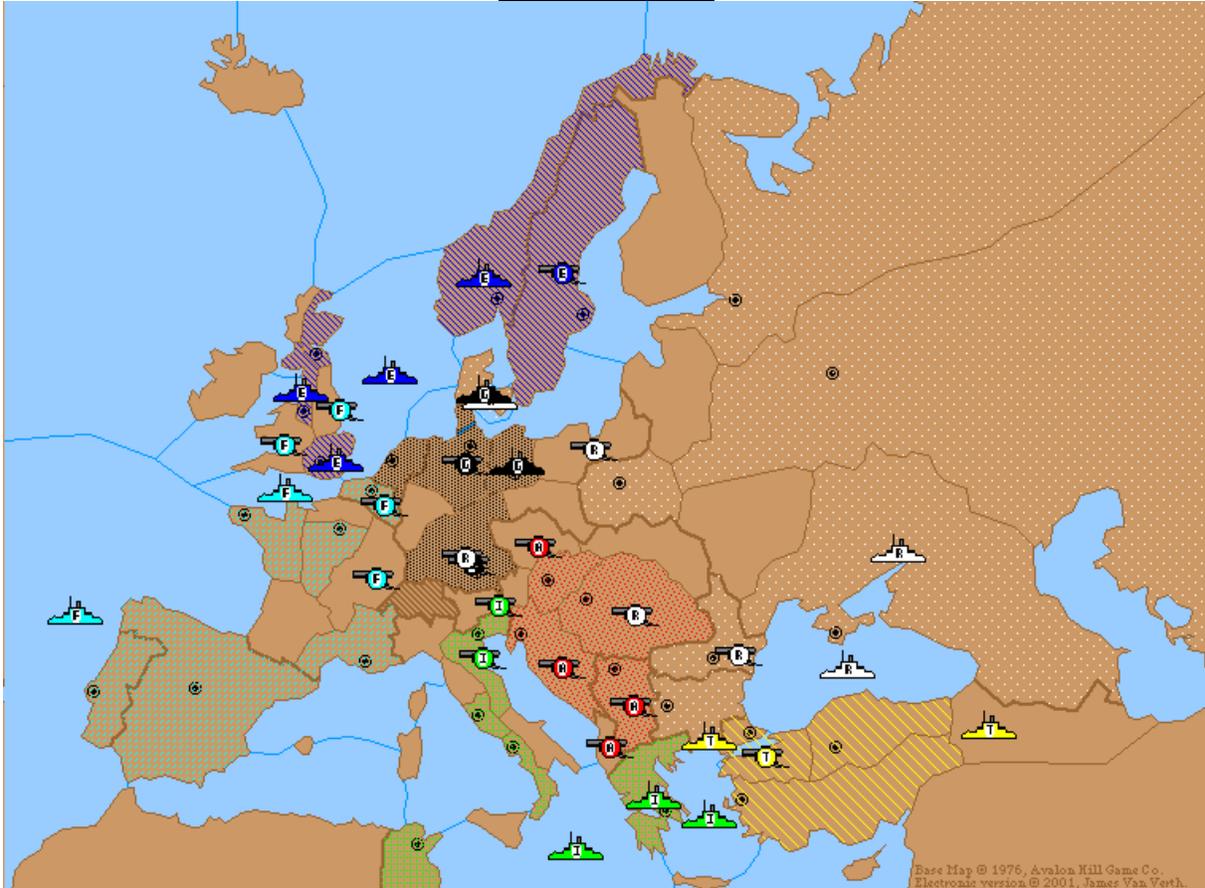
France, on the other, hand is in an interesting position—he can switch sides and join R/A/I—perhaps by asking it become R/I/F or R/A/F (although R/A/F would be a much tougher row to hoe for France since neither R or A is any position to offer much help against Italy and her fleets)—or does France stay with Germany and try and take out England as quickly as possible. Or perhaps, a third choice, France switches to ally with England and takes some German dots and tries to break up the R/A/I alliance diplomatically with the new possibilities now that England is in and Germany is out.

Yes, yes, NOW you get it, this is Gregory and Peter's dance, I think. But maybe it isn't, and the fascination of what comes for Fall is incredible. I have laid out clearly the two most likely scenarios and the least likely one, but there are others, because...

This move makes this game, is as Alice said of Wonderland, "curiouser and curiouser!"

Keen to see the next move.

Fall 1904 Results



Austria: A Albania - Greece (*Fails*), A Bohemia Supports A Silesia – Munich, A Serbia Supports A Albania – Greece, A Trieste - Vienna (*Bounce*).

England: F Irish Sea – Liverpool, F London Supports F North Sea, F North Sea Supports F London, F Norwegian Sea – Norway, A Sweden Supports F Helgoland Bight - Denmark.

France: A Belgium – Wales, A Burgundy – Belgium, F English Channel Convoys A Belgium – Wales, A Gascony – Burgundy, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean Supports F English Channel, A Wales - Yorkshire.

Germany: F Baltic Sea – Berlin, F Helgoland Bight – Denmark, A Holland – Kiel, A Munich Hold (*Dislodged*, retreat to Ruhr or OTB).

Italy: F Aegean Sea - Constantinople (*Fails*), F Greece Supports A Rumania - Bulgaria (*Cut*), F Ionian Sea Supports F Greece, A Tyrolia - Vienna (*Bounce*), A Venice - Trieste (*Fails*).

Russia: F Black Sea Supports A Rumania - Bulgaria (*Cut*), F Denmark Supports F North Sea (*Dislodged*, retreat to Skagerrak or Baltic Sea or OTB), A Galicia – Budapest, A Livonia – Prussia, A Rumania - Bulgaria (*Fails*), F Sevastopol - Armenia (*Fails*), A Silesia - Munich.

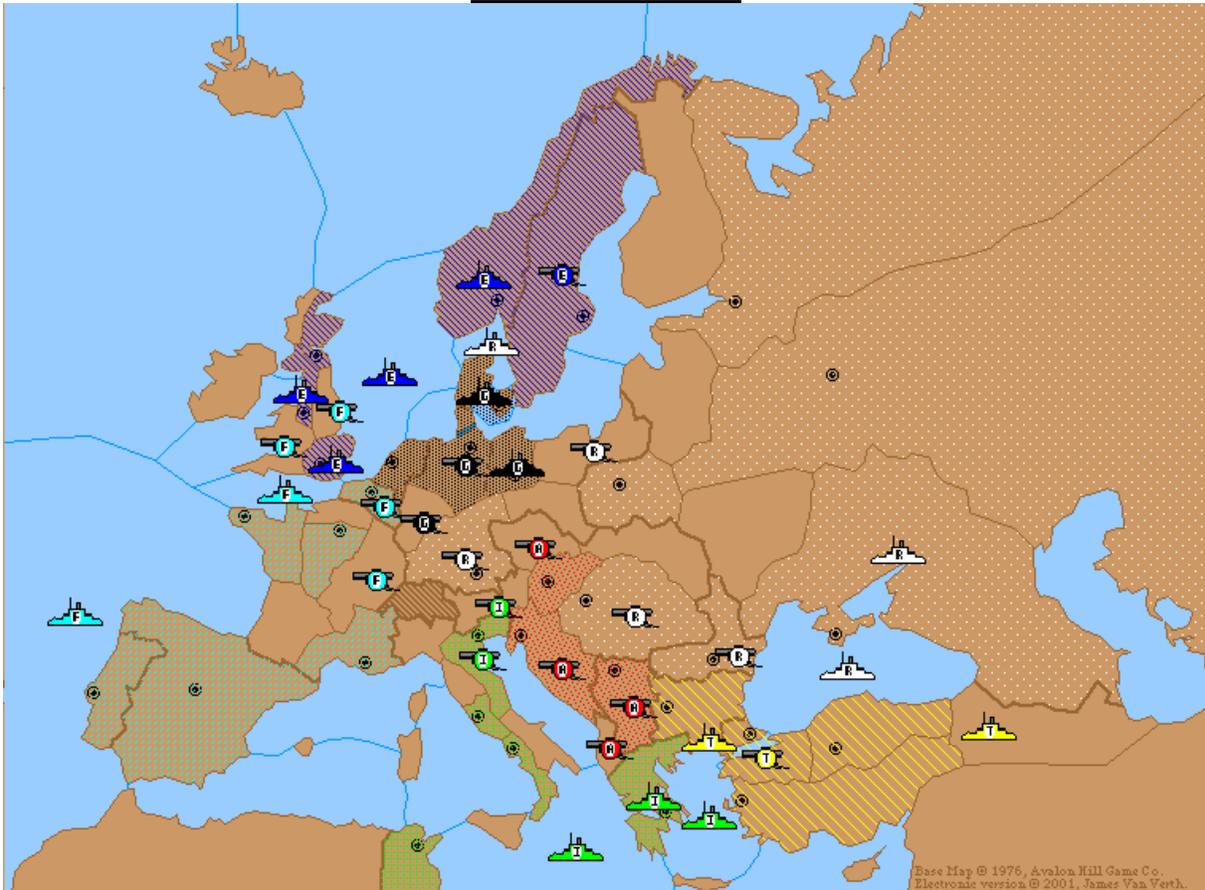
Turkey: F Armenia - Black Sea (*Fails*), F Bulgaria(sc) Supports F Greece (*Cut*), A Constantinople Supports F Bulgaria(sc) (*Cut*).

PRESS

Anonymous Press:

Mighty is the Bear
Bold is the man who risks all
We will all perish.

Autumn 1904 Results



- Austria:** Has A Albania, A Bohemia, A Serbia, A Trieste.
England: Has F Liverpool, F London, F North Sea, F Norway, A Sweden.
France: Has A Belgium, A Burgundy, F English Channel, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, A Wales, A Yorkshire.
Germany: Retreat A Munich - Ruhr.. Has F Berlin, F Denmark, A Kiel, A Ruhr.
Italy: Has F Aegean Sea, F Greece, F Ionian Sea, A Tyrolia, A Venice.
Russia: Retreat F Denmark - Skagerrak.. Has F Black Sea, A Budapest, A Munich, A Prussia, A Rumania, F Sevastopol, F Skagerrak.
Turkey: Has F Armenia, F Bulgaria(sc), A Constantinople.

Supply Center Chart

- Austria:** Serbia, Trieste, Vienna=3, Remove 1
England: Edinburgh, Liverpool, London, Norway, Sweden=5, Even
France: Belgium, Brest, Marseilles, Paris, Portugal, Spain=6, Even
Germany: Berlin, Denmark, Holland, Kiel=4, Even
Italy: Greece, Naples, Rome, Tunis, Venice=5, Even
Russia: Budapest, Moscow, Munich, Rumania, Sevastopol, St Petersburg, Warsaw=7, Even
Turkey: Ankara, Bulgaria, Constantinople, Smyrna=4, Build 1

Fall and Autumn 1904 Commentary:

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

Big Picture: OK, so it does look like we have the FIR tree alliance, where Austria hoped Russia was with him, but he wasn't. Russia would have gone down

one had he not stolen Budapest. Nevertheless, "one dotting" if that is all it was, is not the way to play well. So, it wasn't a one dotting it was the big stab. I

bet Chris' way, and thus was wrong along with Chris. Turkey guessed right on the attacks, so Jonathan probably knew that Italy had gone with Russia. I would expect that the Diplomacy on all this was hot and heavy. On the other side of the board, England and Germany figured out what was what and trounced Peter out of Denmark. So, what **SHOULD** happen now is that everyone will oppose RF except Italy in the FIR tree. And though they are quite spread out across the board, there are some real FIR vulnerabilities, particularly St. Petersburg.

I'm not sure France is actually allied with anybody. He seems to be merely attacking England by his lonesome. Russia had a bad year, trading Denmark and Bulgaria for Munich and Budapest. Those are dots that will be hard to keep controlling.

France is in the best shape of all the powers on the board. He has no one in any condition to do him any harm near him and he has TWO armies in England. It is truly Springtime for Clemenceau and France. I don't think Russia had a bad year--it just wasn't as good as last year but he didn't lose any units and there is an ominous build up of English forces on his northern flank. As for the dots--clearly Russia needs to be player in central and southern Europe, more so than in Scandinavia.

AUSTRIA: So, Chris bet wrong, I would have bet the same way, it was his best shot, but he had to convince Peter what would happen if he stabbed. Now is time to show that, working closely with Turkey. So, here's the choice. Turkey can build F Smy and Greece falls, but that doesn't really punish Peter. Certainly he can make sure Munich is not held, but it is unclear in the face of FIR what else he can do. I would take Greece, but I expect Chris to go the other way. And certainly, though there is a space for toadying to Russia, don't expect Chris to do that either.

Yes, Chris had to take a risk and he took it. But he kept Italy from getting a build. Would it be fair to assume that he'll work more openly with Turkey now? Either that or he'll cut some kind of deal with Russia. I'm not sanguine, though. He's down to three and I/R have enough force that they can just ignore Turkey and kill Austria first.

Austria is now a bit player in our little drama--he'll probably lagaar around his two most defensible dots Tri and Ser---I don't see him continuing to march into Germany with Russia while the Bear picks off his home centers one at a time.

ENGLAND: Better, better, but of course Gregory played for position. Still, I think EG has a shot at making some gains (particularly St. Pete) that will mitigate homeland losses somewhat.

Now there are two French armies on the island. Ugh. This front will collapse soon, and long-term prospects are gone unless he can get somebody to go after France.

I agree with Rick--although England has potential against Russia, the dots do him little good if he is losing his home centers in the meantime. England might be able to survive in the Arctic but that's about all.

FRANCE: Gregory remains the puppet master of the game tactically, if not diplomatically, in my view. I would trust whichever tactics he comes up with, but to me annihilating an English unit in Spring (London?) would not be shocking. As long as Italy is tied up very, very far away, France is in very good shape here.

That's about right. I'm going to remind the readers that I thought the move to Yorkshire was the way to go. ☺ France can play Gunboat right now and take the English dots. Of course, then he'll have to actually negotiate with the other players. I wonder if he's been doing that?

The power with the fewest hostile units near its home centers is doing the best and that is clearly France in this game. I also agree France is can pretty much dictate the game at this point since the only other power who can stop him is Italy and he is tied up with his Balkan maneuvers.

GERMANY: Mike is now the centerpiece of the alliance against FIR and needs to show it. Anschluss with Chris in Austria needs to be firmly established and even Turkish coordination is essential. Germany could be in fine shape after this year with some good moves.

There's an alliance against FIR? The good news is that he has a decent shot at retaking Munich. Surely somebody will want him there, yes? The French should give him a support.

Germany's biggest asset? He's sitting on the stalemate line between France and Russia...His biggest weakness? He's sitting on the stalemate line between France and Russia...meaning Germany has to tread very careful between two behemoths to avoid being crushed underneath them. His biggest

advantage is Russia is still relatively weak up north, although that could change if Russia can realize more gains in the Balkans. Germany is also counting on England being tied up with France or Russia or both but England could look to cut a deal with either F or R and move on Germany as well.

ITALY: For Italy the key is whether to commit to FIR or completely defect. It changes the whole game again if Italy attacks France, even though it is VERY slow to develop. Turkey and Austria CAN take Greece this Spring if they want to, and that's their leverage. Italy wins by making balance of power moves, so I'd probably go in with Austria and Turkey, but it really needs to happen now so that Turkey builds Ankara instead. Jonathan had the mojo going, so I think this is possible. I thought it was possible
LAST turn.

This was not a good year for Italy. He needed to take Trieste. He's in danger of falling behind France, and even Turkey got a build.

I agree with Rick, this was not a good year for Italy, especially in comparison to his chief rival--France. Italy's position isn't nearly as good as France's position and is taking far too long to develop. Italy needs to stop inching along and taking "safe" moves--he needs to break out of his comfort zone and take some chances or he'll soon find French units in home centers.

RUSSIA: OK, so Russia is big, it also is early. Potentially (everyone pig pile on RF) he is in real trouble. Certainly St. Petersburg is not held, that stray fleet is not in a good place, even if helped by France, and Munich is not held. If FIR holds, then potentially that is OK, but really isn't clear. As Peter stabbed ALL his potential close friends?

I don't get the retreat to Skag. A disband could have been followed with a useful army build and a peace with England. And he's got armies in Prussia and Munich?

You know, this position is so awful that I'm tempted to think that this 1-dot of Budapest is a fake.

Well, at least he's got a lock on the Black Sea.

Again I agree with Rick, but I also agree with Jim-Bob, Russia have disbanded that useless fleet and replaced it with an army either in StP or War. JB is also right about the Russians being all strung out...he needs to get his units together and decide where to place his emphasis..his one dot stabbing can't go on much longer.

TURKEY: I still don't count Jonathan out at all. I think the best deal he cuts is the Italy attacks France one. Maybe it still is a Bridge Too Far, but then I think he tries to convince Chris that the short term gain in Greece first is the way to go. Either way, I don't think Turkey is out any time soon!

Great year for Turkey. What to do next? Get an ally. Any ally will do. He seems to have pissed off some people, though, given how intently Italy and Russia are blocking the seas. Maybe Chris will work with him?

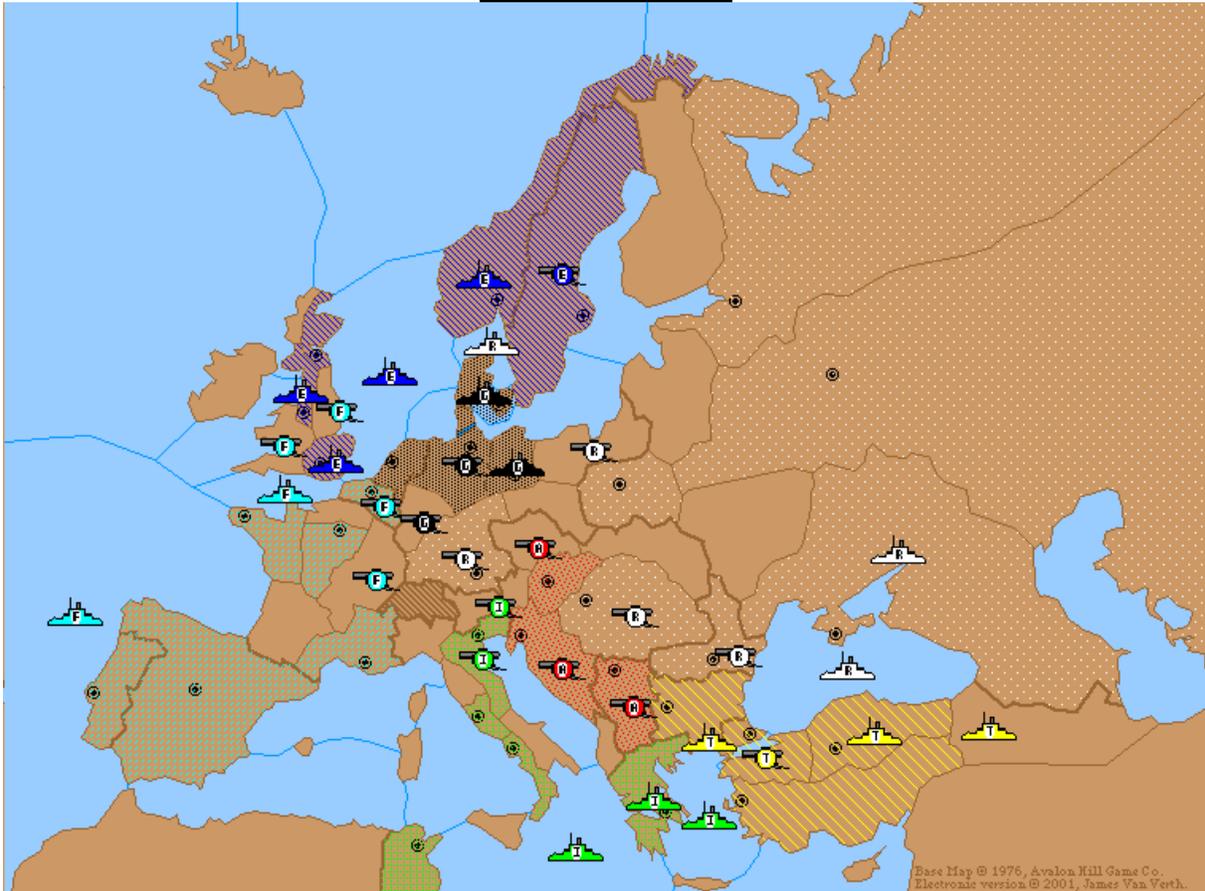
I'm less enthusiastic than RD or JB about having a 4 center Turkey in winter 1904...yes Turkey didn't get attacked this year however this appears more to do with Austria being a juicer target than Turkey, e.g. Turkey wasn't than the Bear but just faster than Austria who the Bear ate instead of Turkey....I don't see this big FIR alliance that JB sees since the primary target of I/R should be either A or T and I don't see them attacking either one together. Not much of an alliance if you ask me, more like they just happen to be working separately with France.

Don't be surprised if deals go completely topsy-turvy again this year.

I expect it to.

Since there are no firm alliances here, I'm not surprised by anything that happens in this game...

Winter 1904 Results



Austria: Remove A Albania..Has A Bohemia, A Serbia, A Trieste.

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

France: Has A Belgium, A Burgundy, F English Channel, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, A Wales, A Yorkshire.

Germany: Has F Berlin, F Denmark, A Kiel, A Ruhr.

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

Russia: Has F Black Sea, A Budapest, A Munich, A Prussia, A Rumania, F Sevastopol, F Skagerrak.

Turkey: Build F Ankara..Has F Ankara, F Armenia, F Bulgaria(sc), A Constantinople.

Winter 1904 Commentary:

Jim Burgess (**BOLD**)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Jack McHugh (Comic Sans MS)

So, we have an interesting Winter season, reflecting some likely hot and heavy negotiation.

Austria had to remove A Albania, but you hope that he did it working WITH Italy for next year. Italy has to be worried about the play out between ART and life.... HIS. If Austria just goes down meekly, then Italy is next.

Now, as Jack says, we also have the slightly surprising F Ank. This reflects the fact (lucky for Italy) that there is NOT a strong RT growing out of the Russian stab of Austria. But we have a mess of fleets down there. Turkey still has a SC Bulgaria fleet and Italy has three of them. Remember the old

dictum, Italy wins with armies, baby, armies. Italy doesn't even have an army placed to be able to back off and let Turkey and Austria knock the Russian back. But really, how far back? Since Gregory and a long term RF alliance is the real danger to the board, I might really take it all the way back to Gregory. That isn't as wild as you might first think. The risk, admittedly, is that Turkey has a LOT of fleets after he takes Sevastopol.... I disagree with Jack, this is a correctable problem if Italy and Turkey work together. The Army and the Fleet switch places via the Aegean convoy.

Not all that much to say about the adjustments.

Austria removed A Alb. That means he's not going to attack Greece while letting Russia rape his inland centers. Won't help him all that much.

Russia retreated to Skag instead of taking a build. That's surprising. He's only got 6 SCs and he's got three fleets, one of which is nearly useless. I would have disbanded this fleet and put an army in Moscow or St. Pete. Or even Warsaw.

Turkey built F Ank. That means he's not going to just build armies and play defense. Instead, he's intent on making futile attacks on the Black Sea. Well, that's not completely fair. If he makes a deal with Italy, he can slide the third fleet to Constantinople and retake the Black Sea.

I am completely baffled at the diplomacy at this point. Tactically, only France is in what I'd call a strong position. After that, the Italian position is decent, the German and Austrian positions are bad, as is the English position, while Turkey seems stuck. Russia's position isn't as bad as it seems if you just look at the forces. I don't know exactly what his plan is, but if he attacks Austria with Italian assistance, they will mop things up quickly, with plenty of time to deal with Turkey later.

Germany could recover, though it's hard to see exactly how, with so many possible enemies crowding him. England is in deep trouble. Austria will need a miracle.

Austria's removal of A Alb was completely expected but I found Turkey's build of F Ank to be somewhat unexpected.

Strategically Turkey's build signals the Sultans willingness to work with Italy against Russia but tactically it isn't very good in my opinion. Why? It leaves Smy/Con open to a stab from Italy's F Aeg (or Italy shifts all of his fleets on province to the east) but it still doesn't allow Turkey to take the Bla from Russia.

Despite this second Turkish fleet, I don't see the short term advantage for the Sultan as he still can't

take Bla with Russian F Sev. In addition, the Turkish fleet is on the wrong coast of Bul--south--to be in position to cut the Russian A Rum support of Sev.

I also don't see how the A Con is of any use to Turkey unless he can convince Italy to convoy it somewhere useful like the now empty Alb.

