

DIPLOMACY DIGEST-6

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With this issue, DIPLOMACY DIGEST joins a very exclusive set of zines: Ron Kelly is a subscriber and is neither a player nor on the standby list. That because we have neither. This zine is devoted entirely to articles, mostly reprints. This issue is another potpourri of misc. articles, this time with an emphasis on lesser known zines. The next issue will probably be a single-subject one on Villifications and Tirades. If this is a single issue it will be late; if a double issue, it will appear in late Feb, as a Jan/Feb issue. The reason for this is that I will be vacationing in England Jan 6-22. Right now I'm busy waterproofing everything that I own.

In a monthly zine, issue #6 represents a half-year of effort, a good point for some early stock-taking (any excuse will do, actually). The circulation, a robust 52, is remarkable because I do not have the two prime items which produce rapid growth in new zines: trades (I trade only with archivists, which right now means Walt Buchanan) and lots of game openings to suck the readers in. So I'm quite pleased. Further, virtually every new subscriber has asked that his sub start from the beginning. This is not only flattering, but most helpful, because my printer has a minimum press run of 100 (this zine, except for #2, has been printed by photooffset). I hope by the fall to be comfortably over 100. When that happens, and if postage and printing rates have not gone up significantly by then, then I should be able to cut the sub rates slightly, say to 11 for \$3.50. This would be done retroactively to the subscribers at that time. But that is some time off. Don't forget that the free issue offer of issue #3 is still open. The zine now goes out to six countries.

It is also gratifying to receive all the kind words people have had to say about the zine, especially issues #2 and #4/5. The single subject issues have received the most favorable comment, and if this continues, then I will place a greater emphasis on them and deemphasize the potpourri issues. It is also pleasing to hear that some old-time pubbers like Lipton and Smyth have opined that DIPLOMACY DIGEST looks like the best new zine of 1977.

New subscribers are Walter Luc Haas (Switzerland), John Piggott (England), Dick Trtek, Steve and Carol Colombo, Robert Lipton, Dave Caswell, Jonathan Berger, and Ron Kelly. I'd also like to thank the publishers of Fal Si Fie, Brouhaha, Paroxysm, and Ethil the Frog for their kind words expressed on my behalf.

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Rebus Sic Stanilus (Drew McGee, Apt 3-F, 100 Belmont Place, Staten Island, N.Y. 10301, subs \$4.00/year) has two outstanding features. One is a section of "Grand Tournament Diplomacy" (1976 Dhd) recently voted the outstanding variant. The other is his "Man of the Month" column. This one is from Vol 1, #8 (July, 1976) on part of the career of Aaron Burr. There are a number of elements here relevant to postal Diplomacy, such as the importance of timing, the problem of allies who get wet feet, the value of patience, the importance of understanding the personalities of the people you're working with, and.....well, you read it and see what you find.

A FOUNDING FATHER FOR DIPLOMATISTS, AARON BURR
by Drew McGee

In light of the American Bicentennial celebration, we have looked to the early decades of American history to find a man worthy of our monthly tribute. For July of 1976, we salute the third Vice President of the United States, Aaron Burr.

Unfortunately, we do not have time or space to fully recount the life of our first American master of intrigue. Here we will only present a rough outline of Burr's greatest gameplan.

In 1804, Burr's term as Vice President was coming to an end. Having stabbed President Jefferson more than once, even having tried to keep his fellow Democrat from being elected, he did not even try to retain his post. He ran for the governorship of New York, but owing to the efforts of Alexander Hamilton, who came out of political retirement to oppose Burr, he lost the election. Soon afterwards, Burr and Hamilton fought their famous duel, ending in Hamilton's death. Burr was charged with murder, and had to leave his home state of New York. His career appeared to be in ruins. But our Man of the Month had only begun his great campaign.

While escaping from New York, Burr began his plan. If the United States would not provide him with a position suitable for a man of his self-realized abilities, Burr would have to create a country of his own ((something which can be done in McGee's GTD)).

He was still Vice President, a post he would hold until his successor would take office in 1905. As such, he could command the attention of many people. This final political asset would be used to the fullest.

He approached the British minister to Washington, Anthony Merry, and met with him in Philadelphia. Quite calmly, over dinner, Burr proposed outright treason. If the British government would provide him with money, ships and munitions, he would split the United States in two, taking all of Louisiana, and perhaps Kentucky, Tennessee and Ohio, into a new country, an empire to be ruled by Aaron I. The British had grown apprehensive about the growing United States. The dismembering of the new power would be quite useful to them. Merry passed the plan on to London.

Burr then travelled to Georgia to finish planning and to avoid arrest. Then went back into session, without fear of arrest as the presiding officer of the Senate, he returned to Washington.

There, with amazing but brilliant gall, Burr approached Jefferson for a much needed favor. The President had to make a number of appointments to the territorial government of Louisiana. For reasons of pity, we presume, Jefferson appointed Burr's lifelong friend General Wilkinson as military governor of Upper Louisiana; John Prevost, Burr's stepson, as judge of the Superior Court of New Orleans; and Joseph Brown, Burr's daughter's brother-in-law, as Secretary of the Territorial government. Jefferson had freely given Burr a power base in Louisiana.

Having secured a good post for Wilkinson, Burr told him of his plan for a new country. To Burr's relief, the general agreed to participate. To his surprise, Wilkinson informed Burr that he had for years been a secret agent in the employ of Spain. It was agreed that Spain would be approached if England did not come through.

Burr returned to Philadelphia for another secret meeting with Merry. London was interested and wanted to know more specifics. Burr asked for £100,000 and two heavily armed frigates. In return Burr promised not only to neutralize the United States but also to attack Mexico and halt Spanish growth in North America.

While this was going on, Wilkinson secured the cooperation of Spain.

Feeling that the interest of London was enough to go on, Burr began to work. From Philadelphia, he journeyed to Pittsburg to begin his tour of the West to recruit rebels. In towns all along the western rivers, Burr stopped to mingle with the frontiersmen who

were happy to get their first look at a prominent person, even a former vice-president. Burr knew that duelling was not considered immoral in the west, and that Hamilton was very much disliked in the region. To some, for killing Hamilton, he was a hero. He also knew that the people felt that Washington was not representing their interest. The people cheered Burr, hoping that he might be able to help them if he returned to power.

On Backus Island, in the Ohio, Burr recruited Hermal Blennerhassett, an eccentric millionaire, to help raise money and purchase supplies.

In Cincinnati he met former New Jersey Senator Jonathan Dayton, there rebuilding his political future. Dayton agreed to join the plot, and was to become Burr's Prime Minister. He stayed in Ohio to build support and then moved to Washington.

Burr grew bold in Louisiana, in Natchez ((Isn't that in Mississippi??)) even addressing a crowd openly advocating that the West secede from the Union if it did not better represent them.

In New Orleans, he charmed the Spanish and French speaking communities, informing them that he had always spoken for their interests in Washington. Having no reason to know otherwise, and Burr being the highest federal official they had ever seen, the people were at once swept into a Burr fan club. The local merchants were approached openly, though individually, about the plan. With New Orleans as the capital of a new great country, they would all profit. The merchants gave greatly to the coffers of the plot.

Thinking that he had enough support in the west to bring the people around to his ideas of empire if he had the warships to back him up, Burr returned to Washington to complete arrangements with Merry. Sad news awaited him there.

The British minister informed the New Jersey born emperor that London had lost interest in the plan. Burr was shocked but did not panic. He knew that he was in trouble. Too many people knew of the plot for him to wait too long, but without the ability to make a show of force his coup would certainly fail. Rumors were circulating. People wondered why Burr had travelled to New Orleans only to return to the Capital. But Burr was undaunted.

At Burr's request, Wilkinson, then at his post in St. Louis, arranged for a conference between the Spanish minister, the Marquis de Casa Yrujo, Burr and Dayton. Burr's story for Spanish consumption was even more grandiose. If the new empire were to be established, Burr would march on Washington and install himself as the ruler of all of the United States. As such, he would be a firm ally of Madrid.

The Spanish minister bought it and wrote to Madrid for aid. The Marquis even made a loan to Burr so that he could live in style while Madrid responded. Six months later, Burr was again rejected.

Burr took all the pressure of waiting well, but Wilkinson did not. He began to worry about his own skin and to start to cover his tracks.

Without foreign aid, Burr again changed his plan. In 1806, Jefferson, reacting to rumors of Spanish invasion, sent Wilkinson and his army into the field. Burr decided that the regular army under Wilkinson and a private army under Burr would invade Mexico and seize it. This would allow for complete expansion of the west to the Pacific and for Burr to be a great and popular hero. With popular acclaim, Burr could announce that he had taken Mexico for his own state and had done it all against the wishes of Jefferson and the United States. To keep Mexico, the westerners would have to join Burr's empire.

The private army was put together on Blennerhassett's island, drilling every day under Burr's direction. The recruited farmboys had no idea that they were going off to Mexico for Burr's benefit and not that of the United States.

Wilkinson knew that the invasion of Mexico was not all so easy. For him, this was it. He had lost faith in the scheme. He decided to abandon Burr.

In order to avoid any suspicion of himself, Wilkinson wrote to Jefferson that he had heard of a plot for the west to secede. General Wilkinson gave his commander in chief only the broad outlines of the plot. If he had given more, the president would have wondered why his general had not acted sooner.

Jefferson immediately thought of Burr. He issued a blanket arrest order for federal troops to seize those "plotting against the United States."

Burr was captured after escaping a number of times. He was brought to Richmond for trial for treason.

It comes as a surprise to many that Burr was acquitted. It shouldn't. Burr was not only a politician, but also a very clever lawyer. Treason is defined in the Constitution (Art. II, section 3). It requires that two persons testify to one overt act of treason

before one can be convicted of the crime. With the exception of the Diplomats and his fellow conspirators, no two persons ever saw an overt act of treason ((It may well be that Jefferson acted too soon, not giving Burr enuf time to hang himself.))

Of course, Burr really now was ruined. The rest of his life was never as grand ((In fact, he spent several years of it in abject poverty)). He plotted, of course, but no one ever listened to him again.

Burr travelled to Europe, and then returned to New York after many years. In 1836, on Staten Island, one mile from the Offices of this publication, our Man of the Month went off to meet the great gamesmaster in the sky. Burr lost his life's game, but, oh, he had played so greatly!

What lessons did Burr give us? Of course, that treason rarely pays, and that having a few principles makes one easier to get along with.

We can't urge out readers enough to read Burr's life story. We had to leave so much out (Burr's founding of Tammany Hall, his plot to deny Jefferson the Presidency, his maneuvering for high rank during the revolutionary War, etc.). He was a real bastard, but you you'll love him.

Some Further Thoughts on the Key Opening

The Key Opening for Italy was examined in some detail in DIPLOMACY DIGEST #2. Key's original article was reprinted and an extensive look was given to two games which featured I-A alliances based on this opening. One of our subscribers, John Piggott, an experienced British player, has questioned the value of all this. In an extensive review of the first two issues of the zine, he states flatly: "No Austrian player with half a brain would permit this to happen." (Ethil the Frog #12(second cycle) page 16). Is this really so?

First off, it must be conceded that this is a very pro-Italian opening, where Austria takes the risks. It was, after all, in the all-Italy issue, not the Austrian issue. But John considerably overstates the case. I can think of at least one Diplomacy player with whom I (as Austria) would not hesitate to play this opening. I say this not because he just doesn't stab early in the game --- I've seen him do just that. But I think that he would find the ally-with-Austria option more interesting than the stab-Austria option. I also think that he would play the option which he finds more interesting. Such people are not unknown in postal Diplomacy.

A second circumstance allowing a prudent Austria to accept the risks of this opening is described in, of all places, John's Ethil the Frog #10 (second cycle), page 11. On that page is a quiz: "Know yourself through Diplomacy, by Dr Stab, Ph.D", which included this:

5 You are Italy and in Spring 1901 have successfully ordered A(Ven)-Tri and A(Rom)-Ven. Russia and Turkey have both left BLA vacant, and from Germany you hear that these two have already shared two victories and are widely believed to play a cartel. Do you

- a) Respond to Austria's plea to vacate his territory because you will be next in the firing line
- b) Continue to attack Austria
- c) Retain Trieste, but support Austria thereafter

The diplomatic situation above is a little more exaggerated than I need for my purposes. There are two other options which should be considered by Italy:

- d) Accept Austria's offer to convert Italy's attack into a Key opening
- e) Accept Austria's offer, but stab him anyway, all the more dastardlyly

Altho Austria may consider a) the best of his solutions, it doesn't deal with his eastern problems, and in particular it gives him no ally against Turkey. For Italy, c) is only a half-hearted measure, which weakens Austria, his ally, in a time of need. And a) and b) both fail to deal with the problem of the R-T alliance. While it's true that Italy's attack can be switched to a Lepanto, that opening is not advised when Russia and Turkey are strongly allied. The Key opening may well catch R-T by surprise and at the very least will completely bottle them up, until a northern country can be persuaded to attack.

Given that Turkey can be expected to move F Con-Aeg in the Fall and raise F Smy in the Winter, an immediate It F Ion - Eas will tie up the Turkish navy, reduce the pressure on Greece, and prepare the way for the Austrian fleet to move east. It is true that this is desperation ploy, but Austria more than any other country finds itself in desperate straits in 1901. Italy can choose option e) and often will. But if Italy is hostile, and cannot be dissuaded by fears of the R-T alliance, then Austria is completely doomed anyway. In this regard, it will be necessary to convince Italy that this A Tri - Ser move is not some ad hoc concoction, but an authentic form of Italo-Austrian cooperation. The well prepared Austria will whip out his copy of Key's article and send a copy to Italy for just that purpose.

Third, a really aggressive Italy can pull off the above in Winter 1900 rather than Spring 1901. Armed with We're-allied-against- Austria-do-you-wanna-join-in? letters from Turkey and Russia, Italy can put the hard choice to Austria: Its the Key opening or war. Given the choice between a risky alliance with Italy and a probable triple attack (it helps to send the letters along) many Austrias will opt for the Italian alliance, provided that Italy is firm in rejecting all other forms of cooperation, such as the Lepanto or "super-power" alliance.

Fourth, there is what Nozik refers to elsewhere in this zine as the "Experimental/ Personality stage", where players "tire of the traditional alliance" and try "formerly unorthodox types of alliances." And finally, John, a certain proportion of all Austrian players will only have "half a brain." For these.....

One last item. In the original article I had to leave the results of one of the games, 1974 DX, up in the air. I now have more issues of Dolchstoss. The Austrian-Italian alliance continued thru Spring 1910, but in the Fall, Austria stabbed his ally, possibly to keep up with England, who had been growing without significant opposition. By 1911, thanx to a GPO-induced English NMR, Austria was up to 17 centers, with a forced win, only to blow it with a miswritten order which cost him Kiel. After continuing for a while, the game suddenly vanished from the zine, and has not been reported in Everything. Piagot reports, tho:EAIdraw.

DIPLOMACY PUZZLE

((Many Diplomacy players scorn puzzles, but I think you'll find this one very clever. It comes from Tau Ceti Vol I, No. 5, and was presumably written by the Editor, Larry Dunning, 46 Holmesdale Road., West Midland, 6056 W. Australia. To my knowledge it is the only Australian Dipzine presently published. This is from the Feb 1976 issue))

France: A Bel, A Ruhr; England: F Lon, F Nth; Russia F Nwy, F Nrg. Other pieces are irrelevant and nowhere near the field of conflict. Russia and England have a very strong allinace (unknown to the other players), and England learns from Italy that France intends to capture Kiel and Holland by ordering: A Bel-Hol, A Ruh S A Bel-Hol this move, and then A Hol S A Ruhr-Kiel, A Ruh-Kiel. The Gamesmaster will interpret all rules literally. It is now Spring 1903, you are England and you wish to capture^{Hol} this spring!!!! How do you do it?
??

ANSWER--You will find that one of the rules..((Instead, I'll quote from XII, 3: If a fleet ordered to convoy is dislodged during the move the army to be convoyed remains in its original province and has no effect on the province to which it was ordered)). Thus:
Russia: F Nwy-Nth, F Nwg S F Nwy-Nth; England: F Lon-Eng, F Nth C Fre A Bel-Hol.

This means that the French A is convoyed, whether he likes it or not! However, since the convoy fails ~~the~~ the French A remains in Bel. Since the French A Has no effect on any moves in or out of Holland, the English F can then retreat to Hol.

((Larry also wrote Calhmer about this situation. Calhmer suggest that the French player should try to "brazen the thing out in argument", pointing out that "his move is a legal move by land; and there is no reason to suppose that it has to be convoyed is it also could take place by land; that is, the land movement has no innate superiority over land movement. But then the orders as a whole are ambiguous; however you can hardly require one player to produce a set of unambiguous orders, where he only writes some of the orders." He concluded: "I'm afraid we simply need another rule to cover this case". I myself have never seen this in play. I invite my GM subbers to write me as to how they'd rule, and I'll publish the results.))

Many Diplomacy players feel the entire issue of tactics is greatly overrated. They believe that after playing the game for a modest period of time, most can figure out all the tactical procedures themselves. It is certainly true that as wargames go, Diplomacy does not require a very high level of tactical sophistication. The following variant removes virtually all tactical considerations by symmetrizing the map. It comes from Logenbeek #14 by Michel Feron, who I believe is no longer publishing, and was undated.

PUREST DIPLOMACY

(This variant was designed by Roland Prevot, and may well be the first French Diplomacy variant. Names of the various countries were chosen in a Brussels restaurant, by Roland Prevot, Steve Plater, Gerard Memmi and myself, during the 1975 Brussels Con.)

1. All regular rules of Diplomacy are used, except as noted below.
2. There are seven spaces:

Churchill Land (Chu)	Maseru (Mas)	Calhameria (Cal)
Tulipe (Tul)	Eden (Ede)	
Eccles (Ecc)	Imryrr (Imr)	
3. Each space is the home center of one of the 7 players.
4. Each space is adjacent to every other space ((This cannot be done with a three dimensional map, but who cares? If you can't keep that map in your head, you're in trouble)).
5. Each player begins with one army on his own home province. There are no fleets.
6. Retreats are not allowed. A dislodged unit is annihilated ((No room for errors, folks)).
7. Victory criterion is ownership of 4 supply centers ((Adds some piquancy to the 3-3-1 situation, doesn't it? Notice that there is no draw criterion. I do not know if this omission was deliberate, but with no draws, this could last quite a while. Note that no person can hold out against the other two)).
8. First game year is 01 ((Real useful rule, huh??)).

((There it is. The golden tounge is all y'need in this variant. If any of my readers are interested in playing this dubious creation, let me know, and I'll try to locate a pubber. Seven of our subbers run variants in their zines, and if any would be interested, let me know.))

((Next item is "THE DIPLOMACY WIDOW" by Patricia Jones from Vol 1 #2 of "Lies, Deceit and Mefarious Schemes", a sprightly new zine from Jeffrey Jones, 1854 Wagner St, Pasadena Ca 91107))

I don't like to make waves but I don't think that I can keep quite any longer. I have taken all the abuse that I can stand. I have heard about all the oppressed minorities but I have yet to hear anyone speak up for the most underrated minority of them all, "The Diplomacy Widow". When I heard that my husband was going to get involved with Diplomacy I was all for it at first. I had just gotten over being a golf widow and I felt that with him playing Diplomacy at least he would be home for a while. Now I wish that he'd go shoot a round of golf.

It started simple enough. "I'm going to sign up for one game and see how it goes." (Heard that before girls?) "Ya know honey, one game moves too slow. Think I'll sign up for another. Wow, look at this! I just got seven zines in the mail and they all have openings. Which one should I choose?" Then I made my fatal mistake. I told him that I didn't know the difference between them so I couldn't advise him which one to choose. So what does he do? You guessed it, he signed up for all seven! It was down hill from there on out. The next thing you know I'm sitting at a typewriter while he dresses up like Hitler and dictates to me and he gets irritable if I go too slow.

If we are both home when the mailman comes he threatens to break my legs if I so much as make a move to the door. Then comes the onslaught. The pattern is always the same. First he makes some snide remark about how all of the mail was for him and that I didn't get any. Then he opens up a letter and reads it with an evil grin on his face and the next thing you know he is screaming at me, "WHAT KIND OF A FOOL DOES HE THINK I AM?" And then he whips out this funny looking board with a lot of wooden blocks on it, threatens the cat if see makes one move towards the board, and then he-

From CLINTON, 12 June 1975 comes the following article, presumably written by the editor, Steve Nozik

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT IN DIPLOMACY



I've been wanting to do an article on the development of cognition in Diplomacy for some time. Calhamer's recent series in The Pouch #'s 75 & 76 on "Ideologies in Diplomacy" has provided the catalyst for such a project.

To begin with, I am not a major postal player. I have played somewhat by mail, but the bulk of my experience comes from face to face (FTF) play, and it is from there that I generally draw my conclusions.

It seems to me that there are approximately four "stages" in the development of player style. For identification purposes, I will call them the following:

1. The Novice Stage
2. The Western Stage
3. The Balanced Board Stage
4. The Experimental/Personality Stage

The Novice Stage is the style of play of those to whom the game is brand new. It is characterized by wild, impractical alliance structures, such as agreements between 3, 4 or even more countries in the same area; which do not usually last more than a turn or two due to the vile deceit and multiple stabs which occur on every turn. There are no firm alliances, no strategy, and no such thing as truthfulness or trustworthiness in the complete novice stage.

I feel that the Novice Stage closely resembles the Hobbesian "State of Nature" (in that it is basically an every man for himself, game) because as newcomers to the game, the novice player is usually incapable of seeing any strategy that will lead him/her to victory. And secondly, I honestly believe that when players are instructed that lying, deceiving, spying and everything short of cheating is part of the game, they run wild. These type of rules are usually a new phenomenon in people's gaming experiences, and they are eager to test them out on their soon-to-be ex-friends.

After playing a while, the participants discover that alliances of two players can be helpful in beating the unorganized mob, and they also begin to discover the necessity of having a good reputation for trustworthiness. This precipitates the Western Stage. I call it the Western Stage for one reason; that is the prominence of the England-France alliance. During this stage, certain alliance structures seem to develop with a far greater frequency than others, and the most frequent of all is the English-French alliance with the desire of most players being to play France.

The reasons for the pre-occupation with the western countries appear to be basically sociological. North Americans derive their history from the history of England and France. We are heavily indoctrinated into thinking that Western Europe is superior to Eastern and Southern Europe, since we derive much of our culture and government from the West. Also we have a history of fighting two World Wars and a Cold War on the side of Western Europe versus the totalitarianism of the rest of the continent, which brings me to a further point about western alliances: England and France both are representative of the freedom and democracy schtick that North Americans can identify with. The reasons that players in the Western Stage like England-France alliances, are similar to the reasons why the U.S. regulated immigration from eastern and southern Europe, while not placing any barriers against western European immigration over a half-century ago. Finally, many beginners find it hard to escape the historical background in the game. England allied

with France in W.W. I. Therefore the only proper alliance is between England and France. There is a stigma about allying with "history's bad guy"--Germany.

This stage also sees the adoption of a standard set of opening moves for each country which are always the proper ones. An example would be (for France) A Par-Bur; F Bre-Mid; A Mar-Spa. These are ~~far~~ referred to as "standard moves" and become an almost predictable pattern with Western Stage players for Spring and Fall 1901 moves.

Now then, if this thesis is true, then why do players prefer to play France over England, if both the U.S. and Canada were former British colonies? Elementary my dear Watson. France is a land-power while England is a sea power. France does not have to waste time CONVOYING armies across bodies of water. Furthermore, France can march straight ahead into its enemies for a rich source of supply centers. England, on the other hand, must bend around the West side of the board, like a horseshoe, in order to gain its supply of centers. Northern Russia and the Mediterranean are both easy areas in which to be stalled. This necessarily means that in Anglo-French alliances, the French partner will win more often. Also ~~xxx~~ keep in mind the western stigma against Germany and then look at the board. France is in the more direct position to attack Germany, while for England it is much more complicated.

I believe that my conclusions about the western alliance are borne out in NADPS #1. The majority of respondents to the survey began playing postally in 1973 and 1974, which makes them relative newcomers to the hobby. The number one and two countries in terms of preference were (you guessed it) England and France. I was also shocked (at the time) to discover that that the England-France alliance was rated as high as second, in strength, and had the lowest standard ~~of~~ deviation of any alliance rated, showing a high degree of player agreement.

I personally think France one of the worst countries to play, due to its (many times) limited options. I might point out that in my earlier player days (I began playing FTF in '68, postally in '71) I felt exactly the opposite. It is my opinion that many in the hobby are still mesmerized by the western countries. It will be interesting to see what trends develop, as the game is introduced into other countries in Europe.

The third stage I have labelled the Balanced Board Stage. In this stage, the accepted "spheres of interest" concept, whereby the board is divided into East and ~~xxx~~ West spheres, is solidified. In this stage, the board resembles a balance scale with Germany, France and England on one side, and Austria, Russia and Turkey on the other, with Italy acting as the balancing point.

Actually, Balanced Board is not quite an accurate term, for there are alliance patterns that are still regarded as the only proper ones--especially in the East, where the Russian-Turkish alliance has become the only legitimate one, with devastating consequences for the rest of the board. The game has now become a set of combinations, either England-France or England-Germany against Russia-Turkey or on very rare occasions, Russia-Austria. The result is the immediate destruction of Austria, an Italy with no clear strategy (or ally), and a long series of eastern wins. The eastern wins seem to be due in part to the slight eastern advantage in units, but also Italy usually aids in the collapse of Austria in the Balanced Board Stage, which aids the Eastern juggernaut. The Balkan concentration of supply centers is nothing to sneeze at either.

The Balanced Board Stage is only ~~lx~~ balanced in that there are two firm allies in either sphere. In reality, this situation usually favors the East. I believe this is shown, again by the NADPS which put Italy in last place and Austria in second-to-last place in both preference and strength.

Boredom with the sameness of alliance structures is what leads players to the fourth stage or Experimental/Personality Stage. In this stage players who tire of the traditional alliance, attempt to inject a bit of new excitement by experimenting with inefficient and formerly unorthodox types of alliances. This is the reason, I think, for the current excitement over the France-~~xx~~ Germany alliance. I have also seen experienced postal players experiment with the Austria-Turkey alliance, and with an opening German Eastward offensive.

It was in the spirit of innovation that new opening moves were being experimented with, such as the Lepanto Italian move which revolutionized Italy-Austria relations.

Perhaps the greatest factor in this stage is that of the personality. It is misleading to imply that personalities play no part in earlier stages. They most certainly do. It is simply that during the Experimental/Personality Stage, experimentation with inefficient alliances requires the utmost in trust between allies in order to succeed.

It is here that Calhmer's concept of cartels of trustworthy players comes into play. It is from the standpoint of the Stage Four cognition of players that the ideologies of "win only" and "strong second" can be better understood. In Stage Four, the desire to play in an interesting game is placed above a "mere win". This may explain a large part of the motivation of "strong second" players, who appear to be largely very experienced players as well.

The Stab is the only barrier to experimentation, the building of a cartel of trustworthy players, and the enjoyment of strong second people. Ironically this trend may induce even greater regularity than the traditional alliances, hence greater boredom. Where will it all lead? Perhaps back to Stage One.

Much of my experience in playing Diplomacy was gained by playing regularly with a face-to-face group centered in Rochester. It is from this group that I draw much of my conclusions about Diplomacy cognition. It is hard to tell whether or not the stages I have spoken of have any correlation with the styles of play of postal players.

According to NADPS, the vast majority of active postal players began playing ~~partially~~ FTF before playing postally (48% began over a year before, 35% began within a year before). It would therefore seem to be a safe assumption that there would be almost zero stage One players, and that most players would be between late Stage Two and Stage Three, with only the most experienced players in Stage Four (a relatively small percentage of the hobby).

Were these assumptions true, there should be a large amount of sentiment in favor of the Russia-Turkey alliance, followed by the England-France alliance, followed by the England-Germany alliance. The country preference list in descending order should look like ~~this~~ this:

1. England (listed second by Stage Two players but listed first by Stage Three players due to its greater diplomatic flexibility, thereby edging out France for first.)
2. France (See above.)
3. Russia (Actually almost interchangeable with Turkey, but edging Turkey out again for greater diplomatic flexibility and units.)
4. Turkey (See above.)
5. Germany (Stage Two players may rate Germany as high as third, Stage Three players as high as second, though rarely.)
6. Austria (Austria isn't last because it has a slim chance for an alliance with Russia, but rated below Germany because it is usually crushed by Russia, Turkey and Italy.)
7. Italy (Rated last because it has no allies, or workable strategy in Stage Two or Three, and will always be a nuisance and a battleground.)

These predictions are supported by the results of NADPS #1. If there should ever exist a time when the number of greatly ~~ex~~ experienced players in the hobby exceeds the number of relative newcomers, there should be a corresponding rise in the poll results on the question of Eastern alliance strengths particularly involving Austria, and a fall of western alliance strengths, particularly England-France. While I am dubious about a rise for Italy, I can say quite securely that the degree to which it is proclaimed last may lessen in severity ((He was wrong)).

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goes into a fit trying to make me see why the Black Sea must be Russian. Oh, should I look away for a moment all hell breaks loose. "The world is crumbling at my feet and you don't care! What kind of a wife are you?"

But I guess it isn't really all that bad, it couldn't be. Since he started playing Diplomacy I have gotten pregnant. It happened the day army Warsaw moved into Galicia, whatever the hell that means. And finally I don't care what he says, Allan B Calhmer Jones is a crummy name for a girl.

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