



DIPLOMAG

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This is the bimonthly newsletter of the American Mensa Postal Diplomacy SIG, bringing hobby and SIG news to Mensans interested in playing Postal Diplomacy, the board game produced in the USA by Avalon Hill. Membership dues are \$4.00 per year for members living in the USA and \$5.00 per year for those living elsewhere. Please send all dues and inquiries to the Chairman.

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CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

Last October/November, in my first chairman's statement, I had bad news and worse news. In this, presumably my last statement, all the news is good.

We have recovered the S.I.G. records and funds from Glenn Overby. Glenn has extended his apology to the S.I.G. for this whole unfortunate affair. On behalf of the S.I.G., I gladly accept. Representing the S.I.G. in this matter was Keith Sesler for his tireless efforts in resolving this problem.

By now, many of you are aware that I must withdraw from Diplomacy, and other hobbies, as soon as possible. This is due to business pressure that is not of a short time nature. I owe a big thanks to Keith for stepping in for me on a number of problems. A graceful retirement has been made possible for me, due to his help.

Perhaps you have noted the analogy between myself and Keith with Ron Brown and Bruce Poppe. I hope you will remember this coming election that Bruce and Keith have already earned your support.

SIG STANDBY POOL

Last month, I commented that the SIG Standby Pool was an idea whose time had come. Little did I know but that you SIG members knew that before I wrote it down. The Standby Pool is alive and well, and was even before I wrote my plea for it.

The mechanism for matching volunteers with needy games is either complete or nearly so by now. A big Thank You for all those who have come forward. The SIG will be much better for it, and that makes me happy. Thanks again.

If you're going to do something tonight that you'll sorry for tomorrow morning, sleep late.

-- Henny Youngman

SIG Game NewsMensa # 13 (1980 KY) GM: Chip Charnley

Spring, '07, has been completed...Two draw proposals went down to defeat. Everybody's growing (yes, it's really 1907), except for Poppe's Italy and a France that appears headed into civil disorder. Austria-Hungary (Baty) and Germany (Brown) appear to be headed into a confrontation, while England (Hess) would like to gobble up those beckoning French provinces. Turkey (Compton) looks for southern gains.

Mensa # 14 (1981 AQ) GM: Keith Sesler zine: Manifest Destiny

Winter, '05 adjustments just in...Eric Strand's France and Ralph Baty's Russia dominate with 9 units each. Bringing up the bottom are Germany (Platt) and England (Reges) with 2 and 3 units respectively. Italy (Rick Young) and Turkey (Kevin Brown) are in the middle with 6 and 5 units. These two guys in the middle in terms of units may hold the balance of power, since it doesn't appear that any strong campaigns are going on at the moment. (Game was transferred from Migraine)

Mensa # 15 (1981 HR) GM: Ed Bapple zine: Migraine

Winter '04 completed, with France (Douglas) at 10 units and Russia (Brown) at 11 units. Each of these two built 2 units this season. All of the rest of the board consists of nations with four or fewer units. Since the two superpowers are at opposite ends of the playing field, it appears that they're going to try to blast away at their disorganized, non-allied opponents in a race to the finish, all of which assumes that their opponents don't get it together to exploit a central, compact position to hold them off.

Mensa # 16 (1982 I) GM: Ronald James Brown zine: Snafu!

In Fall, 1905, Paula Dodge's Turkey landed an army in England. She now has 7 centers, as does Keith Sesler's Italy. Dave Lincoln's Russia is leading the pack with 10. Germany, France, and England seem to be having problems holding off this triple-pronged attack. windy Windblad's Germany met with disaster by falling from 5 to 2. Mike Mazzer (England) and Robert Young (France) are holding on with 3 and 5 respectively.

The attached Bourse (variant) is reflecting the fortunes of the powers in this game. The Lira, Rouble, and Piastre are holding well above \$1.00, while the Pound, Franc, and Mark seem headed for zero.

Mensa # 17 (1983 V) GM: Steve Hutton zine: No Fixed Address

Most of the opening wishes came true in the Spring '01, with a stand-off in Piedmont and another in Burgandy being the only exceptions. A, I, R, & T are converging on the Balkans--looks like a real free-for-all. E, G, & one Russian unit are aiming for Scandinavia. And nobody likes France, bouncing him out of moves eastward on two fronts.

PLAYING ITALY

by Ronald Brown

Italy has four options in 1901. He can attack France, Germany, Austria, or Turkey. Let's look at each.

The attack on France used to be popular at one time, but now is very rare. To make it work Italy will have to pass up any builds in 1901, concentrating instead on getting his fleet into the Gulf of Lyon. German or English help will be required if he is to take Marseilles and his progress will likely be slow in the beginning. But, this opening has worked well in the past.

The attack on Germany also requires outside help, but Italy can afford to take Tunis in 1901 at least. He opens, of course, to Tyrolia, hoping that France will be in Burgundy or that Germany will be out of position to defend Munich. The Tyrolia opening works because it should be fairly easy to convince Germany that the move is aimed at Austria. That is also a drawback, as Austria may need a lot of reassurance.

A strong offensive against Austria will gain Italy the most in the short term. He can open A Ven - Tri, A Rom - Ven; or, better yet, A Ven - Tyrolia; A Rom @ Ven. He is almost certain of two builds in 1901. The drawback is that Italy will have to develop a lot of armies to grow through Austria, and hence will be vulnerable to both Turkey and France through the seas. Also, it can be difficult to move armies out of Italy, as any move to Tyrolia will be annoying to Germany and Piedmont can be bottlenecked. Often when Italy opens against Austria the real winner is Turkey who can take advantage of Italy's slow development of armies and vulnerability on the seas.

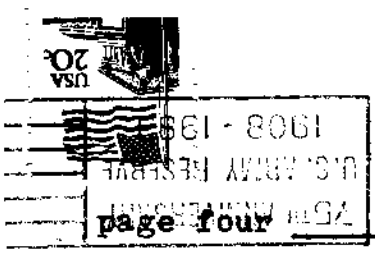
If Italy realizes that his destiny is to be a sea power, his real enemy becomes obvious: Turkey. The Lepanto, or Key Lepanto, can effectively remove this menace, as long as Austria is willing to co-operate but if France gets itchy to get into the Mediterranean, Italy could find himself in trouble. But, it shouldn't matter to Italy who eliminates Turkey, as long as it's done. Or, again, if Turkey develops as a land power Italy should be fairly safe, though it would only take a few fleets coming from Turkey to mess up his plans.

Italy has difficult choices to make in the beginning, but making no choice is the worst one of all. Many Italy's open "neutrally," content with taking Tunis while watching developments. In these cases Italy almost invariably winds up with four centres until the mid-game when his stronger neighbours decide it's time for him to go. Italy has to choose before Spring, 1901, and hope that his choice is the right one.

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More SIG Game News

Mensa #18 (1983-?) GM: Scott Hanson zine: Irskome

This game has filled, with the following assignments:
Austria-Hungary - Paula-Marie Dodge; England - Richard Benjamin
France - Kevin Brown; Germany - Graig Reges; Italy - Michael Keller
Russia - Keith Sesler; Turkey - Loring Windblad. Their first
deadline is occurring even as I type this report.

Proposed Mensa Variant #4

NOTE!!! All correspondence concerning upcoming SIG games should be
directed to the SIG Chairman (Ed Bapple), who is responsible for
assigning SIG game starts. ACHTUNG!!!

Proposed SIG variant games include:

- *Gusher, with some random chance in terms of the value of a supply center when it is captured.
- *Pride of Armies, which is a new variant which emphasizes the role of those ground-based things.
- *Abstraction, "the original Davis variant.
- *1885-III, a later version of -II, both of which have 9 players.
- *Zeus IV or V, which is a WWII scenario, played on a polar-projection map.
- *Blow-up, which allows the placement or disarming of one mine per player each game year.
- *Deadman, where each player's knowledge of the board positions is limited to the immediated vicinity of his units. (This game lends itself to being played by "flyer" rather than zine, because there's just not much public information.)

COMING UP NEXT TIME:

** More SIG Game News

** Rule IX "Dislodgement of a Piece Participating in a Stand-off" as it occurred in a recent game (Delayed from this issue due to lack of space!)

***"Sea Powers" by
Ronald James Brown