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OUT OF THE ARCHIVES

The following is the most vintage strategy and tactics article printed to date. It is based on some tactical considerations outlined by Allan B. Calhamer, the inventor of Diplomacy, in 1961. It is reprinted with his permission and that of John Boardman, the editor of Graustark since the article was first printed in Graustark #60-62 dated 15 to 29 August 1965.

THE TACTICS OF DIPLOMACY

by Allan B. Calhamer

The first two moves, of course, are usually devoted to the capture of supply centers which are not occupied at all at the start of the game. Typical results are as follows: ENGLAND: Norway; FRANCE: Spain & Portugal; GERMANY: Holland & Denmark; ITALY: Tunis; AUSTRIA-HUNGARY: Serbia; RUSSIA: Sweden; and TURKEY: Bulgaria. Belgium, Greece, and Rumania fall variously depending on the situation.

The game tends to reach a balanced state in which players continually shift their weight against the strongest; therefore, it is unlikely that any game will actually continue until it produces a winner. Normally we play for three or four hours, then discuss what we think would have happened if we had continued.

There have been many opening variations, as well as other concepts, developed in the course of play here. Normally, England and France will agree to leave the English Channel open on the first move. England will then play A Liv-Yor, F Edi-Norwegian Sea, F Lon-North Sea. If France violates the agreement, the Army drops down to London on the Fall move. Norway can still be attacked with one support. If France does not enter the Channel, the Army may be convoyed through the North Sea to Norway. The Norwegian Sea Fleet may support. If this action is unnecessary, the Norwegian Sea Fleet may go to the Barents Sea to prepare an attack on St. Petersburg. If France should move into the Channel on the Fall move, England raises a fleet, based on the capture of Norway, in London.

If Russia wishes to play an anti-England game, she will order F St.P-Bot and A Mos-St.P. The other two pieces will be deployed according to purely southern considerations. On the Fall move, the Fleet is ordered to Sweden and the Army to Norway, which adjoins St. Petersburg at the top of the map. This action compels England to tie up two pieces in the attack on Norway. If Russia occupies Sweden, she then repeatedly attacks Norway with either Army or Fleet, supported by the other. This ties up two English pieces. Now if either Germany or France attacks England, she may collapse.

If Russia prefers a southern game, the Moscow Army goes to Ukraine on the first move. The northern Fleet still moves to Sweden.

Normally Russia and Germany agree that neither will move pieces into such places as Livonia, Prussia, Silesia, and the Baltic Sea. Then if either should attack the other, he would have to enter these areas first. The areas are not supply centers; so at no material loss the attacked party gets warning, and may raise the appropriate pieces or scramble back into defensive positions, as the situation permits. Such a "self-enforcing" agreement has a tendency to last a long time; but you cannot count on a player accepting realities and playing accordingly in the absence of an agreement. He may not understand the situation. Also the mere absence of such an obvious agreement may raise suspicions which may provoke an attack. If these two countries get into an early war with each other they usually get

tied down, without either accomplishing anything, and then they are both very vulnerable to attack by other countries.

A typical German deployment is F Kie-Den, A Ber-Kie. The Munich Army may do various things. If the Russian A War has not attacked in the rear, the Army in Kiel occupies Holland in the Fall. If the Russians should attack in the Fall, Germany would simply raise units in her path. The fleet in Denmark may be used to attack Sweden in the Fall. This costs Germany nothing, since she will win either Denmark or Sweden, but not both, in any case; but it can prevent Russia from taking Sweden. Germany may use this threat as a bargaining lever to secure the neutralization treaty with Russia. In any case, if Russia attacks Germany on the first move, Germany will certainly play the attack on Sweden on the second move, to keep Russian strength down and to keep Russia away from Denmark.

On the southern Russian frontier, a fleet in the Black Sea exerts a great deal of influence. Occasionally an alliance succeeds in which Russia and Turkey agree to leave this space open. The Russian Fleet is ordered to Rumania, to pick up the supply center. A Turkish Army is ordered from Constantinople to Bulgaria, and the Fleet to Constantinople. Thereafter the fleet proceeds to the Aegean Sea. Often this alliance is offered by an experienced player to a beginner, however, and then promptly broken. Other experienced players should warn a beginner against this during the first diplomacy period. Russia and Turkey can often make a sound alliance in which both order their Fleets to the Black Sea move after move, thus assuring that it will remain empty, which their Armies attack Austria-Hungary.

In this situation it is sometimes possible to pretend that each country has stabbed the other in the back, and mask the fact of alliance for a few moves, after which both countries may be much strengthened by spoil from the Balkans and Austria-Hungary. Russia may request that Turkey raise fleets primarily or entirely, to insure that, after Austria-Hungary is beaten, she will expand against Italy rather than Russia.

If Turkey wants an anti-Russian game she may order her Smyrna Army to Armenia on the first move.

Italy normally spends the first two moves with her Fleet on the acquisition of Tunis. She may proceed through either the Tyrrhenian or Ionian Sea. Normally she chooses the Ionian, because this gives her the option of foregoing Tunis for a couple of moves and attacking Greece or supporting either Austria-Hungary or Turkey into Greece.

If Italy wishes an anti-Austrian game, she may play A Ven-Tyr and A Rom-Ven (the "Obrioni Attack"). If these moves succeed, in the Fall she has the option of single attacks on Vienna and Trieste, or a supported attack on Trieste alone. Austria may gamble on some such Italian deployment, and leave Trieste undefended on the first move, in order to dash into the Balkans. If this gamble succeeds, however, she must in any case send sufficient defense back to Trieste on the Fall move, as an open supply center next to an enemy piece is an invitation to attack. If Italy has an inkling that Austria is going to make this gamble, she may order A Ven-Tri on the first move. If this move succeeds, then with normal follow-up play Austria-Hungary will collapse quickly.

Also, if the Obrioni Attack succeeds, Austria will normally collapse quickly, because of her surrounded position and wide-open landward frontiers. The trouble with this result, for Italy, is that she cannot ordinarily hold her gains in Austria. With the Adriatic separating her advance forces from her newly raised forces, she is quickly dispossessed by two other Powers which have been strengthened by the downfall of Austria-Hungary: Russia and Turkey. Turkey particularly, due to her secure corner position, rapidly becomes a menace to all Europe. Therefore, the player of Italy usually does not attack to bring Austria-Hungary down.

An early Italian attack on France, however, usually doesn't work. Italy sometimes plays a waiting game with her armies, to see which side will weaken. Occasionally she has made a tenuous attack on Turkey with Fleets, or a picaresque invasion of Germany through Tyrolia. This last, though seemingly unsound, on one occasion succeeded in recreating the Holy Roman Empire in toto.

An alliance between Austria-Hungary and Italy is often very strong, because it cannot be taken in the rear, unless other Powers, particularly France and Turkey, recognize it at once and make a very strong naval commitment in the Mediterranean. It is, however, subject to internal problems, because of the vulnerability of Venice and Trieste to the ally, if these are left undefended.

Austria-Hungary normally agrees with Germany that each will stay away from the other's frontiers. They commonly agree that neither shall enter Bohemia or Silesia. If these two Powers fight early in the game, both are likely to be taken in the rear and destroyed. Austria

has a difficult game at the outset, but if she gets off to a good start she often gets a strong game. Usually she will play A Bud-Ser in the Spring of 1901. This piece may attack Rumania, Bulgaria, or Greece in the Fall, without fear of failing to be in a supply center in the Fall, and if she gets a stand-off she will slow the growth of another Power. There is a variety of ways of playing the other two pieces. Often the Fleet goes to Albania and the Vienna Army goes to Trieste. This permits F Alb-Gre with support from Serbia in the Fall. If Italy and Russia have not invaded in the North, Austria will raise two Armies and get a good game. If the Russian Warsaw Army has invaded Galicia, the Trieste Army may be ordered to either Vienna or Budapest, leaving the other open, and hoping to outguess the Russians. Shading one's guess can become psychologically and technically a deep proposition.

If Austria suspects that Italy will attack Tyrolia, she may order A Vic-Tyr, F Tri holds. Now if the Russians invade Galicia, the Austrian Army which is still in Vienna (due to a stand-off in Tyrolia) and the Army which moved Bud-Ser in the Spring, may both be ordered to attack Budapest. They stand each other off, which keeps the Serbian Army in place, so that Austria may build after the move; they also keep the Russian Army in Galicia out of both Vienna and Budapest. Austria has substantially no chance of capturing Greece, however, if she elects these Spring moves. Also, if Italy does not attack Tyrolia, the Vienna Army unexpectedly flies into this province, after which it is out of position to make the self-stand-off in Budapest. Thus, if the Serbian Army is ordered back to Budapest in the Fall to keep the Russians out, it may unexpectedly move there, and Serbia will not be occupied after the Fall move. Thus Austria cannot raise a new unit.

A solution to this dilemma is for Germany and Austria to agree both to attack Tyrolia in the Spring. They stand each other off, neither moves out of position, and Italy is kept out of Central Europe entirely. If Germany and Austria agree to do this, they should notify Italy during the first diplomacy period. Italy will be more likely to choose an anti-French deployment if she knows that the roads to both Germany and Austria are blocked.

A normal French deployment is F Bre-Mid, A Par-Bur, A Mar S A Par-Eur. If England has not played F Lon-Eng, the French Fleet proceeds in the Fall to Portugal. An Army is ordered Mar-Spa. If Italy has entered Piedmont, the order is A Bur-Bel. Generally France would like to prevent a German thrust into Burgundy, which ties most of the French pieces down to defense of supply centers. If France wants an anti-Italian development, she may play the above Spring 1901 moves, except A Mar-Spa. On the Fall move, the Spain Army occupies Portugal, and the Fleet moves Mid-Spa (South Coast). If Italy did not move to Piedmont in the Spring, the Burgundy army must be told off to go to Marseilles. If the result is a stand-off, again a Fleet may be raised there, but if the result is a move to Marseilles, raising a new unit there is not allowed.

There are other interesting first move developments which arise from time to time, and choosing among early developments is often based on positional considerations which flower later in the game. Strategy is still evolving, too, because no idea cannot be anticipated and adapted to in a subsequent game. In any case, diplomatic considerations can override the technical. Alliances sometimes hold together in situations in which neither ally is adequately defended against the other. Sound technical alliances founder on distrust, or are pulled apart by false advice or tempting offers from the outside. A country that has "lost the diplomacy" and finds itself fighting superior numbers can rely on tactics only to delay the issue while it tries to save itself diplomatically.

ARCHIVES LISTING

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