

Politesse

The newsletter of FTF Diplomacy serving the BaltoWashFredricksburg
corridor for nearly 40 days and 40 nights Issue 42 December 1982

GREETINGS

Many thanks to those who responded to Politesse One by telephone and by mail. Your appreciation is appreciated, your opinions are carefully considered and your COA's are well-noted. Politesse exists to facilitate just such communication within the local FTF Diplomacy community. Let us know if you need players for a game you are hosting or wish to join a game or have a report of a recent game. Also...send us your thoughts on the burning issues of the day confronting Diplomacy enthusiasts. With this issue we launch an entirely new department, GOTTALETTER, whose heading is, we expect, self-explanatory.

- Ed Whobel

GOTTALETTER

Playing Diplomacy at Dipcon was frustrating. Russia had a clear lead (10 SC to 5 SC for the next best) but was unwilling to pursue a victory and settled for a draw. Other games have resulted in two or three players agreeing to a friendly draw and wiping out the opposition. I feel that the purpose of Diplomacy is to have totally independent countries only interested in furthering their own interest and winning the game. What other multi-person game has such a high percentage of shake hands, let's go home draws? Nothing is worse than wandering into a random game where two people have decided in advance to ally and draw. Second worse is playing all night to no conclusion.

Suggestion: FTF Diplomacy games should have a set time limit (for example, Fall, 1910) and the country with the most SC wins; if two countries are tied, then the third most SC wins (unless there is a tie for third in which case the fifth most wins), etc. This gets rid of nothing worse and second worse, while leaving some hope for the lowliest player to still win the game with clever diplomacy in the last round.

Your example HADAGAME is ridiculous, only 6 years were played (no adherence to move time limits), and a three-way EFG draw would horrify any student of history. Ironclad alliances simply should not exist. Under proposed suggestion, France is the winner if Fall '06 is the agreed end-date, and if one SC is taken from France by Turkey, then Russia is the winner! See, you can leave early and still win!

Hopefully, non-nationalistic leaders who roll over and play dead to help another country will become obvious and such leaders can be deemed unsuitable for a new term or a new game.

--Louis Newman, Oakton, VA

As a victim of the EFG alliance in that "ridiculous" (nasty epithet: don't forget the title of this newsletter) game, I'm in a position to agree that such an alliance borders on illegality. Even worse, it's boring. Where were the doubts, the adrenalin, the deception? Where was the excitement of The Stab?

Why did English armies carouse in Liverpool and Edinburgh rather than ravage Brest and Paris when the French were delayed in

Italy? Why did the leader of a proud German nation become a supplicant to London and Paris before the first move?

Surely a three-way draw is less of an accomplishment than a two-way or a victory. But it shows more foresight than losing. AIRT might have joined together to stop EFG- the alliance was obvious from the beginning- but we didn't. The survivors might have refused the draw or, as Austria suggested later, might have publicly agreed to a two-way draw and let the triumverate deal with the population problem in its way.

I must take exception to your appeal to history in your criticism of an EFG alliance, however. The game of Diplomacy is only incidentally related to the Europe of 1901. In fact, it is grossly misrepresentative when viewed in historical terms; only the names have remained the same.

We had a timer and a certain degree of adherence to the limits. We could have done better in adhering to the time limits, though, and we might have played a few more turns. Perhaps we were short on patience, imagination and discipline, but we did have excellent food and an abundance of heartening malt beverages. I hope our readers will comment on the issues you raise, including time limits, the curtailment of games, the worth of a draw and game-long alliances, as well as your specific suggestion.

--EW

HADAGAME

Myers number 12/82E was held December 4, 1982 at the home of Ed Fahrmeier in Baltimore, MD. We nearly recruited Mr. Myers himself for this game.

- A - Ed Fahrmeier
- E - Marty Ward
- F - Matt Ellis
- G - Ed Wrobel
- I - David Cannon
- R - Hank Becker
- T - Steven Ralston

Countries were assigned by preference list and shoe box.

The Supply Center Chart

	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09
A	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	7	8 *
E	5	6	5	5	6	8	10	10	8
F	5	5	6	6	6	7	6	6	6
G	5	4	5	5	5	3	2	2	1
I	3	4	3	2	2	1	0		
R	5	6	6	6	5	5	2	1	1
T	5	5	5	5	5	5	8	8	10 *

*Two-way draw

Swe Russian civil disorder
Tun after Spring '07

Of note in this game were the two more-or-less triple alliances (EFG and RAT), the almost random play of the Italian, the steadfastness of the eastern bloc, the bravery of the French in their repeated annihilations in Italy, the treachery of Albion and the delicious sandwiches I brought.

*
Of all the possible alliances, that of Austria with Turkey seems to ensure a cramped, frustrating game for both in spite of a solid alliance. I seemed to be eternally struggling to gain or

regain Venice while the Turk took even longer to land in Apulia (a good place to go because of the name). That the sun should emerge from the clouds right before sundown was truly a surprise. Almost full-time ally Russia deserves some glory for a couple of good guesses against the black and blue gang before his untimely demise. (The convoy to Kiel will be remembered.) To France and Germany, my regards for a memorable struggle, and to Germany a few words of advice: leave a fleet in Holland and don't sic the Italians on the Austrians. To Italy I say: learn to be predictable. Finally my thanks to England whose perfidy stirred up a great wind that blew away all those gray clouds so the sun could shine.

--Ed Fahrmeier, Austria

Turkey had a quiet time in development. The Balkans were divided peacefully with Turkey annexing both Greece and Bulgaria. The Black Sea became a neutral buffer as Russia was extremely reluctant to be aggressive in any direction. Austria-Hungary (A-H) concentrated on the Western Front, leaving Turkey to develop its own Mediterranean campaign.

Turkey was held to five supply centers since the Sultan was content to conquer Italy slowly. The "role of the box" (also called the "roll of the box," Italy's unique decision-making mode - ed. note) gave Turkey a few set-backs but the Sultan's tactical errors also contributed to the stable Turkish position. Eventually, Turkey conquered Italy, which was greatly expedited by a French retreat from the mid-Mediterranean. Turkey's ally, A-H, triggered the retreat with victories on the Western Front coupled with Russia falling into civil disorder.

The key to the Turkish/A-H victory was the strength of the game-long alliance. Trust was apparent and reinforced when A-H vacated Serbia but Turkey never took it. Turkey had the opportunity with an Army in either Albania, Bulgaria, or Greece every turn. In my opinion, the trust that developed, despite numerous Western suggestions that Turkey attack not only Serbia but Rumania and Sevastopol as well, cemented the game-long alliance and led to the dual victory. As always, contributing to the alliance's strength and therefore, to the victory was that a sea power (Turkey) was allied with a sole land power (A-H).

--Steven Ralston, Turkey

Thank you, gentleman, for your statements. Ed and Steven have been a dominating force in Myers games recently. Ed has participated in two draws in two games and Steven is three draws out of three after an early elimination as Russia in the first Myers game.

WANNAGAME

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Some Saturdays free, limited transportation.

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HAVAGAME

Your editor will host a game Saturday, January 9, Noon. This will be the Myers game of 1983. Be there! Write today for a reservation. Dale City is conveniently located near I-95 about twenty miles south of Arlington.

A Modest Proposal

Let's take a hypothetical situation. Suppose you are hosting a Saturday afternoon Diplomacy game and have invited six fellow enthusiasts from near and far. Player one arrives, then players two and three, player four and then player five. The appointed time comes; anticipation builds as the players craftily list their preferred countries in secret. It's 12:15. Player 6's preference list is composed by his friends drawing wooden blocks in sequence. Half past noon. A decision must be made; there is no seventh.

Surely you won't scatter after so much preparation. (The notices were printed weeks ago, the refrigerator is filled with food and drink, the collective travel time amounts to several person-hours.) You have too many for bridge, probably a good number for poker; you can't play poker properly before sundown. And besides, everyone came for Diplomacy.

Well, let's see, we could leave Italy in civil disorder from turn one. Curiously enough, Italy was at the top of the missing player's preference list. But that skewers the game so much—such an easy target. Well, we could each write orders for Italy every turn and randomly choose the set to followed. Not a bad alternative, it gives you something else to bargain for, i.e., your set of Italian orders. But that brings Lady Luck into an allegedly luck-free game. Bad taste in the mouth.

I've got an idea! Let's pretend Italy is being played by a computer. Let's program Italy's moves. How about S '01 the armies hold and the fleet goes to the Ionian, F '01 the armies provide mutual support and the fleet takes Tunis, W '01 build fleet Naples, S '02 same for the armies and the fleets move to Ion and Tyr, the armies mutual support again and the fleets mutual support in the Fall unless there are foreign units adjacent to Naples and/or Tunis. If Naples only or Tunis only, have both fleets move to the threatened province. If both are threatened, have one fleet move to each. If either fleet succeeds in moving, it must remain in the province until eliminated. Fleet Naples could support Army Rome. Removals are random within these priorities: unit farthest from an Italian-owned center, secondly, unit farthest from Italy. Retreats the same way, first to a supply center, secondly to a province adjacent to an owned center. Also, no foreign units may enter Naples, Ion or Tyr or Tunis before F '02. Think that's any better?

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