

God Save The Zine

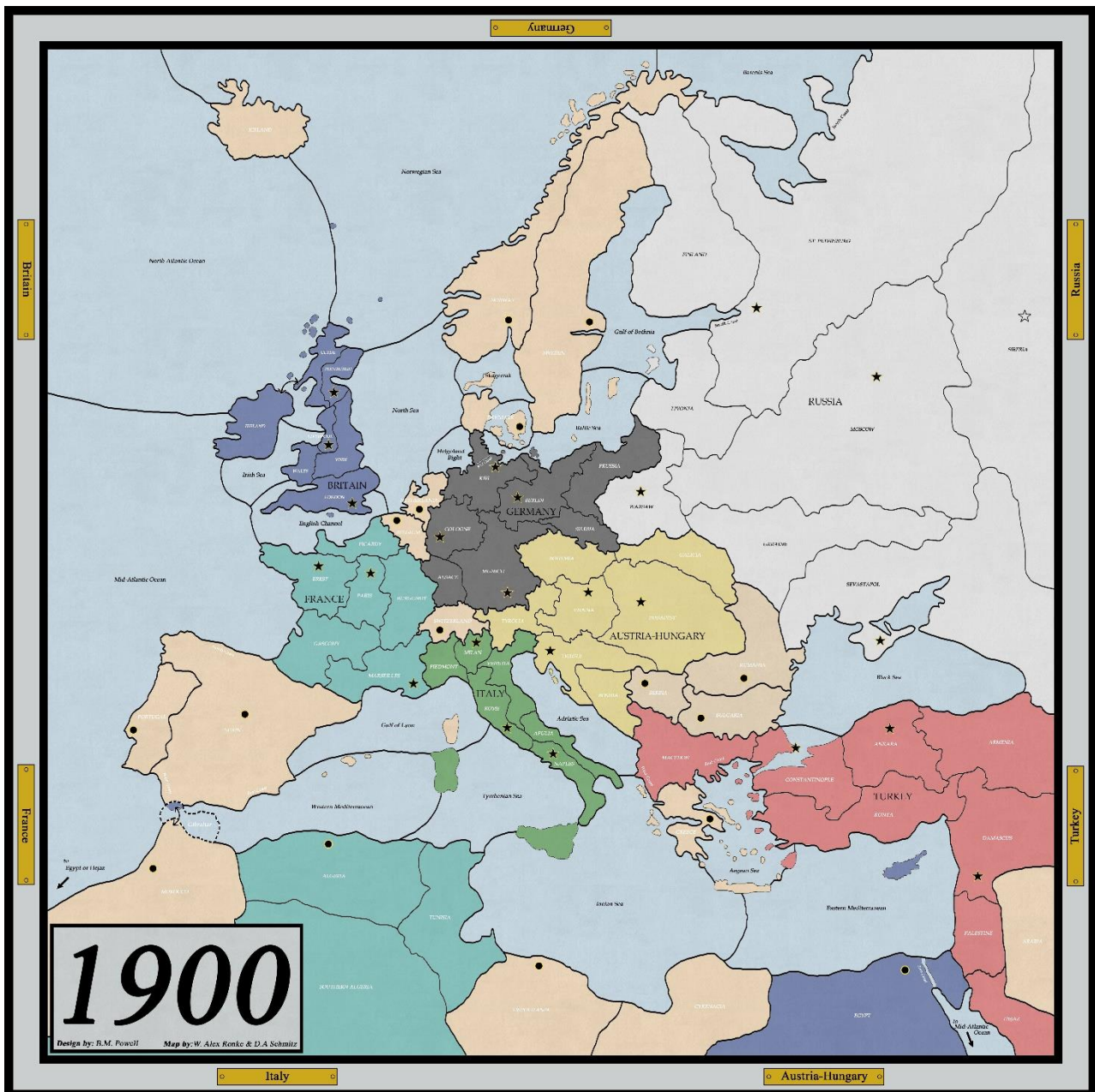
Issue 2

This is the house zine for www.diplomacyzines.co.uk from:

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DEADLINE

Friday 31 March 2023



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My Bit

Welcome to issue 20f **God Save The Zine**, an attempt to do a little to sustain the existence of zines as an adjacent to the hobby of playing Diplomacy. Issue 1 seems to have been generally well received, with the circulation now around the 120 mark - which is a far better result than I ever expected. Thank you all for displaying an interest.

Thanks particularly go to everyone who has contributed to this issue, Baron Powell, Sandra Bond, Toby Harris, Chris Tringham, the late lamented Conrad von Metzke and everyone who has sent in a letter (or orders). The more contributions the better - please keep them coming.

This issue there is a bit of an improving on regular Diplomacy and technical rule interpretation vibe going on, distinctly nerdish. Sorry about that. Things just kind of develop and take on a life of their own. There is an awful lot of dense reading material as well. Is this all too much - let me know. I really should try and include more pictures to break it up.

The success of the zine has meant that I need to rethink the idea that Cannibalism could be an all-reader game. Even taking into account those that didn't want to participate, 90ish players is far too many. Therefore, there is a proper waiting list with a target number of 8 players (one for each coastal space) and a maximum of 16. Players who expressed a positive inclination

are on the list (but of course you can change your mind).

The news of the death of Conrad von Metzke is yet another reminder of the relentless march of time. I was a member of the second generation to discover this game - those before me were a good 10-20 years older. So, I suppose it is only natural that we are losing more and more of them. These days I hesitate to ask after an old friend on Facebook in case I discover that they have died without me noticing. And sometimes it is very hard to find out what happened to people you were once in regular contact with. It would be nice to have a memorial page somewhere to remember those that have gone.

I was trying to think of a theme for next issue - something wild and wacky. I was considering **television** - maybe Diplomacy variants based on a TV series. A couple spring to mind. Is there one that you think would work but has never been tried? There used to be 13 ITV regions in the UK, how about ITV Diplomacy? No, that's silly. Let me know if you have any interesting ideas and maybe we can come up with something. Until next time!

Poetry Corner

Pretty Fly For A White Guy

by Sandra Bond

How hard it is for me to make my way!

I am not of the fancy or the fine,

To join with whom is my avowed design;

Such is the nature of the world today.

I must be seen, I shall be seen, I will;

Into the streets I'll go. The bloods I see,

And fain I wish they would take heed of me,

Yet fear that if they did, they'd use me ill.

Yea, further still my efforts to refine,

My features to enhance, I'll be tattoo'd,

With stark design and ink of nature crude;

O, let the churl err not in its design!

I'm conscious of what's what, and who is who,

All notwithstanding of my skin's fair hue.

International Zines Seen

S.O.B. 281

S.O.B. is a web-based zine also available as a PDF download from Chris Hassler. Chris describes SOB as a zine for unusual postal games, and that it most certainly is. 14 waiting lists for games such as Terraforming Mars, Puerto Rico, Machiavelli, 4000 AD (great game) and History of the World and lots more. Having played many of these excellent games FtF, my mind boggles at how some of the more complicated ones can be played postally - but looks like great fun and with a committed readership. Contact Chris at cerberus@sob-zine.org.



back-of-the-envelope 19

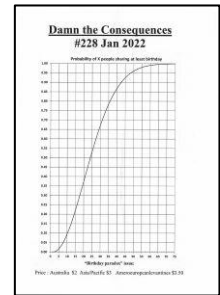


Tom Howell is an old hand at producing a games zine and **back-of-the-envelope**, with its description of life in the rural idyll of Washington State, has bags of personality. What other zine would have articles written about the correct way to shovel snow, or the pitfalls of about buying a replacement pickup truck? Tom runs a variety of games, with lists open for Diplomacy, Dominion, Dream Mile, Eat Me!, RR and others. Contact Tom at off-the-shelf@olympus.net

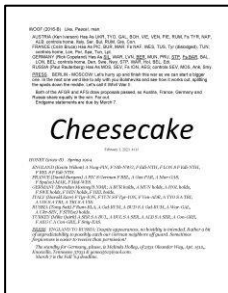
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Damn The Consequences 228

One of my few paper zine trades, **DtC** comes from Brendan Whyte all the way from Australia. DtC has a whole host of different games available - I counted 18 different waiting lists open. Plenty of old classic games available (Sopwith, ManEater, RR, BB) and some I'm less familiar with. Only 1 needed for Sopwith! One of the games Brendan is trying to get started is Beatlemania, which was once (surprisingly) commercially available. Looks great, but I don't really have the time to play at the moment. Interesting bit in the letter column about the obscene price of printed academic books - \$500 AUD not being uncommon. Looks like the whole idea of a library being a place where you can access physical books will soon be in the past. Presumably all libraries will one day be closed and replaced by online servers? Contact Brendan at BWHYTE@nla.gov.au.



Cheesecake 414

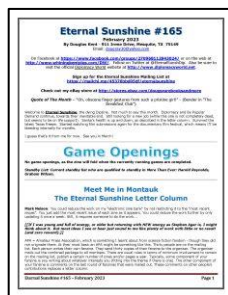


I am filled with awe at any editor who can keep a zine going for over a 100 issues, let alone one who has passed the 400 mark. As one of his games has just finished, Andy has lists open for Regular Diplomacy ran to 5-week deadlines. Issue 414 has a GMing quiz which I am not going to try to answer at the risk of embarrassing myself. Contact Andy Lischett at andy@lischett.com

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Eternal Sunshine 165

It is a source of great sadness that just as I start this zine, Doug Kent announces that he is running Eternal Sunshine down to a fold. Always with a great letter column and interesting film reviews (that do inspire me to search out some films). Andrew York runs a subzine called Out of the Way, which I hope continues. In it Mark Nelson claims he doesn't collect cooking books despite owning 60. Sure. Just like I don't collect unused notebooks... Tell Doug he's mad to fold at dougray30@yahoo.com.



UK Diplomacy Archive

Additions

The following zines and variants have been added to the UK Zine Archive (www.diplomacyzines.co.uk) since last issue:

- Albatross** 26-27; **ATU XVIII** 8-9; **Bloodstock** 159-161; **Bohemian Rhapsody** 2, 4-6, 10-11; **Borealis** 53; **Cut & Thrust** 219; **Diplomat** 9; **Dolchstoss** 131-140; **Filibuster** 18-20, 34, 37,

39, 42. 45. 47-51; **Fury of the Northmen** 6, 11-16, 22-24, 26-31, 117; **FWTDR** 96 98 188-189,-191, 193-194, 198-200, 206, 208, 210-215; **Gummiballs** 11-13; **He's Dead Jim!** 20; **Hopscotch** 203; **Lokasenna** 2-6; **The Norns** 13, 15; **Obsidian** 121, 173, 177, 288; **Ode** 233, 243-248, 253-300, 303, 434; **Perfidious Albion** 1-39, 43-53; **Perspiring Dreams** 1-44; **Puppet Theatre News** 37, 44-61; **Putty Riffo** 1-39, 47, 50-52; **Pyrrhic Victory** 1-30, 59-109; **QLA** 46-48; **Ripping Yarns** 3-4, 23; **Sauce of the Nile** 7; **Tangerine Terror** 20, 52; **TCP** 184-192, 195-199, 201-207, 216, 221; **The Ring** 40-41, 43-44; **Variable Pig** 105-107, 199; **Variant Openings** 1; **War Bulletin** 30, 47, 50; **Watch Your Back** 47-49, 51-52; **WIMM** 49

(ao01) Claudian Diplomacy; (cn01) Cline 9-Man Diplomacy II; (cn04) Cline-9 Man Diplomacy III; (cn05) Cline 9-Man Diplomacy IV.1; (cn06) Cline 9-Man Diplomacy I; (cn08) Cline 9-Man Diplomacy V; (cn09) Cline 9-Man Diplomacy IV.2; (cn10) Cline 9-Man Diplomacy VI; (cn11) Cline 9-Man Diplomacy VII; (cn12) Cline 9-Man Diplomacy VIII; (ec01) Chinese Diplomacy; (fc01) Chronicle; (hb08) Centenary; (lc01) Central American Diplomacy; (pw03) City-State; (qp01) Cold War; (rb30) Catastrophe Diplomacy; (rg06) Character Diplomacy; (rg14) Character Diplomacy II; (rg15) Character Diplomacy (Batyville); (rm03) Coast-Running Variant; (rm64) Cabinet Diplomacy; (rm75) Cabinet Diplomacy II; (rm77) Cluster Diplomacy; (rs26) Cartel Diplomacy; (rs48) Chaos Diplomacy; (rx25) Code Duello; (rz03) Catspaw Diplomacy; (sb01) Cities In Flight I; (sb02) Cities In Flight III; (us02) Capitalist Diplomacy; (us07) Capitalist-Dippy; (us08) Capitalist-Dippy II; (uu03) Cat Diplomacy; (uu11) Carthage; (vb02) Circle Variant; (ac11) The Conquerors; (be01) Conquest of the Land; (cb57) Contretemps II; (cm10) Croatia Diplomacy; (em16) Conflict in the Middle East; (en01) Coup In Canberra; (gf25) Cthuloid Diplomacy; (gh01) Colonia I; (gh02) Colonia IV; (gh03) Colonia V; (gh04) Colonia II; (gh05) Colonia III; (gh06) Colonia II-15; (gh07) Colonial Winters; (gh09) Colonia VI; (gh10) Colonia VII; (gh11) Colonia VIII; (ls01) Continent I; (ls03) Continent II; (mc04) Crusadomacy; (pa01) Collapse of the Dual Empire; (rb18) Cryptodiplomacy I; (rb52) Completely Insane Diplomacy; (rb61) Corner Diplomacy; (rb84) Crowded Diplomacy; (rg12) Cosmic Diplomacy II; (rm70) Crazy Whacko Heptadiplomacy; (rn26) Covert Diplomacy; (rs06) Confewshun; (rv01) Complot; (rv11) Cryptodiplomacy II; (rw01) Colonisation; (rw05) Colonisation Diplomacy II; (sg06) Cosmic Diplomacy I; (sg16) Cosmic Cluster; (uu04) Colonial Variant; (wc02)

Conquest of the New World II; (wc03) Conquest of the New World III; (yg03) Colour Diplomacy; (me05) The Known World

Diplomacy News

If you would like a weekly email newsletter of all that is happening in the online Diplomacy world, then I heartily recommend that you subscribe to the Diplomacy Briefing. Go to <https://www.diplomacybriefing.com>. I freely admit that some of the material here has been derived from this excellent hobby service.

In episode 116 of their Diplomacy podcast (<https://diplomacygames.com/noam-brown>) Kaner and Amby interview Noam Brown from Meta about all things you don't know about Cicero, the AI who excels at Diplomacy. The guys also discuss getting face-to-face games in, their plans to attend the upcoming World Diplomacy Championships in Bangkok and an unconventional strategy to be "open and honest" while playing Diplomacy.

The February edition of Deadline from the Diplomacy Broadcast Network can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=awe4FdYo0Gw>. David Hood brings us all the latest news from the world of Diplomacy, including a fitting tribute to the late Conrad von Metzke with Doug Kent.

The Diplomaticon is an interesting Diplomacy blog from Mal Arky (great name) and you can find it at <https://diplomaticon.com>. In a recent post Mal puts forward the suggestion that maybe 24hr deadlines aren't the optimum way to play Diplomacy. I wholeheartedly agree! 24hr deadlines limit the people who can play to those whose lifestyles permit, namely people with rather more free time than is usually available to someone holding down a job or raising a family. And it encourages semi-Gunboat play whereby people fail to communicate as broadly with the other players than they should. That's why we need a full range of options, fast and slow.

Brandon Fogel has become the new Virtual Diplomacy League champion with a 13-center Russia after 1907. The game itself can be seen at <https://diplobn.com/%20game/?GameID=16193>



Conrad von Metzke (1944 – 2023)



Conrad and Jean

Conrad's full name was Conrad Friesner von Metzke. As he once wrote "I'm really sorry about that ungodly name of mine, but you gotta blame my parents, Ross von Metzke and the former Elizabeth Friesner, who made me seem like a refugee from a dark and draughty East Prussian castle, complete with walking stick and monocle, whereas I am in fact merely one of the two tallest publishers ever known in the postal or on-line gaming hobby. The other was Lewis Pulsipher of, I think, Michigan, who was exactly the same height as I was, because we measured ourselves together at DipCon in Chicago 1973, and nobody could tell the difference (except he was heavier whereas I was a stick figure). We were almost exactly two metres in height. I'm not anymore; I have no idea if he is, as that was the only time we ever met."

Conrad was one of the founders of the Diplomacy hobby, editor of **Costaguana** (which he started way back in 1965 – the hobby's 9th ever zine) and a past contributor and editor of **Diplomacy World**. In fact, he came very close to being the founding father of Postal Diplomacy in that he tried (and failed) to get a game started in 1962 (the year before John Boardman managed it with **Graustark**).

In the early days of the hobby Conrad was well-known for playing Austria. His favourite opening was A(Vie)-Tyr, F(Tri)-ADR, A(Bud)-Tri. Some claim that the poor statistics for Austria in the early days of the hobby are due in part for Conrad's penchant for both Austria and this opening.

Conrad folded and restarted Costaguana a few times but kept it going for much of the 1980's

when it was one of the best zines around in the US hobby (winning the Runestone Poll in 1986 and 1987). After another break Conrad ran a subzine in (and later edited) **WIMM?** until 2020.

Conrad said that he'd ran so many zines over the years that he couldn't remember the names of half of them. Recently Conrad had been running a few games under the banner of **Zargonia**, but he announced his retirement from running games in 2021 and had been struggling with his health for over a year. Despite that, Conrad was still emailing his games chums right up to Christmas day a few weeks ago. A delightful and funny guy. Sleep well, Conrad.

Hobby History

First Games

By Conrad von Metzke

When I was asked for this article describing my first game of Diplomacy, my initial reaction was, "Nifty! That'll be a snap, I can hammer that one out in half an hour!" And down I sat, and opened Word, and then...

I sat. And I sat. And I sat. And after rather too much more of that, I began to worry, and creaked up out of the chair, wobbled into where my wife was reading and said, "Dear, did I forget my herbal memory supplements tonight?" And she smiled, and replied, "Ah, the delicious irony of it, that that should be the specific thing you've forgotten..."

So. Apparently, it's going to take just a wee bit more hammering than I'd expected. But let's be fair; it was 46 years ago! That's before many of you were born! That's before some of your parents were born! So allow me please a small bit of your time as I attempt to figure out which drawer I put my early Dip memories in, and then sort them out from all the other crap I've piled on top in the intervening two score and half a dozen...

It was the early sixties. The very early sixties. So early in the sixties that there remains some doubt that they were actually the sixties yet. (This would make some sense if you'd been there and could now look back with a semblance of nostalgia.) We had John Kennedy as President. Canada had John Diefenbaker as P.M. We got to chuckle that we had the charismatic guy, and they had the dour old dud. (A few years later, we'd get Richard Nixon and

Canada would get Pierre Trudeau, and they got to gloat right back at us.) No one had walked on the moon, there were no cell 'phones to misuse, nor computers to take over two thirds of our waking lives...

But what we did have, brand new and just waiting to be discovered, was Diplomacy — "The Game of International Intrigue." In 1961 the inventor, Allan Calhmer, secured a deal with a small Boston firm, Games Research Inc., to manufacture and sell game sets in limited retail distribution, and also by mail. The latter was achieved by means of classified advertising in "intellectual" magazines of the day; and that's how I found it, by reading a small notice in Saturday Review (anybody remember that one?) offering to ship the game post-paid for (I vaguely recall) about \$8.00.

And what a perfect time it was for me to find such an offer! I had just started college and was desperate to find something to do besides actually attend class. I had made a few new college friends, most of them involved in the Political Science department (despite that I was a music major) and with a special interest in International Relations. We were young and idealistic; Vietnam hadn't started to escalate, and most of us somehow naively imagined that "negotiation" might prove to be the defining word of the decade. (Sadly, it turned out to be "napalm" instead.) So I clipped the ad and showed it to one of my new friends — one who actually had a checking account! His name was Rodney C. Walker, he sent for the game, and about three weeks later he and I and a few others whom we'd bamboozled, met in the International Relations Laboratory at San Diego State College, and learned to play.

The first of our actual games (as opposed to putative 'training sessions') probably happened at Rod Walker's home; the I.R. Lab was too busy with actual students to be used for the length of a game. Rod and I took turns hosting our games for some months, but as he owned the only game set, he got to host more often. He paid for the game, he saved the gas money. Fair enough. (Besides, his parents' home was two stories; mine was just one. We got to use an entire floor at Rod's.) A bit later, when gathering seven people began to be difficult (some lost interest, others — gasp — had other things to do in life), we moved the games back to the I.R. Lab at the college and started trying one-season-per-day games. In May 1962, when the college year ended (and Rod Walker graduated, entered the Air Force, and took his game set with him), I bought my own game set, recruited other

friends to try it out, and got an entirely new group going. (That meant my house; college was out of session. My parents were thrilled.)

I also attempted, by way of keeping in touch, to start up a postal game with Rod Walker and others, some of whom had also moved away. The attempt failed; in fact, not a single turn was actually played, all we managed was a player list and a couple of "come on, guys, send your orders!" letters which were unanswered. But despite that it went nowhere, it remains the earliest effort to play Diplomacy by mail that has yet been identified — June 1962, more than a year in advance of the first successful game run by Dr. John Boardman of Brooklyn. (No artifacts from that first attempt have survived, I'm sorry to tell you; there is no museum, do not try to book tours.)

All of which is just ever so wonderful, I know, but the more perspicacious amongst you will have noticed that there has not yet been any real discussion of my first game. One passing reference is rather an empty shell of a reminiscence, n'est-ce pas? But, well, er, you see, there's a small difficulty. Not only hasn't there been any such discussion, I fear there ain't gonna be any. Because, O The Shame, I simply cannot remember! We played too many games. We were insatiable. We were addicts. We were Demonically (Diplomatically?) Possessed. And after a while, the games we played all tended to blend together into the equivalent of one huge banana smoothie, from which individual components can no longer be separated. I am so very sorry for this failure of specificity. But, at a rough guess, you'll live.

Still, detailed recollection or not, I do know that in aggregate — though I sure as hell wasn't very successful in college at this stage - I well and truly learned more about Diplomacy (The Game of International Intrigue) than any six people actually need to know, and apparently, I've gone on to become a Legend In My Own Time, hobby-wise. This is unlikely to get me into the Britannica or Who's Who, nor has it engorged my retirement income in any way, but I have to admit that it's quite nice really to come in contact with a newer hobbyist and have them write, "Why, I've heard of you. You're a Legend In Your Own Time!" Wow! That's an ego-boost to the highest degree there is!

(But I wonder why nobody ever mentions "why" I'm a legend?)

Reprinted from **The Diplomatic Pouch** (Fall 2007)

Letters

Kevin Wilson

OK, being a Brit, I have to ask, scotch or bourbon? I'm into my second bourbon of the evening so that's what's driving the query.

SA: Always scotch - preferably a nice single malt - hopefully Laphroaig.

Kevin Wilson

A peat guy! Not so much my preference. If I go scotch, it's Balvenie or Glenmorangie or Oban. Oban is about as close to smoke as I get. Oh!! Forgot Scapa! I like that too. But, bourbon is first!

Doug Kent

Hahaha first critique: you don't insert hyphens into long urls! www.diplomacyworld.net not www.diplomacy-world.net

SA: Damn.

Peter Northcott

Thanks for issue 1. Really fascinating to read. Oh my gosh. Takes me back! The only zine I still receive is **Hopscotch** which is quite a different animal - and no Diplomacy. And given that I haven't played Diplomacy for about 40 years it was quite bizarre to recognise at least 4 of the folk involved in your first gamestart.

SA: Yes, but a bit reassuring surely. I hope we can find many more of the old folk still around - but my ideal would be to get at least some readers under 50...

Toby Harris

Many thanks for the postal copy of **God Save The Zine**, which gave me an opportunity to read it cover to cover last night.

Given that Diplomacy was such a huge part of my life it came as some amusement when (after 21 years of marriage) Sital piped up "What's that you're reading?" It says rather a lot really, having to explain what a postal Dip zine is, as it has been such a long time since receiving one.

That said, going forward please could I just have the pdf version via email. That's not to judge anyone who wants a paper copy (and I fully understand why some will) but I turned my work into a 100% paperless organisation in 2008, with HMRC being the only paper floating through the business these days; whereby their paper is quickly scanned & shredded. I try to be

as green as realistically possible; three garden water butts, solar panels, cavity wall insulation, only heat one room during the day, recycle where possible, minimise car journeys, lots of home growing etc.

SA: Now, there is a real debate about whether a paper copy is more or less green than an email. Many organisations, notably banks, try to pretend that it is more "green" to get rid of paper statements, when what they really mean it is cheaper for them and allows them to outsourcing menial banking work to their customers. For a website which gives you an alternate view on what is really "green" take a look at <https://www.twosides.info>. They have been very successful at taking banks to the ASA over greenwashing. However, I completely get that there are real efficiencies at being digital as a business.

So it is with some sadness that (having been read in full) that my issue 1 copy of **God Save The Zine** has now been shredded. And whilst in years gone by this fact may have been reported in **Smodnoc** with an element of glee, today I can proudly say that my shredder has just been emptied into the composter and (in February) said compost will be used to help support the growth of this year's crop of garden flowers, fruits & vegetables. So, I am sure this summer's tomatoes & chillies will be extra tasty & spicy thanks in part to your zine! Which links rather well to ...

SA: Well good luck with the tomatoes - at least you might have some. For non-UK people, at the moment there is a shortage of tomatoes and peppers in the UK due to bad weather in Spain and Morocco, Brexit and our idiotic supermarkets not been willing to pay producers more.

Could I also ask not to join your all-reader Cannibalism IV game. It sounds like a lot of fun but I've just joined up for a couple of games already and would prefer to stay focused on just those few, rather than spreading my time too thinly. That said, any left-over scraps from the numerous carcasses (as they arise) would be most welcome in my composter too.

SA: Cannibalism didn't really work out, as I didn't really think I'd get so many subscribers on board. Having 100+ players is a non-starter.

Alex Richardson

Thanks for sending me this first issue. It's a lovely mix of nostalgic bits and new enthusiasm and I look forward to seeing what you can do with it in future. (I note, too, that it keeps up

your habit of not starting a zine without a Dip gamestart -- well done!).

SA: The one bit of advice I always used to give to someone wanting to start a zine was to get a gamestart first. If you don't have a gamestart you have no urgency to produce a second issue. Once you get a rhythm going, more subscribers should come. But that was in the old days.

Your contacts list is also pretty impressive: Will Haughan and Mike Benyon are a right couple of dinosaurs, in the nicest possible way.

Your bit about the advantages of paper as an information medium reminds me of something I read years ago in 'The Everything Store', a book about Jeff Bezos and Amazon. If the staff there have anything important to put to their boss, they write it out on paper, rather than use a pdf or a PowerPoint slide. Bezos also finds it easier to take in and retain information that way, apparently, but it's a touch screen future for everybody else...

I'd say at first that the superiority of paper media might have something to do with hand-eye co-ordination coming into play, but then of course you're holding your phone or tablet while reading the screen.

I wonder, then, if the newness of the electronic media is somehow acting as a sub-conscious distraction? The smartphone isn't even 20 years old; the home computer only 40; the television about 70 (in its post-war, widely available version).

The printed book, however, has been knocking about for nearly 600 years, while the book in its manuscript codex or scroll form is centuries older still. Assuming that we want to receive our information through reading, and are not dyslexic, then using a printed book is by now as utterly familiar as drinking tea out of a cup.

SA: The surprising thing for me was the memory encoding bit of the research – holding a bit of paper in your hand just massively improved recall. Which is why I always discouraged my kids from revising from a screen.

And I don't worry about how to use my cup, or whether my neighbour has got a better cup than me, or how long it will be before I have to buy a new cup because the manufacturer has decided that they will no longer be supporting the old one...

SA: Old formats are a real pain. I have a friend who recorded a few LPs in the late 80s, early 90s. He has all his original master tapes on

DAT. Now he can't use them as they technology is obsolete.

Dane Maslen

Your comments about the differing extents to which people absorb information from printed and electronic media were interesting but given that the majority of my reading these days is electronic, I hope that I run counter to the norm. To some extent, however, I've long prioritised learning where to find information rather than learning the information itself. In my days as a computer system manager, I tended to read the various manuals not to learn how to do things but to learn what things could be done so that at a later stage I'd know where to look when it became apparent that I now needed to do something I'd read about. These days the required skill is crafting the appropriate internet search and then being able to evaluate the various hits for reliability.

*SA; My memory is rubbish these days. It is amazing how much I have forgotten. To give you a very silly example, recently I was uploading some issues of **Puppet Theatre News** to the Archive. A con report of PolyCon (from 1978) caught my eye. In it Pete Mearns said "Back in the "Select Lounge" the more discerning were... enjoying excellent curries (apart from Stephen Agar who succeeded in dropping his beef curry on the floor – it was such a nice carpet as well)." You'd think I'd remember that wouldn't you. Nope. Not a flicker of recognition. Mind you I may have done it deliberately so as not to let on that curry was far too scary for me to eat at the tender age of 17. And of course, that was 1978 – now I can't remember what I did yesterday.*

Alan Parr

Stephen: many thanks for issue 1. As ever, I may not understand the technicalities of Diplomacy, but Diplomacy zines make much the best reading.

What a very interesting finding, that readers assimilate better from paper than via a screen. I'm sure there are lots of caveats, but that certainly feels a realistic observation. However, since I guess neither of us is too bothered about long-term retention of the material in **GSTZ** or **Hopscotch** I reckon it makes sense to make the trade a purely electronic one.

SA: There's still something about paper. Maybe I have a fetish?

Jonathan Palfrey

Cannibalism seems an interesting concept for people who like that kind of thing, although it's another game of deceitful negotiation, which I prefer to avoid if possible.

Railway Rivals is a game that suits me well. It involves occasional negotiation, but usually amicable and not deceitful. Stabbing people at Railway Rivals probably isn't profitable enough to justify the damage to your reputation, why bother?

SA: I suppose there aren't that many negotiation games around, where players promise each other things and then can go back on them. As most games involve taking turns, I guess that makes "deals" less easy to implement. Can anyone else come up with mainstream examples - I am not a widely experienced games player.

Thanks for your zine reviews, quite interesting as I'm long out of touch. The only zine I've seen for years has been **To Win Just Once** from Paul Evans, which may be off your radar as it doesn't run Diplomacy games. Paul reviews a very wide range of board games (and beers) and runs games of En Garde, Railway Rivals, and one or two other games. It's a well-made zine, downloadable as PDF from <https://www.pevans.co.uk/TWJO>.

SA: TWJO is an excellent games zine with a great track record. Paul has been kind enough to send me many issues of TWJO for the Archive, though I have not yet sorted them all out. Hopefully soon.

In answer to your question, I've had the Yes album **Close To The Edge** for most of my adult life, and I like it more these days than I used to. Last summer, greatly daring, I ventured to buy another Yes album (**Fragile**), although unfortunately I can't expect to have another lifetime in which to get accustomed to it.

I still listen to quite a lot of the same music that I was listening to in the early 1970s, although I've accumulated some newer music to add to it, and indeed some older music that I wasn't aware of then. I've also accumulated an assortment of non-Anglo-American music, although not as much as you might expect from my travels.

SA: Music is a very personal thing. Some people don't really relate to music at all (which is amusing if they get invited on to Desert Island Discs). Others just like classical. More often, people just like what they heard between 15 and 25. I'm a bit like that, but I do make a positive

*effort to buy new music. For example, this month I bought Lisa O'Neill's new album, **All Of This Is Chance**, but you have to like modern Irish folk music to get in to that one. I also bought Judge Smith's new CD, **The Trick of the Lock** and I don't even know how to begin to describe it. **Fragile** is probably one of Yes's most accessible albums, but I always preferred **Relayer**.*

Toby Harris

Not wishing to come over all Columbo, but if you were to name your Diplomacy games after punk singles then it would "respec" the speccy" - Neil loves his punk music and I can highly recommend the Stranglers first ten 7" titles (1977 - 1979) as highly appropriate names for Dip Games.

But forget the Stranglers ... there are loads of amazing bands from that era to choose from. Even today John Lydon is attempting (quite reasonably imho) to represent Ireland in the Eurovision song contest. And this weekend I will be attending a Birmingham party to see "The Wingmen"; a mix of characters from the Damned, the Ruts etc. "Decent rock" music lives and I love it still.

SA: Live music is something special, though I am less keen on vast stadiums where the performer is either a tiny dot or you just have to watch them on a screen. In recent weeks we have been to see Al Stewart, Colin Hay and Suzanne Vega. Unconvinced that Rebecca really liked any of them - but I did.

Jonathan Palfrey

I'm pretty sure I was receiving **Dolchstoss** in 1977, so I would have read The Department of Dirty Tricks before, but only the beginning of it rang a faint bell. Memory has never been one of my strengths.

However, I remember CompuServe, which I used from 1991 to 2001, mostly via the very useful TAPCIS program. In 1991 I was in Sweden, but moved to France in 1994, then Spain in 1997, where I got married (at the age of 43) and have remained ever since. My son Marc is now 22 (!) and works for a French software company in Barcelona

SA: I used to have a CompuServe account. But I have no recollection at all of when or how it ended. Did it just disappear one day? And how did I get here? Doug must remember...

Doug Kent

I played in **The Armchair Diplomat**, and I was Editor of the variant co-zine **The Eccentric**

Diplomat for a few years. **TAD** was for regular Diplomacy games, and **TED** was everything else. I realized while I read through this article how old it was, even in Compuserve terms, as soon after I joined you no longer found Diplomacy in the GAMES section, but rather PBMGAMES. I believe I have about 300 issues of **TAD** in my zine archive; most of the ones I downloaded have long ago been lost. Back then we still made sure every game was registered with the Boardman and Miller Number Custodian, and likewise that end-game reports were submitted.

SA: Which is how it should be (though sadly isn't anymore) and a great intro to...

John Marsden

Amongst all the other things I've never managed to stop doing, I still issue Boardman Numbers. Admittedly that is all I do; I don't keep track of them or record results in any way.

So your gamestart is 2023BB. Two Diplomacy games in one month hasn't happened in years.

SA: Well, I'm going to go for broke and try to get a third game started! I was going to say that it goes to show that "the fat lady hasn't sung yet for postal Diplomacy" but then considered that any half-decent sensitivity reader would probably delete the word "fat". However, as I am most decidedly fat myself (clinically obese even) then maybe it's a word I am still allowed to use? I don't know, it's all getting very confusing.

There was only one Diplomacy start that I knew of in 2022 and three in 2021. So, this year could set recent records! However, sometimes uncertain situations come up. I'm now wondering whether I should retrospectively award numbers of **Last Orders!** games, having just discovered them. Discuss,,,

SA: You absolutely should. Let's recreate all the Diplomacy stats zines of the 70s and 80s. Mind you, they might be a bit short.

Toby Harris

When considering Zine reviews these days, what can anyone possibly say about the likes of **TCP**, **Diplomacy World** & **Ode**? They have ALWAYS been here. And that much demands respect from all. To me, they are like my Indian in-law elders. Respec'. Others have fallen by the wayside but these guys have delivered every month, every year. Despite personal tragedies and deeply upsetting times. These three guys are like demi-gods.

And frankly Sir, you have some catching up to do 😊 But I reckon you can make up that ground and keep the rabble entertained.

SA: Yeah, that isn't going to happen. I have a track record of quitting every 4 or 5 years. I have no stamina.

Andy Lischett

On house rules, I've just been working on a GMing quiz for **Cheesecake** and one of the questions is on accepting late orders. I usually accept them but worry about naive players divulging orders before the game is adjudicated. The main problem I've had with accepting late orders is that one player frequently submits orders up to an hour late, and I feel as if I should NMR him to teach him a lesson.

As for your houserule 4.5, only in rare cases will I warn a player of an impending NMR: when it may really mess up a game, as in 1901. I don't want to baby-sit players, and they have a right to mess things up. Their disasters are someone else's opportunities.

Also, giving yourself the discretion to warn an NMRing player introduces the chance of favoritism, whether you intend it or not. *"Should I or shouldn't I remind that #@%&*! who voted for/against Brexit that's he's about to NMR? Oh, look! It's time for The Benny Hill Show!"*

SA: To be honest I will always warn a player before I NMR them these days. Players are too far and few between to lose one by accident. Ah, Benny Hill. I wonder what a Sensitivity Viewer would make of him? I think I'll put on Ernie on the hifi.

Tom Howell

Speaking of archives, I probably still have every Diplomacy hobby 'zine I ever received. It's not as extensive as, say, the Hoosier Archives were, but my ex did say part of the reason she divorced me was she didn't want to have to deal with my 'stuff' after I die - and a significant fraction of my 'stuff' is the Dip 'stuff'.

SA; I read this to my wife and she said "Absolutely!"

Baron Powell

I was pleased to see your 'zine. I absolutely loved the Postal Hobby and was sad to see it go. Forums like Discord have their advantages, but for me they lack the qualities that made the Postal Hobby special.

House Rule Controversy

Can You Support A Mis-ordered Unit?

This is a genuine question.

The House Rules for my previous zines have always said that a support order to stand that is given for a unit attempting to move is not valid even if the unit is misordered. When it came to putting together a new set of House Rules, I reconsidered this and changed my mind. As I expected (and hoped), not everyone agrees with this change of heart...

Doug Kent:

*In my mind, your prior version of House Rule 3.9 is the correct one. I use a "let's pretend these are actual armies and fleets" rationale. If we pretend they are real, the act of holding and being supported in place is a cooperative effort between both units, in that they form a united front (unless the supporting unit is attacked, cutting the support as they are forced to turn and defend against that invasion of their position). So, a unit holding is still an activity; parts of the unit entrench, patrol, occupy strongholds, etc. When given an impossible order they are therefore **NOT** told to hold. So they don't do those actions involved with holding. Instead they mobilize and prepare to move, only to later determine they cannot accomplish the task set out for them.*

This also matches with the house rule many GMS (and programs like Realpolitik) use that an UNORDERED unit cannot be supported in place. It all depends on whether you view holding as an action, or a LACK of action.

OK. I see where you are coming from, but let us start with some direct quotes from the rules of the game...

Rules 4th edition, page 7 says...

"A unit that is... not ordered at all can receive support in holding its position."

Hmmm. That directly contradicts any House Rule that an unordered unit cannot be supported in place. I always thought House Rules were intended to fill in gaps in the rules to allow the game to be played remotely, rather than to disregard the rules.

The rules continue...

"Support can be given without consent and cannot be refused! This causes some wonderfully unexpected moments in the game."

Elsewhere, Rules 4th edition, page 3 says...

"A unit that is given an illegal order (or given no order) must stand in place. (The unit holds.)"

It is an accepted tenet of the rules that a unit may not refuse an unwanted support. A good example of the unwanted support is when it is done to foil a self-standoff. For example, if Germany orders A(Ber)-Mun and A(Kie)-Mun, the stand-off would protect Munich from an unsupported attack by a foreign unit, while also covering Berlin and Kiel at the same time. However, an Austrian A(Tyr) could order A(Tyr) S German A(Ber)-Mun, allowing a Russian A(Pru)-Ber to succeed. There's no way this can be reconciled with any view that the game represents real armies moving across Europe.

So far, so good. We have established that a unit cannot "turn down" a support when moving. But what about the situation where the unit is standing? I would submit there is no justification for a different outcome.



Consider this example. Austria and Russia are allied against Italy and Germany. Italy already owns Tri, Vie and Bud. Russia orders A(Rum) S A(Ukr)-Gal, while Austria orders A(Gal) stand. There is an Italian Army in Trieste and a German Army in Warsaw. The Russian and Austrian orders are designed to make sure that Austrian A(Gal) will end up in either Vie or Bud, whether the Italians order A(Tri)-Vie or A(Tri)-Bud. It gets rid of the possibility of a stand-off over one or the other. This in turn means the Russians/Austrian can occupy both Vienna and Budapest on the following turn. This is achieved because a dislodged Austrian A(Galicia) can retreat to whichever of Vie or Bud remains free. In other words, Austria **wants** to be dislodged. I think we are clear that if German A(War) S Austrian A(Gal), then the plan would fail as

Austrian A(Gal) would not be dislodged and therefore would not retreat. We are agreed that Austria cannot “turn down” the support. Again, so far so good.

Unfortunately, the idea that Austria cannot “turn down” the support for A(Gal) conflicts with the idea that a unit which is misordered to move cannot be supported in place. That is because we are allowing Austria to be able to ensure that his A(Gal) cannot be supported through the simple expediency of a **deliberate disorder**. Rather than A(Gal) Stand, Austria simply has to order “A(Gal)-Tyr”, “A(Gal)-Lon”, “A(Gal)-Uranus”, or even “A(Gal) gives Italian A(Tri) the finger!”, for the unit to stand and reject the unwanted support from Germany. You might as well allow him to write the order A(Gal) stands and refuses any support from other players – which the rules say is illegal.

There is no clear right or wrong answer to this issue – though I think my interpretation is at least consistent with the rules as they currently stand.

Any other views?

The Italy / Austria Dilemma

The Italian Three Fleets Opening

by John Dodds

Italy is recognised to be the weakest power at the start of a game. One method of strengthening her position (made popular by Richard Sharp in his book **The Game of Diplomacy**) is to alter the starting positions, giving Italy F(Rom) instead of A(Rom). However, an opening already has been developed to rapidly change the balance of Italian units in favour of Fleets. As with many Italian openings this one must have full Austrian co-operation and trust to work.

Diplomatically the Austrians recognise that they must have a long-term alliance with the Italians, or at least past 1905/6 and initially they are at peace with the Russians, although hostilities may start in the second year. France and Turkey are the direct victims of this opening. Austria must be convinced to take some kind of satisfaction from watching Italy commit himself and initially do well against both these targets.

Italy must be convinced that France and Turkey should be defeated swiftly. Ideally a French

campaign should include help from Germany and England whilst against the Turks, Russia should be persuaded to attack, or be at worst neutral.

The technique is for the Italians to move A(Ven)-Tri in Spring 1901, whilst the Austrians move F(Tri)-Alb; A(Bud)-Ser and A(Vie)-Bud (or holds). Then in Autumn 1901, the Austrians move on Tri with support from Ser, while the Austrian fleet continues to Gre. The Italians order A(Tri) to be disbanded and with Tun will have two builds. If they build two fleets this gives Italy three fleets and one Army by Spring 1902.

Now, the Italians have the option moving (Rom)-Tus/Ven and then into Pie in Autumn 1901 as their fleet takes Tun. In 1902 the Italians can move F(Tun) and F(Rom)west with A(Pie), as F(Nap) goes into the ION to bolster the Austrians on the Turkish front.

Alternatively, the Italians can go the Lepanto route with the difference being that rather than having A(Ven) sitting around looking foolish, they will have F(Rom) to move into TYS and then thrust into WMS or GoL as they land an army in Syria. While this one-piece attack on France isn't generally advisable, under the pressure of a combined Anglo/German offensive the one piece may crack open the French front long enough for the Italians to take a centre in 1903. Should the Western Alliance include France, the fleet can act as a safety valve to stand-off the first waves of a French attack and to convoy A(Tun) back to the homeland before too much damage is done.

[Acknowledgements to Edi Birsan]

Reprinted from **Perspiring Dreams** 6 (Oct 1980)

World Diplomacy FtF Database

by Toby Harris

Interested parties may want to check out the “World Diplomacy Database”: <https://world-diplomacy-database.com/php/commun/index.php>

In theory it has every FtF game ever played, though in reality it doesn't. I won the 2016 Italian NDC for example and that didn't get reported (that was the last FtF tournament I played in). And there are lots of gaps in general. But it's an amazing record & database of so many past games.

For example, you can click on “player” and let’s take one (totally random) player as an example.... Stephen Agar. It says you played 16 tournaments and are British. It transpires that your greatest Dip achievements were a Southampton “CUP” in 1994 and a Birmingham “CUP” in 1993, coming second both times. [NB: “Cup” means it wasn’t a National Championship (Like Midcon) but could include an event like Manorcon.]

Should you get onto the “Ranking System” there are three to choose from; “Dip Pouch”, “SDR” & “World Performance”.

SDR is purely a Swedish affair. No harm in that of course (and we all know of Christian Dreyer’s wonderful performance in 1999. He was a welcome guest at my wedding in 2002) but this is not a true world ranking. On the other hand, Dip Pouch is very US-orientated. But Lei’s stats on World Performance look at every game ever played. https://world-diplomacy-database.com/php/ranking/ranking_class.php?id_ranking=2

Sadly, I have slipped numerous rankings over recent years (with no FtF play for 7 years!) and am stooping just a few pips from slipping outside the top ten.

Be assured, this ONLY counts FtF play, so there is no credence or bonus for doing well at postal / email play, such as in your freshly-hallowed zine. And frankly I can’t see anything for Manorcon 1991 (which I won) or Manorcon 1992 (came 4th, with 18 centres).

So how’s about a review of the top 20 players in this World FtF ranking of all time? I pretty much know them all well, have played them all and appreciate their style.

At least start with the top five?

Two of the top five came to our wedding and we still meet up often; Yann & Cyille are very close family friends. They are both highly strategic, and incredibly diplomatic.

If I am brutally honest, I have to side with Cyrille as being the best of all time. Not because of our friendship but because of the manner in how he plays the game. But in terms of “play character”, Yann & Cyrille are diplomatically similar – both highly charming.

Perhaps the biggest difference is that (a) Yann will never declare the game to be over (b) Cyrille can point his forefinger upwards with the words “if there is one thing for sure” and (c) other than this, if you are facing the pair of them on either side then the chances are you are toast!

Chris Martin never gives up and fights for every centre. He certainly deserves a top 5 slot here.

Andrew Goff is the Amazing Ozzie who’s who won the f-t-f Diplomacy World Championships a few times and always does really well. When we first met (his Italy to my Austria) he was shocked at my defence Most in the UK know I have played Italy a few times too. So I defended well. We got on well but have yet to have a great alliance game opportunity.

Now Gwen Maggi. #1. Gwen is a shrewd ferret who knows the game of Diplomacy inside out. He has spent many hours learning the game and many tournaments playing it. He started as a keen learner and grew to be amazing. He’s exceptionally hard to outwit (nay impossible) and incredibly good at the game.

I’ve no issue with the names above me ... but reckon perhaps it’s time I played ftf again to stop those behind pushing-in?

Diplomacy is a wonderful game and I’m so proud for getting to the space I once got (something like World’s 5th best) and World Champion in 2015. I am also realistic in knowing that I am definitely not as good a player as the likes of Gwenn, Cyrille & Yann. And I know this because they’re my friends and (as we speak every word in friendship) I know I could never be as good as them.

But ... they all know I could give them all a bl**dy good run for their money in a 7-player showdown.

Diplomacy’s “luck” is also about board allocation and perhaps this opens up a new question? i.e., if you get the right start, aren’t you destined to win anyway?

Long before Gwen won WDC, I had already concluded that the greatest Diplomacy nation in the World was France. (current rankings: 4 of the top 10 French, with 3 USA, 2 UK and 1 Aus)

But I said this from historical “gut feeling” too. Nicolas, Bruno, Pascal & Vincent (all World Champions). And others like Samy & Benoit who had amazing National & European results too. So I would like to tell a Diplomacy story I have never told anyone before...

At WDC1 (1988) the “ODE” Team came 4th. https://world-diplomacy-database.com/php/results/tournament_team.php?id_tournament=178

The team captain was zine editor John Marsden. And you may notice my late cousin (Tony Wheatley) in that team too.

For the record, Mark Nelson was there too. And for Cyrille's record, he may recognise the name of Paul Cook 😊 It was a great team but they came 4th. Personally, I finished in the 7th placed team after an 8 centre & 12 centre result ... ultimately finishing 12th in the individual standings.

But the following year at Manorcon 1989 things changed a tad. The tournament only considered your single best result and my 17 centre Russia (which wiped out Richard Williams like a skid!) came third behind 15 and 16 centre results, which were understandably "closer to the 18" by virtue of supply centre gaps. Rotten thing was that I had a 50/50 of the 18 and lost the guess. As Cyrille so wisely once said: "there are two types of 50/50 guess - the good 50/50 guess and the 50/50 guess which is not so good"

At this tournament our team came third, yet three of our team players were eliminated! (that shows how good the four good players were!)

https://world-diplomacy-database.com/php/results/tournament_team.php?id_tournament=179

It was from this event that Brian Frew and I decided (ok, I proposed it and he nodded approval) that this was the last time we would fail to have an all-star team and not win Manorcon.

For the next three years Brian and I shared team victory at Manorcon. And even in the fourth year we were just pipped to second place. I did ok in the individual tournament there too with an 18.

Those were my halcyon years at Manorcon. EDC & WDC moments after that came in pockets. With some great moments, memories & friendships.

But here is the part I never spoke about. After Manorcon 1989 (and the 17 centre result) I asked Steve Jones if I could join his team.

His precise words I forget, but it was most definitely along the lines of "I'm sure we can find a place for you in our ranks" ... rather like Voldemort (Ralph Feinnes) said to Neville Longbottom.

Well history writes its own lines. And I have not always been so kind to others in the hobby either. Always outspoken and regularly saying what I shouldn't. Truth is that this is a global hobby and (like it or not) the best players are not "Olde UK" players. Some great players have come from that era, but the best in fact are French. Seven World Champions. Numbers speak.

I haven't played FtF Diplomacy for seven years. Maybe now is the time to return?

SA: If we could identify missing tournaments, I might be able to track down some of the results in the archive. Anyone willing to do that?

Tweaking Diplomacy

by Stephen Agar

Almost from the beginning, fans of Diplomacy have been coming up with ideas to make it a "better" game. Don't get me wrong - Diplomacy has been so successful because of the elegant rule system and the notion of simultaneous movement (as opposed to turns). However, the "colour" for the game comes from the scenario (Europe on the eve of the First World War) and it is the map (and in particular the starting positions) which introduces biases which mean that on average some of the Great Powers will always do better than others. Put simply, it is harder to win as Austria than it is as Russia or France.

While some budding games designers have tried to improve on the original game with new unit types (Aircraft, Submarines, Tanks, Spies etc.) and others have gone for new combat/movement systems (multiple units, A/F combinations, hidden movement etc.), those seeking to improve on the original game have inevitably focussed on the map. Sometimes designers have tried to make it more historically accurate (1900 which features on the cover of this issue is undoubtedly more historically accurate). However, historical accuracy in itself can create new issues. And often once a designer has corrected what he sees as imperfections with the map, their enthusiasm leads on to changes to the rules system as well.

Abstraction is a good case in point. **Abstraction** was developed out of several ideas for improving the map, Often this resulted in putting in new spaces to give new options. But Fred ended up putting in a lot of new spaces. A/F rules were then developed to make play across sea spaces faster - but these changes to the convoy system made it quite a different game.

The configuration of the regular Diplomacy map makes it highly likely that the early stages of a game reduce to two regional three-way conflicts (which tend to be resolved 2 against 1), plus

Russia who can choose to intervene in one of these conflicts (or both). The truth is that the way the board is designed makes it unlikely that the left-hand side triangle (France, England Germany) will get involved with the right-hand side triangle (Italy, Austria and Turkey) in the first few years. This is because Italy will rarely get involved at an early stage with France (or vice versa), just as Germany is unlikely to get involved with Austria (or vice versa). Despite the proximity of (say) Munich to Vienna or Venice to Marseilles it is extremely unlikely that this will result in early conflict.

In my opinion this is the central design flaw in the game – it would be more interesting if a greater degree of east-west and north-south cross-board strategic flexibility (with a realistic chance of success) was available from the off. So, what is it which usually compels these separate triangular regional wars to have to be resolved first and prevents more imaginative play from the beginning?

I think the reason for this strategic limitation in the early game boils down to four things.

1. Switzerland.

Maintaining Switzerland as an impassable area in the centre of the board helps to create a map bottleneck which becomes the cornerstone of a defensive line (and in the later stages of the game a pivot for stalemate lines). It restricts north-south movement in the centre of the board and goes some way to separating the western and the eastern regional conflicts.

2. Venice/Trieste

The Venice/Trieste problem – being the only example of two home centres of two different Powers being adjacent on the map – invites conflict between Italy and Austria. This makes it far more likely that Italy will look east rather than west. This map anomaly probably goes some way to account for the fact that Austria and Italy regularly show up as the Powers least likely to prosper.

3. Starting Units

Diplomacy is very prescriptive about what units start where. Russia can't start the game with an A(StP) or an A(Sev), Austria has to start with a F(Tri) and wouldn't Turkey prefer to have a F(Smy) and an A(Ank), rather than the other way round? The initial set-up means some tactical choices are harder than others and limits the choices available to some players.

4. Corners

The board is a rectangle with corners. Any Power in a corner has a strategic advantage in that they cannot easily be attacked from behind. This focusses their attention inwards to the centre of the board, again putting pressure on central powers.

If you really want to tweak Diplomacy to make it a better game, I suggest that you should only make the absolute minimum changes, as every change can have an unintended consequence. However, there is a real temptation once you start changing things, to think of other things you can modify. I would only add extra spaces if there was a very clear rationale for doing so that would improve play balance. For example – many variants that modify the board make Ireland, Iceland or Sicily into additional spaces (perhaps because they are substantial islands that are big enough to put a label on), but does it really add anything? Also, you should beware of creating additional SCs around the map, as they can have a radical impact on play balance and strategy.

SOLUTIONS

So, what do you do about Switzerland? Essentially, designers have gone for one of three options. First, just make it passable, Second, make it passable and a neutral SC (as in **1900**). Third, turn it into two passable spaces and make one (or neither) of them a SC (as in **Abstraction**). For myself, I would avoid putting a new SC in the centre of the board. It risks turning Switzerland into a space you couldn't enter, into one that actively attracts units towards it. If the aim is to increase strategic options with regard to movement, it is sufficient just to make it passable. After all, if neutral Sweden can be invaded, why not neutral Switzerland?

Venice/Trieste is a trickier problem. A common solution is to play around with Italy by moving the SC out of Venice and create a new space (usually called "Milan") which doesn't border Trieste. That is the solution favoured in **1900**.

The other (and in my opinion better) option is to reconfigure Austria. According to Larry Peery, the first person to suggest dividing Trieste into two with a non-SC space bordering Ven/Tyr/Tri (but not Vie or Bud) was Conrad Von Metzke in 1966. Larry said it was play-tested a few times F-t-F and found to work well. In **Abstraction** Fred Davis went further by making the new space also touch Vie and Bud. In both cases the eastern half of the old Trieste was a SC. Larry Peery went even further by putting a new SC in

the new space, which he modestly named **Peerijavo**.

While the regular Diplomacy set-up may almost encourage conflict between Italy and Austria, you do have to be careful you don't go the other way and actively discourage Italy and Austria from engaging. A more subtle approach that was once popular was to switch Italy's initial A(Rom) for a F(Rom). This really limits the ability of Italy to pile into Austria in force in 1901 though in turn it does make Italy vulnerable to an all-out attack from Austria in 1901. This variant seems to have died out as it didn't appear to make enough of a difference.

The starting positions issue can be dealt with by simply having a diplomacy phase pre-Spring 1901 to negotiate the starting positions and then letting players build what they want. That would create new tactical possibilities (particularly for Russia), but with the downside that it might telegraph intentions too much before Spring 1901.

And finally, what to do about the corners? Either you create additional spaces to encourage flanking around corner countries (such as splitting the Eastern Mediterranean into two, filling in the North African coastline or adding extra spaces in the Atlantic) or go even further by allowing east-west movement around Africa (as in **1900**). My view, is that while there is a case for completing the north african coastline, allowing direct movement from the east to the west (or vice versa) is too radical. I think if you tackle Switzerland and Ven/Tri you've probably done enough. If you want to go further you can make some changes to the starting positions, but adding in more spaces and special rules beyond that starts to make it into a very different game.

So, how would you tweak Diplomacy to make it a "better" game? Personally, I'd make Switzerland passable, include the extra space between Ven and Tri (as in **Abstraction**) and leave it at that. However, such a variant is still 98% regular Diplomacy and thus probably too similar to the original game to get players sufficiently excited to bother to play it. Which is a shame.



MANORCON

Stamford Court, University of Leicester

ManorCon has now come full circle in Leicester, and is back at Stamford House and Stamford Hall. Stamford House and Hall is the venue we used when we first moved to Leicester. We will have accommodation in Lasdun, Bowder Court, and John Foster.

15th July – 18th July 2022

by Chris Tringham

I remember Manorcon...big event in Birmingham University...Diplomacy tournament and other boardgames.

Cons used to be a fairly large part of my life. I was chairman of the Midcon committee for over 20 years, and also attended Manorcon almost every year. And there was Baycon in Devon, and even that very cold one in Manchester.

My last Manorcon was back in 1996 and things have changed - now it's in Leicester, and there's no Diplomacy at all (not that I would have played, I have to admit). My excuse is that since 1996 I have been living thousands of miles away. My fairly brief trips to the UK have never allowed time for a con (except when I was asked to go on a business trip to Birmingham in November 1997 and was able to drop in to Midcon, but even that was 25 years ago).

But I was able to spend more time in the UK in 2022, and I think it was John Harrington who alerted me to the fact that Manorcon was still going - as, in fact, are Midcon and Baycon. Indeed, John is one of the organizers of Midcon, which has also fled Birmingham (you can read Stephen's review in the previous issue of GSTZ).

By the time I finally decided to book for Manorcon, it was too late (I could have turned up on Friday and probably got a room with shared facilities, but somehow that wasn't very attractive). Instead, I went up on Saturday morning and stayed in a hotel for one night. No change, really, because back in the 1990s I used to stay in the Hyatt and either walk along the canal or take a taxi to the University.

Things didn't get off to a great start - I checked the website and headed for Stamford Court. The Stamford Court Conference Centre looked promising, but it was locked and empty. Maybe it was the other side of Manor Road? No. After walking around (several times) and not finding any signs of life I searched again on Google Maps and Stamford Hall seemed to be not too far away, so I walked out and round the corner

(there was a faster route if only I had known that Stamford Hall had been renamed to the "Village Hub") Mainly my fault - if I'd downloaded the programme booklet, I'd have known where to go.

Mark Stretch was manning the registration desk (which he was able to combine with playing a game). I soon found John Harrington, with Paul Oakes and Richard Beattie - three of the 'hobby' people who I have seen in the last 25 years. The others at the table were friends of Paul's from Liverpool, and (as far as I know) that group played a series of games together throughout the weekend.

As Stephen wrote in his Midcon review, that does seem to be the way things are these days - though apparently there was a Telegram group for people to arrange games (maybe these are the same people who download and read pdfs on their phones).

Krypton Factor's John Webley was at a nearby table, and it was great to catch up with him after all these years. He's someone else who moved away from the UK, though not so far and not for so long. Again, his group seemed to stay together playing games at the same table.

Upstairs was the 18xx tournament, so I wandered around chatting to some more people I knew. One was Geoff Hardingham, who I had first met at the very first con I attended (Ronscon, at Ron Fisher's home in Preston a very long time ago). There were several more familiar faces, including Dave Thorby and Richard Clyne and now I have to admit that I can't remember who else was there.

I used to play 1830 and 1835 regularly, but these two games seem to have gone out of fashion. Now there are dozens of other versions, set in almost every possible location in the world. People kindly explained the game they were playing, and I nodded politely. Some of them had companies and cities that I vaguely remembered, but with different rules. Had there been an opportunity to play 1830 or 1835, I probably could have been persuaded...well, maybe...but learning a new version with different rules and strategies was too much.

So, yes, I went to a boardgames con and didn't actually play any games.

The venue consisted of three main areas: the Dining Room in one building, the bar and the upstairs rooms in another building, and an older building next to that which was used for a Second Hand Games sale on Saturday. There

were some tables outside, but I didn't see many games being played there.

The bar didn't seem to be doing much business, but maybe people were buying drinks and taking them to their tables. I wasn't there in the evening, so maybe it got busier, or maybe we're all boring people who don't drink as much as before!

Eating out at cons has always been a bit fraught with difficulty. Different types of food, different budgets, and finding a time that different groups playing different games can agree upon.

But somehow it all came together. Paul had made a booking at a place called Seoul Bowl, which was about a 20 minute walk away and we ended up with a group of about 12 people.

It turned out to be (1) primarily a takeaway but with one large table, and (2) only a little bit Korean. The other offerings were Spicy Chinese food from Szechuan (Sichuan) - which some people found surprisingly, er, spicy - Indonesian satay, Japanese Teriyaki, sweet potato fries, and all manner of other delights.

It clearly wasn't a place that was normally had groups of 12 people eating in, and there were one or two minor issues (I remember Paul complaining bitterly that there weren't enough glasses), but it all went off surprisingly well.

By a strange coincidence, there was a pub just a few steps away from the restaurant, and that was where we adjourned for some decent beer (none at the con).

I returned to Manorcon on Sunday morning for more of the same. I didn't play any games, but I was able to catch up with people I haven't seen for 25+ years (and some who I have seen just a few times in the intervening years).

Thanks to Mark Stretch and the rest of the committee for all their efforts to arrange the event in these difficult times!



About 1900

By Baron Powell

So where to start? I guess the seed for 1900 was planted after I read an article by Stephen Agar in issue #80 of **Diplomacy World**. The article was entitled "New Improved Diplomacy?" and it suggested a number of ideas to improve the basic game. I thought some of Stephen's ideas

were very good. Others... hmmm...let's be kind and say that they didn't appeal to me much. I also wasn't entirely convinced that Stephen's suggestions were sufficient to make the game "better," which was his stated goal. What would make the game better? I thought that any solutions worth considering needed to address three items: play balance, player interaction, and historical accuracy.

Play Balance. Diplomacy does not have a level playing field. Consider the following numbers:

	Games	Points	GPR	Solo	2-way	3-way	4-way	5-way	6-way	LOSS
AUSTRIA	3723	82821	22.28	284	126	179	159	56	15	2899
ENGLAND	3723	98454	26.48	300	183	280	194	54	17	2690
FRANCE	3723	110418	29.70	364	176	285	200	68	17	2608
GERMANY	3723	95019	25.56	327	156	214	139	69	18	2795
ITALY	3723	70896	19.07	221	124	172	150	66	17	2968
RUSSIA	3723	112800	30.34	449	140	185	126	60	15	2743
TURKEY	3723	98832	26.58	329	149	275	160	57	15	2733

These game results come from three sources: an excellent study of 3485 games that appeared in issue #81 of **Diplomacy World** ("The Strongest Country on the Diplomacy Map" by Thaddeus Black), my records of 223 games played on America Online, and 15 games played in Tim Richardson's **The Old Republic**. The GPR, short for Great Power Rating, is based on a simple formula. Basically, I divide 180 points by the number of Great Powers that participated in a solo or draw, 2-way through 6-way. The GPR is the number of points each Great Power earned divided by the number of games played.

If Diplomacy was perfectly balanced, the GPR for each Great Power would be approximately 25.71 (i.e., 180 divided by 7). While we should expect some degree of variation from this figure due to simple randomness, the numbers clearly show that some Great Powers are more equal than others are. France and Russia are heads and shoulders above the pack, while Austria-Hungary and Italy are scraping the proverbial barrel bottom. This isn't necessarily a problem, though. On the contrary, the inequality of each Great Power's position gives that Power a "personality," which, in turn, contributes to the charm of Diplomacy. Even so, I couldn't help but believe that each of the Great Powers could be

given a more equal chance of doing well without sacrificing those aspects of Diplomacy that make it appealing. I believed I could enhance the quiriness of each Great Power along historical lines while levelling the playing field at the same time.

Player Interaction. While the good diplomat ensures he contacts all of the other players on a regular basis, the truth is that certain Great Powers demand more attention than others do when the game starts. If this situation could be changed so that it truly is in the best interests of each Great Power to negotiate in earnest with all of the other Great Powers, I felt something good would be accomplished.

Historical Accuracy. I firmly believe that a game based on historical events should create situations where the historical outcomes can occur, but don't necessarily have to occur. Diplomacy does attempt, in a satisfyingly abstract way, to replicate the "Balance of Power" that existed in Europe at the start of WWI. Some things are done, however, that remove the "feel" of the period. As I saw it, the challenge was to give the variant some historical flavour without adding complexity (i.e., minimize new or special rules) or, most importantly, destroying the delicate balance of play as mentioned above. I

was inspired enough by these thoughts to write a letter to Douglas Kent, then the editor of *Diplomacy World*. This letter discussed a variant proposal that combined my own ideas with those ideas from Stephen Agar's article that I liked. Most significantly, my proposal was based on a map of Europe at the turn of the century. After all, *Diplomacy* is supposed to start in 1901, but the map is of Europe around 1913. Douglas, ever desperate for material, turned my letter into a full-fledged article ("Improving New Improved Diplomacy") and printed it in issue #81 of *Diplomacy World*.

When it came to turning the article into a game that could actually be played, I soon found out how much work was needed. A suitable map had to be drawn, variant rules had to be finalized, and house rules had to be determined. As soon as I set out to do these things, I realized my variant needed a name. Since the map was of Europe at the turn of the century, I decided on 1900. Each of my tasks took some time, but the most effort by far was invested in the map. When I finished everything and was ready to start the playtest, I'll admit I was quite pleased with the various products. All in all, I thought I had a pretty decent variant.

Sadly, reality intruded on my visions of grandeur. Playtesting the original concept showed me that not all of my "brilliant" innovations were particularly good. In fact, a few were spectacularly bad, such as making Iceland a supply center (SC). The truth is that Britain, ably played by Scott Morris, won the first playtest in a rout of epic proportions. I had no recourse but to go back to the drawing board and make a number of changes. A second playtest was soon organized, and the revised variant was put through its paces. This time the results were much more encouraging. Only one deficiency involving the boundaries of Vienna and Galicia was discovered and it was easily fixed. Over the next six games, the map and rules underwent a few more tweaks that primarily impacted on Turkey. Finally, by the ninth game 1900 appeared to be ready for primetime.

The timing could not have been better. In 2001, both Manus Hand and Millis Miller contacted me. The former was interested in putting 1900 on DPJudge (<http://www.floc.net/dpjudge/>), while the latter had put 1900 on USTV (<http://www.floc.net>). The ultimate success of these ventures meant that 1900 was now available to any *Diplomacy* player with access to the Internet.

Naturally, having 1900 on the internet meant that many more games were started and completed than I ever could have run on my own. Over the next two years, fifty-four 1900 games were started using the same map (V2.6.1.) and set of rules. These games gave me the opportunity to observe how the various Great Powers performed. After forty of those fifty-four games had been completed, with another seven being aborted before a conclusion was reached, I decided to make a rule change involving Russia that was intended to enhance play balance. This rule was the aptly named Russian Steamroller Rule (or Steamroller for short).

Another three years passed with more 1900 games being played. During this time, the impact of the Steamroller was examined closely. Unfortunately, after another eighty-one game starts and sixty-three finishes, with eight games being aborted, it became clear that the Steamroller wasn't the answer. Once again, Russia became the subject of intense scrutiny and discussion. The result was another rule change, the **Russian Emergency Measures Rule**.

MAP CHANGES

[The Map is on the Front Page]

As I alluded to earlier, something that has always bothered me about *Diplomacy* is the fact that the game begins in 1901, but the map is of Europe after 1912. I'm sure each of you has lost some sleep over this transgression as well. So much for historical accuracy! I thought using a map of Europe at the turn of the century would be a significant step towards correcting this "deficiency." I also believed a revised map could help establish the conditions for a more balanced game.

I immediately had a tough decision to make. If my map was to be historically accurate, several potentially significant map changes were required. This was a scary prospect for two reasons. First, I was concerned that major alterations might make 1900 seem too alien to players comfortable with the familiar *Diplomacy* map. This, in turn, might discourage some players from giving 1900 a try. Second and perhaps more important, I was worried that even minor changes to *Diplomacy's* boundaries might result in unforeseen ramifications that would undermine some of my basic assumptions on how the Great Powers interacted. Experiences with Turkey seemed to confirm that this worry was a valid one. In the end, I decided to keep the internal boundaries

of the Great Powers largely the same as they are on the Diplomacy map and to only introduce major changes where necessary (i.e., where play balance issues were involved). Though I sometimes wish I had been more willing to draw the map "from scratch," when all is said and done I can truly say that I'm pleased with the finished product.

The current version of the map was my fifth attempt at getting it right. If you look carefully at that the map, you'll notice the following:

- There are now thirty-nine SCs. The Great Powers control twenty-five at game-start: Britain, France, Germany, and Russia have four SCs each and Austria-Hungary, Italy, and Turkey have three SCs each.
- The remaining fourteen SCs are neutral at game-start. Note that only eighteen SCs are needed to win, just as in Diplomacy. The motive behind this was to encourage solo victories and preclude stalemates.
- Morocco is separated from North Africa and is a neutral SC. This reflects the fact that Morocco was independent in 1900 and also a tremendous source of friction between the Great Powers.
- What's left of North Africa is split into two spaces: Algeria and Southern Algeria. Algeria is a French SC. This represents France's dominant presence in the area.
- The Tyrrhenian Sea touches Algeria, where it doesn't touch North Africa in Diplomacy. This makes it easier for Italy to stake a claim on French territory.
- Tunisia is no longer a SC. It is now simply a buffer between two SCs, French Algeria and neutral Tripolitania.
- Libya appears on the map and is represented by two spaces: Tripolitania, a neutral SC, and Cyrenaica, which serves as a buffer between Tripolitania and British Egypt. Though Turkey controlled Tripolitania and Cyrenaica in 1900, the fact that the former is a neutral SC rather than Turkish reflects the Ottoman Empire's increasingly loose hold on the area.
- Egypt appears on the map and is a British SC. The British undeniably felt Egypt was a key territory in their vast empire. Never mind that the Turks felt Egypt belonged to them. Having a British SC within arm's reach of Turkish territory dramatically increases the need for British, and therefore French and German, interaction with not only Turkey, but also Austria-Hungary, Italy, and Russia.
- Syria has been renamed Damascus and is a Turkish SC. At the same time, Smyrna has been renamed Konya and is no longer a Turkish SC. This flip-flop makes it more difficult for Turkey to establish a dominant position in the southeast corner of the map.
- Two additional Turkish spaces appear on the map, Palestine and Hejaz. Palestine's primary purpose is to serve as a buffer between Turkish Damascus and British Egypt.
- A new neutral space, Arabia, is sandwiched in between Damascus, Palestine, and Hejaz.
- Turkey controls a large territory in the Balkans called Macedonia. Macedonia has two coasts, east and west, and touches no less than eight other spaces. Albania, which came into existence in 1912 after the Balkan Wars, no longer exists.
- Moscow is split into two spaces: Moscow and Siberia. This division frustrates the formation of stalemate lines.
- Trieste is split into two spaces: Trieste and Bosnia. In 1900, Bosnia was under Austro-Hungarian administration, but was not technically a part of the Dual Monarchy. The Dual Monarchy's annexation of nominally Turkish Bosnia in 1908 nearly resulted in WWI erupting six years early.
- Vienna no longer touches Galicia. Instead, Budapest now touches Bohemia. Not only is this geographically correct, as a look at a map of the Czech Republic today will show, it also prevents a particularly nasty tactic that Austria-Hungary and Germany could use against Russia given the new unit at-start positions discussed shortly.
- Venice is no longer a SC. This diffuses the tension between Diplomacy's weak sisters, Austria-Hungary and Italy. Venice is also renamed Venetia.
- A new space, Milan, is an Italian SC.
- Tuscany no longer exists. Rome now borders the Gulf of Lyon, Piedmont, and Milan. This helps Italy reinforce its northern position.
- A Gibraltar space is added. Gibraltar divides the south coast of Spain in two (i.e., Spain now has three coasts: north, east, and west). Gibraltar is a sea space for convoy purposes, but an army can move there from either Morocco or Spain, and prevent a fleet from entering.
- Ruhr is renamed Cologne and is a German SC. This additional SC makes the Reich more formidable and allows it to serve as more of a counterweight to Diplomacy's Big Boys, France and Russia. From a historical

perspective, this change makes perfect sense. Diplomacy's Germany is, in my mind, somewhat wimpy. Its record in the 223 America Online games included in my study was particularly abysmal. Now Germany has some teeth.

- A new space, Alsace, separates French Burgundy from German Cologne and Munich. This prevents the Kaiser from taking advantage of the new German unit at-start position to perpetrate evil on France during the first game-turn.
- Holland is renamed Netherlands.
- Switzerland is a neutral SC. This makes for some very (very!) interesting dynamics between Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, and Italy. o Ireland borders the Mid-Atlantic Ocean.

UNIT CHANGES

Given the map changes above, my desire to capture some of the historical feel of the period, and the critical goal of maintaining, if not improving, play balance, I felt changes to the at-start forces of some of the Great Powers needed to be made. These changes can be summed up as follows:

- Austria-Hungary starts with an army in Trieste instead of a fleet. The Imperial and Royal Army was the glue that held the Empire together. The undernourished Austro-Hungarian Navy was little more than an afterthought. This third army greatly enhances the Dual Monarchy's flexibility and options.
- Britain starts with four units: F London, F Edinburgh, F Gibraltar, and F Egypt. Note that Liverpool is still a SC, but the army that starts there in Diplomacy is gone. At the same time, note that Gibraltar is not a SC. Britain was the premier sea power at the turn of the century, but its puny army was almost embarrassing for a nation of Britain's stature. The vaunted, and diminutive, British Expeditionary Force wasn't formed until just before WWI.
- France starts with four units: A Paris, F Brest, A Marseilles, and A Algeria. The last unit reflects the military presence France maintained in its African territories. The strong French garrison was no doubt a prudent deterrent given Italian ambitions to establish an African empire that the Romans themselves would have been proud of.
- Germany starts with four units: A Berlin, A Cologne, F Kiel, and A Munich. The supremacy of the German army was acknowledged, grudgingly, by all of the Great Powers. In Diplomacy, however,

Germany seems pathetically weak when compared to the actual colossus that was the Second Reich. The additional army gives the Kaiser real options to conduct a two-front war if necessary or desired.

- The Italian army that started in Venice now starts in Milan.
- The Turkish army that started in Smyrna now starts in Damascus.

RULE CHANGES

As I said earlier, I did not want to make dramatic changes to Diplomacy's basic rules. With the few exceptions discussed below, the rules for Diplomacy apply to 1900 as well. In all but two cases, the rule changes represent little more than minor revisions to account for the new map. The two major exceptions are the Suez Canal Rules and the Russian Emergency Measures Rule.

The **Suez Canal Rules** (hereafter SCR) are a series of rules governing movement and combat between the Mid-Atlantic Ocean space and the Egypt/Hejaz spaces. The SCR serve to give 1900 a distinct character primarily because they dramatically increase the need for all of the Great Powers to talk to each other from the beginning of the game, an end state I definitely hoped to achieve.

The SCR are:

- A fleet may move back and forth between Egypt and Hejaz.
- Movement between Egypt or Hejaz and the Mid-Atlantic Ocean is allowed. It is assumed the unit travels around the southern tip of Africa. A unit that moves in this manner does so at half strength. This means that a unit adjacent to Egypt or Hejaz succeeds in moving there if opposed only by a fleet moving from the Mid-Atlantic Ocean and a fleet adjacent to the Mid-Atlantic Ocean succeeds in moving there if opposed only by a fleet moving from Egypt or Hejaz.
- A fleet in Egypt or Hejaz cannot support a unit holding in or moving to the Mid-Atlantic Ocean.
- This is true even though the fleet in Egypt or Hejaz can itself move to the Mid-Atlantic Ocean. Likewise, a fleet in the Mid-Atlantic Ocean cannot support a unit holding in or moving to Egypt or Hejaz.
- A fleet moving from Egypt or Hejaz to the Mid-Atlantic Ocean does not cut support being provided by a fleet already in the Mid-Atlantic Ocean unless the attack results in F Mid-Atlantic Ocean being dislodged. The opposite is equally true. A fleet moving from the Mid-Atlantic Ocean to Egypt or Hejaz

does not cut support being provided by a unit already in Egypt or Hejaz unless the attack results in the unit being dislodged.

- F Mid-Atlantic Ocean can convoy an army from or to Egypt or Hejaz. An army convoyed from Egypt or Hejaz attacks its destination space at full strength. An army convoyed to Egypt or Hejaz attacks at half strength.
- If two units are retreating to Egypt or Hejaz, or the Mid-Atlantic Ocean, and one of them must travel around the southern tip of Africa, the unit that does not travel around southern Africa may retreat while the other unit is disbanded.

The **Russian Emergency Measures** Rule (hereafter REM Rule) represents the latest, and hopefully the last, change to the variant rules. The REM Rule's purpose is to boost Russia's defensive capability, but not its offensive power. The REM Rule proved necessary after the results of well over 100 games showed that Russia needed to be adjusted to enhance overall variant play balance.

The REM Rule reflects the fact that Russia's greatest military assets at the dawn of the 20th century were its seemingly endless supply of manpower and its vast resources. Unfortunately, terrible mismanagement and a weak economy prevented Russia from successfully exploiting these assets. If Russia were to suffer a severe setback, such as is implied by the loss of a home supply center, it seems reasonable to assume the Russian government would be shocked into taking drastic measures to overcome the situation, to include stripping the many garrisons stationed throughout the Asiatic portions of the Empire and better managing its limited industrial capability. To this effect:

- Whenever Russia possesses at least one, but not all four, of its original home supply centers, it is entitled to maintain one extra unit on the map (i.e., one more than the number of supply centers it currently controls). Additionally, while Russia is in this condition, the Tsar may use Siberia as a build site during the adjustment phase, if Siberia is unoccupied.
- Should Russia fail to possess at least one home supply center or should it regain possession of all four of its home supply centers, the ability to maintain an extra unit is lost and any excess units must be disbanded during the subsequent adjustment phase. Further, Siberia reverts

to its normal status (i.e., it is no longer a build site).

- Note that Siberia, while it may become a build site, never attains supply center status.

Other minor rule changes are as follows:

- Victory conditions have not changed. If a Great Power gains control of eighteen SCs, the game ends and the player controlling that Great Power is declared the winner. With thirty-nine SCs, though, it is now possible for two Great Powers to get eighteen SCs on the same game-turn. Should this happen, the player representing the Great Power with the most SCs is the winner. If the two Great Powers each control the same number of SCs, play continues until one Great Power controls at least eighteen SCs and that Great Power controls more SCs than any other Great Power.
- Iceland, Ireland, and Switzerland are now passable.
- Movement between Clyde and Ireland is allowed. This is true even if an enemy fleet is in the North Atlantic Ocean. A convoy is not required to move an army back and forth between Clyde and Ireland.
- Army movement is allowed between Gibraltar and Morocco. No convoy is required in this case. Gibraltar is considered a sea space for convoy purposes.
- Egypt and Algeria, while controlled by Britain and France respectively at game-start, are not considered home SCs. This means that Britain may not build in Egypt and France may not build in Algeria. This also explains why Egypt is not called Cairo and Algeria not called Algiers.

So, there you have it. As you can see, 1900 is, at heart, just like the game of Diplomacy that we have all come to know and love. The map, unit, and rule changes do, however, alter the dynamics of how the Great Powers interact with each other.



Intimate Diplomacy Ia

by Adrien Baird and Steve Doubleday

1. The official rules of Diplomacy apply except where amended below.

2. To determine home countries, each player submits a preference list of seven countries. If their first choices are different, both players get their first choice. If their first choices are the same, but their second choices are different, then both players get their second choice. If the second choices are identical then each gets their third choice etc. If both preference lists are identical then the players draw lots with the winner getting their first choice and the loser their second choice.

3. Control of the five mercenary countries is determined each game year by bids. The bidding seasons occur before Spring 1901, and thereafter between each Winter and Spring season. Bids are written down and both players reveal them simultaneously. The highest bidder for each country has the size of their bid deducted from their reserve and gains control of that country for the following year — including the winter adjustments.

4. Credits used for bidding are awarded following each Fall season. Each player is given one credit for each SC owned by his home country. (E.g., If your home country controls 10 SCs, 10 credits are added to your credit balance.) At the start of the game, countries have the following credit levels: E, F, R & T are given 20 credits, G 22, A & I 24. The difference in starting credits is to even out the relative strengths of the countries.

5. Players are permitted to bid more than their credit will cover. However, if a player's successfully bids more credits than they hold, they lose all their reserve and their opponent then gains control of all countries they bid for at half price, rounded up.

6. When bids for a country are equal, neither player controls it, and it is treated as if in Anarchy for the year.

7. Play is carried out exactly as in regular Diplomacy with each player submitting orders and retreats for the countries which they control. In the winter season, all builds due to neutral countries must be taken where they are possible. The sequence of play during one game-year is Bids, Spring moves and retreats, Autumn moves and retreats, Winter builds and disbandments.

8. Mercenary Builds: If the player controlling a Mercenary country fails to order builds which that country is due, the GM will build armies alphabetically in home centres (fleets for England).

9. Victory Criterion: The game ends when one player occupies one of their opponents' home centres with one of their home country's units in any season. If this happens to both players simultaneously, then the player occupying the most home SCs of his opponent wins, with the exception that occupying 4 Russian home centres counts as no better than owning 3. If a tie remains, the game is won by the player with the largest credit balance (counting credits won during the season in which the home centres were invaded). If a tie still remains, the game continues until the next Fall, when all of the above are reconsidered.

10. A game may develop into a stalemate situation once all neutral countries have been eliminated with neither player being able to break through a defensive line to meet the standard victory conditions. In this case the winner is the player with the most supply centres. Note that unlike Diplomacy, a game does not end just because one country reaches 18 Supply centres.

Intimate Objective Diplomacy

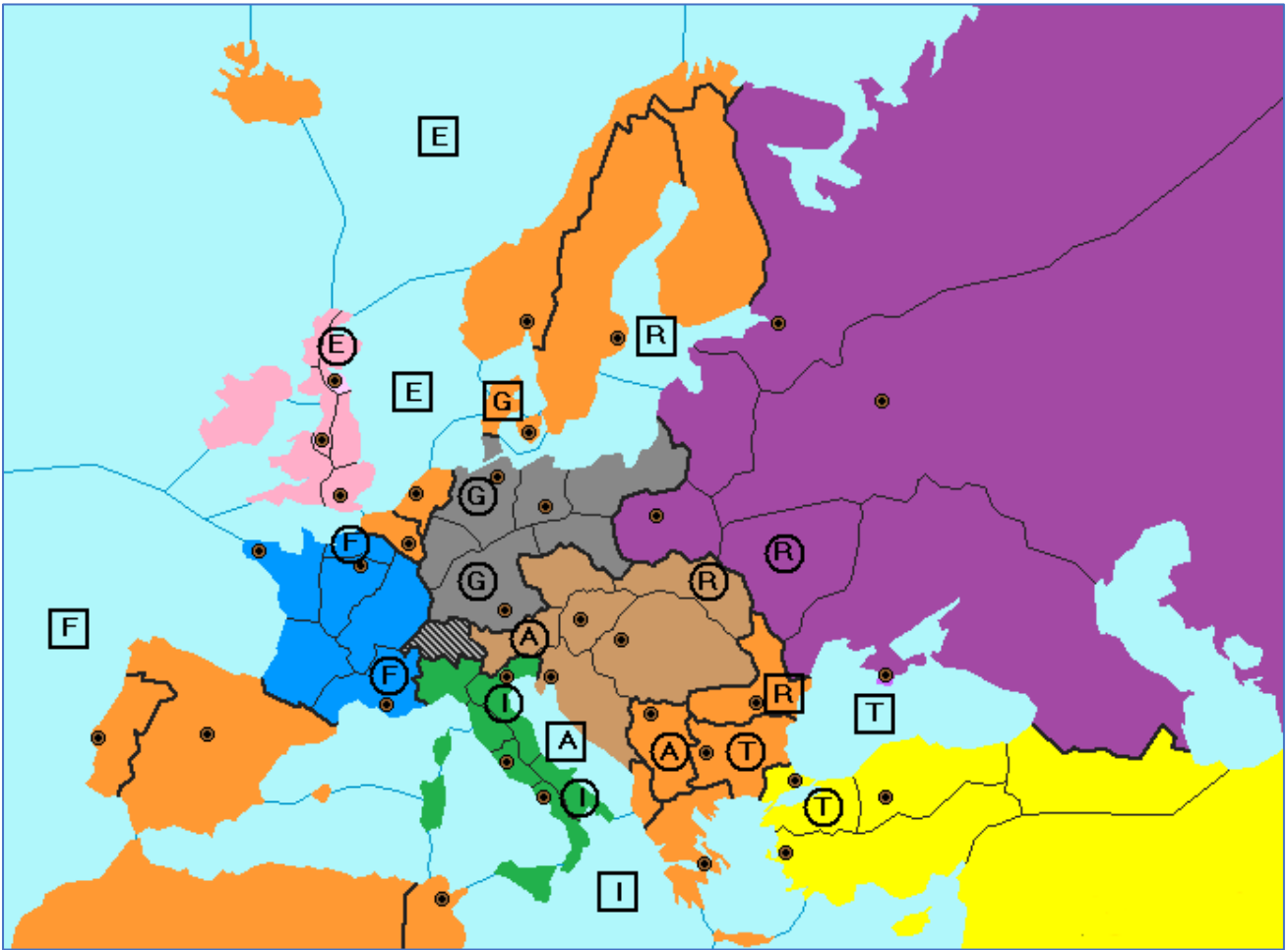
By Simon Langley-Evans and John Langley

This variant uses the Intimate Diplomacy rules above with two important changes:

1. The following is added to para 3. If a player's home Power captures and holds (in a Fall season) a supply centre owned by a mercenary power, that mercenary can no longer be bid for - the mercenary effectively breaks off all ties.

2. The Victory Criterion (para 9) is amended. The game ends when a Player captures the other player's **capital city** - not just any home SC. For these purposes the capital cities are Austria - Vienna; England - London; France - Paris; Germany - Berlin; Italy - Rome; Russia - St Petersburg; Turkey - Constantinople.

SA: Simon and John's rules had Ankara as the capital of Turkey - but Ankara didn't become the capital of Turkey until 1923, so I took the liberty of changing it.



All The Madmen

(2023BB)

Spring 1901

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY (Neil Kendrick) - F(Tri) - ADS; A(Bud) - Ser; A(Vie) - Tyr

ENGLAND (Lindsay Jackson) - F(Lon) - NTH; F(Edi) - NWG; A(Lpl) - Edi

FRANCE (Mike Benyon) - F(Bre) - MAO; A(Par) - Pic; A(Mar) - Bur (FAILED)

GERMANY (Toby Harris) - A(Mun) - Bur (FAILED); A(Ber) - Kie; F(Kie) - Den

ITALY (Colin Smith) - A(Ven) - Apu; A(Rom) - Ven; F(Nap) - ION

RUSSIA (Simon Billenness) - F(Sev) - Rum; A(War) - Gal; A(Mos) - Ukr; F(StP) sc - GoB

TURKEY (Neil Duncan) - F(Ank) - BLA; A(Con) - Bul; A(Smy) - Con

Colin Smith writes: I am away from the 21st March until the 4th Apr, with very limited, if any, internet access, as I am on what they call a repositional cruise, when they move the cruise ships from one cruise area to the next, so I will be somewhere on the Atlantic ocean between the Caribbean and the Mediterranean between those dates. Not sure if possible to ask for a short delay in Fall 1901, or whichever orders it affects once we know the schedule, just thought I should say as early as possible.

In view of this, if I have orders from ALL players by 20th March which are marked "final", I will adjudicate and publish the results in issue 3. If I do not, then the deadline is extended to Friday 7th April, one week after the issue 3 deadline. We will catch up for issue 4.

Please also remember to include conditional retreats and builds with your orders - we do not have a separate build season!

Press:

England (Govt.): For the avoidance of doubt, "Lindsay" is a unisex forename, I have always been male, and there are some things that I will *not* offer other players in order to win!

A - GM: Please can I have a picture of the board? I cannot remember where Austria goes after turn 1 😊

The Daily Nile: Pharoah Tutankhamun blames the recent crop failures on the heresy of his predecessor Akhenaten. This is despite Akhenaten having left office 13 years ago, to spend more time in his pyramid."

A - World: EEEEE! Its been a long time .. back to Manorcon and the AIDS Team (Association of Inebriated Diplomats) .. think that was James Hardy's idea! Or maybe Phil Murphy .. or was that the "Silent Pit"?

Zoom meetings are just modern seances



"There's someone who wants to join us."
"Elizabeth, are you there?"
"We can't hear you."
"Can you hear us?"

Regular Diplomacy - Gamestart



"Blackstar" (2023BC)

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GERMANY:

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ITALY :

Derek De Rooy - DDeRooy@filamarenergy.com

RUSSIA:

Hugh Polley - hapolley@yahoo.ca

TURKEY:

Kevin Wilson - ckevinw@gmail.com

Thank you, gentlemen. For next time can I have:

(a) your vote on whether this game should use standbys; the default is that it will not after 1902 - but in the unlikely event of a player dropping out before the end of 1902 they will be replaced.

(b) your orders for Spring 1901 by Friday 31 March 2023. I think it's always a good idea to send in some orders early, just in case.

As mentioned last issue - for absolutely no particular reason at all (well, I do have a massive David Bowie collection and I absolutely refuse to tell anyone how much I paid for the original single of Liza Jane) - I have decided that all games just have to be named after David Bowie songs. Blackstar is of course the title track from David Bowie's last album, which was released on 8th January 2016, which was Bowie's 69th birthday, just two days before his death.

The New Look of Diplomacy



Renegade Games recently revealed the artwork for the new edition of Diplomacy, due out this summer. What do you think? I do worry that playing the game may be a lot less exciting than the packaging. We are promised wooden pieces though. In the UK we have never had wooden pieces, but at least we have been spared those horrible cardboard pieces the last US edition had.

WorldDipCon 2023

World DipCon 2023 will be hosted in Bangkok on August 17-20. All details are located at <https://wdbcangkok.com> including the board game cafe venue, tournament schedules, and the amazing range of tourist options available around the event. Flights are currently not too expensive and there is a range of pre- and post- tournament tour options to offer.

This is the house zine for www.diplomacyzines.co.uk from:

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Ware, SG11 2AU, UK. Email:
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DEADLINE

Friday 31 March 2023



Backbit

Waiting Lists

Regular Diplomacy (3 wanted) Doug Kent, Joseph Stark, Paul Simpkins, Paraic Reddington

Black Hole Diplomacy II (rules in issue 1) David Partridge, Philip Murphy. Kevin Wilson (4 wanted). A fun game!

Intimate Diplomacy Tournament: Will Haughan, James Hardy, Richard Williams, Mog Firth, Brian Frew, Edward Richards (ideally only another 2 wanted) for a three-round tournament. Rules inside.

1900 (7 wanted). But if we can only find 6, I wouldn't mind a game myself and Baron has said he would be willing to GM.

Cannibalism IV: Rules in issue 1. 4 wanted. Jim Reader; Andy Lischett; Edward Richards; John Galt are all possibles.

Another Diplomacy Variant or Two - Expanded regular board or historical - anyone any suggestions? Maybe Diadochi or Gesta Danorum? Let me know what you are interested in!

Other Games: Jed Stone offered to help me out GMing some other games. Games Jed is considering running include *The Nellie Bly Round the World Race*. A game Influenced by wacky races. *Slither and Climb* which is an advanced Snakes and Ladders game. Jed's also been reworking *Revenge of Dracula*. Jed was working on a new RR map of Middle Earth (unfinished at the present time.) And as for RR, if there is any demand? And if so, which maps?