

Diplomacy World #167



Fall 2024 Issue

www.diplomacyworld.net

Notes from the Editor

Welcome to the latest issue of **Diplomacy World**, the Fall 2024 issue. Fall is my favorite time of year. It reminds me of cool days, chilly nights, falling leaves, Halloween, football, my birthday, and dark midnight blue skies. Of course, here in Texas I don't necessarily get some of those things. But I can pretend, and reminisce, and look forward to when visit the north and enjoy a real fall again. One of these days...

In the meantime, how about I turn my focus to the reason we're all here anyway: Diplomacy!

As a hobby, despite the controversy which filled most of last issue, we're strong and growing. And the most obvious evidence of that would be the number of successful events the hobby is seeing, all over the world. And that includes a notable upswing in events in places like the UK and Australia, two long-time hobby powerhouses which hadn't yet bounced back the way others have. That's a very positive sign! I don't think we have any reports in this issue from those events, but everything I'd heard and read suggest they were complete successes.

But don't worry, there are plenty of event reports in this issue covering a number of major Diplomacy happenings over the last three months. There detailed coverage on the Diplomacy event at the World Boardgaming Championships. There's a preview of World DipCon 2025, at the next Whipping. And there's a report from the Big Sky event, by Chris Brand.

One rather lengthy article I am hoping you do not skip over is Markus Zijlstra's piece on an 81-player Imperial Chaos game. It might be enough to inspire you to look into that variant more deeply...or into other variants. I sometimes think the demise of the postal hobby (and with that, nearly all of the zines) made it much harder to become acquainted with variants. New and old, good and bad, they felt like a much larger part of the hobby back then. I'm not suggesting we try to replace the classic game. Never that. But I think there's a lot of room for some variety. And if **proper** diplomatic negotiations are conducted, it sharpens the game skills as well, as you have to adjust to new maps and additional rules. One of my favorite memories of my last few decades of hobby participation involve running a game of Deviant Diplomacy all the way to completion. I

think this was 2009-2012. Maybe one of these days I'll write an article on that game! I can't imagine a more insane game than that variant supplied.

It's probably time for me to make another call for those of you who might be interested in filling one of our open staff positions. The category editors have a fairly simple task: commit to submitting articles three times a year, and attempt to solicit articles from other hobbyists in their particular area.

The Co-Editor position is a bit different. That person would help proof articles and each issue's final template, provide ideas and inspiration for changes or continued direction, act as a sounding board for how the zine is going and what the future holds, and generally be someone I can lean on for advice and support. Obviously, it isn't an easy position to fill, which helps explain why it has been empty since Jim Burgess left us.

That's enough from me this time around. ***I'll close by reminding you the next deadline for Diplomacy World submissions is January 1, 2025.*** Remember, besides articles (which are always prized and appreciated), we LOVE to get letters, feedback, input, ideas, and suggestions too. So, email me at diplomacyworld@yahoo.com! See you in the Winter, and happy stabbing!



An old piece of Nemanja Simic artwork, a few of which you will find elsewhere in this issue

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Contributions are welcomed and will earn you accolades and infinite thanks. Persons interested in the vacant staff positions may contact the managing editor for details or to submit their candidacy or both. The same goes for anyone interested in becoming a columnist or senior writer. Diplomacy is a game invented by Allan Calhamer. It is currently owned by Hasbro and the name is their trademark with all rights reserved.

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What to Expect When You're Expecting World DipCon

by Adam Silverman, WDC 2025 Tournament Director

World DipCon 2025 at Whipping is inching closer to us. We are about six months away from the event, which is being held April 4-6 in San Francisco, California, hosted by the Whipping tournament. Soon after this article posts, registration and the room block for World DipCon 2025 will open. You can keep on top of all the details by checking the [WDC2025 website](#), signing up for our [email list](#), or joining the [NADF Discord Server](#). Have you started making plans yet?

If you're thinking about attending, I'm hoping this article will provide some of the details you might be wondering about. If you previously haven't been thinking about attending, I hope after reading you'll consider joining the premier Diplomacy event of 2025!



Come and get Whipped at Whipping. Image credit: Hal Schild.

The Venue

San Francisco is well known for its big hills, amazing food and arts scene, and colorful cultural history. Within a short drive from SF, you can find rural hiking trails across coastal bluffs and redwood forests, the Napa and Sonoma wine regions, and scenic beaches on the ocean or bay. World DipCon is being held at [Hotel Spero](#), a boutique hotel near Union Square, SF's center for theater and shopping. We've reserved a room block for guests at an extremely generous rate (\$149/night plus tax for two doubles or a king). Our event space comprises two large rooms on the second-floor

mezzanine of the hotel. There are no bedrooms on this floor, and the mezzanine itself provides a ton of extra room for negotiation and some additional tables for gaming.



The California room provides ~1100 sqft of space for gaming tables, and we'll be adding the Serrano room for another ~800 sqft of space.



Right outside of the gaming rooms, the mezzanine provides tons of additional room for negotiation.



Logistics for the event

San Francisco International Airport (SFO) is accessible for direct flights from most major cities around the world. Getting from SFO to the venue is a short ~20-minute train ride on BART, which stops ~3 blocks from the hotel. Door-to-door taxis, Uber, and Lyft are also options.

One of the best parts of attending a Diplomacy tournament in person is spending time with other players off the board. We're going to make sure there's plenty of opportunity to do this, particularly in advance of the main event. We'll be organizing group activities during the day on Thursday and early in the day on Friday for anyone who arrives early. These might include wine tasting, hiking, or sightseeing in SF, depending on people's interests. Because of the numbers we're expecting, there won't be an organized group dinner on Thursday, but we'll help facilitate groups getting together for dinner, drinks, etc.

During the day on Friday before the tournament starts, the gaming room will be open for anyone who wants to play variants, other games, or just have some space to hang out. Whether you are able to arrive early or not, the social time is a huge aspect that makes attending Diplomacy events so memorable. Take some time to meet and get to know the other great people in the hobby off the boards, and without a doubt you'll make some lifelong friends.

The Tournament

World DipCon will officially kick off at 5pm on Friday, April 4 with a very special event - a panel discussion with hobby luminaries and former world champions. We're still working on a specific lineup and will update on the website. I don't yet know what topics they'll be discussing, but I guarantee it will be fun!

The first round of Diplomacy will start at 7pm on Friday. Players will register with the tournament director by 6:45, and the TD will announce the board seeding. We are aiming to have around 100 players, which would be on the order of 14 boards playing simultaneously each round!

Each board will keep its own timing; at Whipping we reduce the negotiation time as the games go on to keep them moving. So that means you'll have 15 minutes to negotiate in 1901-1903, but that will drop to 12 minutes in 1904, and then to 10 minutes from 1908 onward. After negotiation, boards will set timers for 2 minutes of order writing - though many experienced players will write most of their orders during negotiations so as not to be time-pressured here! Players will take turns reading orders, always reading their own first, and the turn is resolved. If all goes well, we'll also have one player on each board record the moves on a Backstabbr sandbox so that the game can be discussed on the [Diplomacy Broadcast Network](#).



Social time before and between rounds at last year's Whipping.

The first three rounds are time unlimited, with the caveat that they must be completed prior to the start of round 4. If someone gets to 18 centers, it's a solo victory. This is the elusive goal we're all playing for, right? As we all know, solos don't happen much, so most games will end in agreed upon draws. Starting in 1906, anyone (who is still alive in the game) can propose to hold a draw vote. The remaining players have the opportunity to verbally veto the proposal. If there are no verbal objections, a TD will be called over to conduct a draw vote. We run these at Whipping by giving everyone two playing cards, one black and one red. Players who support the draw and want to end the game secretly discard a red card; players who want to keep playing secretly discard a black card. The TD reviews the discards; if they are all red, the game ends. If there are one or more black cards, the game continues; the TD will not share how many votes against were present. Draw votes can only be called once per season. There's one caveat. If three secret votes fail, subsequent votes are held openly where each player will simultaneously reveal their voting card.



Soon to be crowned 2024 Whipping Champion Steven Hogue boldly and openly vetoing a draw proposal.

We might see some Friday night boards play into the wee hours of the morning. But hopefully not too late, because Saturday morning we have round 2 starting at 9am and then round 3 at 6:30pm. Round 2 will also feature a youth game for younger players to have the opportunity to play against their peers - yes, Diplomacy tournaments can be a family affair, and we strongly encourage board gamers of all ages to learn the art of the stab!

The first three rounds are qualifying rounds. The TDs will add up everyone's best 2 of 3 scores from these rounds, and the top 21 ranked players will qualify for the Championship Pool (but ranking order *will not be published*). The Championship Pool players will be randomly seeded together on 3 boards, and receive a 50% bonus to their round 4 score. The World DipCon Champion will be the player in the Championship Pool with the highest total tournament score (best 2 of 3 scores in rounds 1-3 plus round 4 score). All other final

placements will be based solely on total tournament score. I'm not going to address the scoring system in this article, as we are still tweaking it at the time of writing. Keep an eye on the WDC2025 website for details.

For the players who don't qualify for the Championship pool, round 4 will still count for final tournament rank. A big round 4 score could propel someone from mid-tier into the top 7, and all other awards are still in play, so there's still plenty to compete for even if you're not in the running for World Champion. Moreover, everyone not in the Championship pool will compete in a Team Tournament in round 4, assuming we have at least 49 such players. Players will form teams of 7 and within their team assign one country to each player. Everyone will be seeded so that teammates are placed not on the same board. The final scores for each player on a team are summed to get the team's score, and the winning team will be crowned Team Champion.

Round 4 will end at a predetermined time between 1:30 and 3:30pm, and will be followed by the awards ceremony. We do a lot of special awards at Whipping, so in addition to crowning the World Champ and recognizing the rest of our Top 7 and Best Countries, you can expect a whole lot of fun ones for all kinds of on-board shenanigans.



Last year's Top 3 and Best Country Bears, along with the Buz Cup award for best performance across the Western Swing tournaments (presently Whipping, Cascadia, SkyCon, and Regatta)

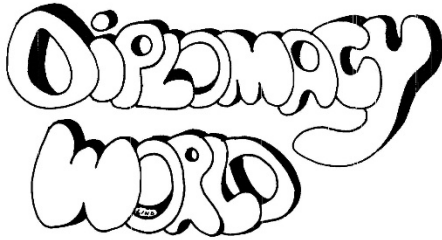
Summary

Whether you primarily play Diplomacy face-to-face, extended deadline, virtually, by zine, or in any other format, World DipCon is *the* celebration of this game we all love. Of course, this is an FTF event - "Con" stands for "Convention" after all - and even if FTF isn't your preferred medium for the game, this is still the best opportunity to meet many amazing hobby enthusiasts and celebrate our amazing community. I hope to see you all there in April!

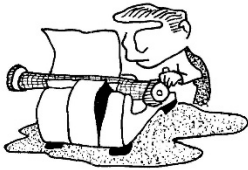
[[Contact Adam at worlddipcon2025@gmail.com]]

From the DW Archive: The Theory of Demilitarization

by Mal Arky



"Lessee, now... I'm in four of Brennan's games... three of Boardman's... one of von Netze's and one of Reinsel's... I'm running three *gTab* games, and plan to start another ... then there's the weekly YUDO meeting, and Blitzkrieg night with Sayre... I have time for dinner every night but Wednesday, if I carry my lunch to that University class... and I've three hours free on alternate Sundays.
"Dear Fred: Please enter me in your new Superdiplomacy game..."



VOL. 1, NO. 3

MAY - JUN 1974

Doug Beyerlein was the author of this article, published in [DW#3](#) back in June 1974. At this point in my life, I was blissfully unaware of Diplomacy. I was seven years old, so I think I'm pretty safe in saying that shouldn't be surprising.

There weren't many articles in the third issue of *DW* that caught my eye when I was thinking about which piece I would pirate for this series. Doug was a regular writer about Diplomacy at this time and usually I find myself enjoying his articles.

The interesting thing about "The Theory of Demilitarization" is that it features a mention of something I hadn't previously seen outside of the Great ABC's own article, published in the *IDA Diplomacy Handbook* from 1974, "[Objectives Other Than Winning](#)": the 'Strong Second' school of Diplomacy.

There have been some daft thoughts about Diplomacy over the years but the Strong Second school takes all the biscuits. Followers of this philosophy would happily

lose the game and play to grab SCs, aiming to finish on as high a number of dots as possible. Presumably the idea is that they'd somehow done better than those players with fewer SCs, missing the key point that they'd still lost the game. Why would anyone play like this? Well, as usual, it's the way a game is scored. As Calhamer wrote: "*Some ratings systems give credit for them [objectives not in the rules], one GM gives small prizes for the first three places, and so forth.*"

Beyerlein mentions the Strong Second school as an example of what can happen in an alliance which doesn't demilitarize and when growth between allies isn't balanced. The smaller ally may find themselves playing for second place, unable to grow at the rate of the other, but not willing – or able – to attack the other.

So, what is Beyerlein's theory?

The context is a game of Diplomacy in which a game-long alliance forms between players. He says that, in such an alliance – and, indeed, *any* alliance – all members benefit from a member of the alliance gaining SCs. It doesn't matter if one power grows more quickly than others as the alliance is, effectively, acting as a bloc, a single unit.

We've come across this idea before in this series. In [DW#164](#) I kicked off this time-travelling series by looking at Edi Birsan's article "The Odd Theory" from *DW#1* and Lewis Pulsipher's reply from *DW#5* "A Myth Defended". Lewis suggested that draws are between "interest groups"; these might be a single player, a 2-player alliance, 3-player alliance, etc. In other words, a 5-player draw might feature a balance between two 2-player alliances and a lone wolf.

Beyerlein, then, is thinking of an alliance as working as a single unit, with common goals, and the assumption he's making is that the ultimate goal is to achieve a draw. In other words, the alliance is working as a utilitarian unit, a Spockian group (if you'll forgive the eight-year leap forward in time), where the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few, or – more appropriately in this case – the needs of the ones.

There are other forms of alliance in Diplomacy, of course, rather than Carebear alliances, and Doug gives a nod to these. In the [Diplomacy Games #64](#) podcast, Andrew Goff discusses keeping a long-term alliance going and not ending it by stabbing too early. The idea

isn't about playing the game to a draw, but about maintaining security and progress by using the alliance until you have the chance of going for the solo. This might be termed the 'Good Ally' school. There's the alliance of convenience, where the alliance is intended to be short-term, with limited goals, perhaps the elimination of a common enemy.

What I've found in today's game is that a long-term alliance – whether Carebear or Good Ally – tends to be dominated by the idea that the allies need to maintain an at least approximate parity in the number of units they have on the board. This may be an example of lower-level play, of course, when players don't have the foresight to see either how an imbalance may be righted later in the game, or where parity is seen as all-important rather than shared progress. Short-termism, in other words.

Doug's idea, rather, is long-termist: the success of the alliance is all that's important, not the comparative success of individual players that make up the alliance. He says that the success of one player in the alliance benefits the alliance as a whole. If one ally begins to grow beyond others, this isn't a bad thing for the smaller players but a good thing for the alliance. Remember, his context is a game-long alliance.

What he does take into account is the human factor: In an unequal alliance, the smaller players are going to grow fidgety. The threat, of course, is that what is being cast as a Carebear alliance is actually being planned as a Good Ally alliance: one player, and possibly more, are using the alliance to establish a position from which they can, eventually, strike out for the solo. The bigger the leading ally grows, the further they outstrip the others, the more chance they have of stabbing and winning.

Beyerlein's solution to this problem is his version of demilitarization. While one player may be benefitting more than others in the alliance, rather than building units they could waive builds, thereby maintaining near parity in terms of unit numbers despite disparity in terms of SCs owned. He suggests the threat to the smaller powers comes from units on the board: if the number of units remains almost equal, there is less chance of the larger power stabbing, and less fear of the stab, which is probably more important to maintain the alliance.

He also points out that it neutralizes borders. With no new units, common borders are protected; no units means no stab. We could take it further, as a stab doesn't *have* to be on another power's home SCs, after all. It could be on the frontline. This could mean that, if the stab *does* come there, the stabbed player might be able to disband retreating units and rebuild at home, although this is likely to be affected by the fact that the stabbed player will probably be losing units.

Doug has quite a narrow view of stabbing, I think. He states that stabs are most effective in the Fall, which is not necessarily true. It *is* true, of course, that if you stab in a Fall turn, you don't risk any retaliation. Take SCs from someone in Fall, and they're unlikely to be able to respond; do it Spring and they can, perhaps, fight back, as they don't immediately lose units in most cases.

I don't agree, however, that Spring stabs are a bad thing, and that stabs might be all about grabbing SCs immediately. A stab might be a positional attack and might happen in Spring to allow an attack on SCs in the Fall. You can't tell me that a positional move against an ally *isn't* a stab. And a positional stab might include capturing SCs. If there's a chance to take multiple SCs, perhaps attacking in Spring might be the optimum time to do it. It's all situational.

The type of stab Doug is thinking of, though, is one that remilitarizes home SCs, when a player who has agreed to not build then builds again. This gives the other ally two turns to deal with this betrayal. The only way it can be dealt with, of course, is on the frontline because the victim can't do anything about the units built by the betrayer.

The best stabs, of course, match the words of Machiavelli: "*If an injury has to be done to a man it should be so severe that his vengeance need not be feared.*" There's never a lot of point in trying to stab an ally if you can't weaken them enough to prevent their revenge.

Sun Tzu also has words for a similar action: "*Thus it is that in war the victorious strategist only seeks battle after the victory has been won, whereas he who is destined to defeat first fights and afterwards looks for victory.*" Before you stab someone, you need to make sure you're going to succeed. Again, you don't need to fear their revenge because they aren't in a position to launch retaliation.

This might not stop everyone, of course; some people become 'Armored Ducks', Richard Sharp's name for people who do what they want regardless of the damage to themselves (and others).

I've said it before and I'll say it again, a good Diplomacy article shouldn't be judged on whether you agree with everything but about whether it makes you think about your game. I hadn't come across this idea of waiving builds before, and it is an interesting idea.

Usually, in my experience, waiving builds is something that happens infrequently and is likely to be a one-off or, less often, for a short period of time. When it happens, it is to achieve what Doug's theory is about: it is meant to

assure the ally that you're doing anything to threaten them.

What Doug is suggesting is an extended period of not building. The alliance, he feels, is dependent on no possible threats arising, and not building additional units as a power with a larger number of SCs needs to do this to carry the alliance along.

I think this ignores the fact that success, whether as a single player or an alliance, doesn't mean that you can continually succeed without building units. One of the benefits in taking an SC from another player is that you have the chance to gain a double-unit advantage over them. If you're both on seven SCs, say, and you take two units from them, you may jump to nine units while they drop to five. Rather than facing parity, you're now almost twice as big as them. If you waive your builds, your advantage is smaller.

Doug would argue, of course, that the benefits, in terms of maintaining the alliance, outweigh the disadvantages of not establishing an even stronger position over the enemy. And this is what Doug is arguing for: the

maintenance of a game-long alliance. Perhaps he's right, if this is your aim. Whether it *should* be your aim is a different matter.

In the modern game, I doubt that a stab would lead the victim to play for second place by keeping the alliance going but looking to grab SCs to finish on the highest number of SCs behind your victory. As I said above, this was a strange – and I'd even say perverse – idea; I haven't seen anyone suggesting it in any game I've played. Rather, I think the more usual result would be in the victim seeking vengeance, in one form or another, or deciding to stick with the alliance in hopes of keeping it going despite the stab. The former seems much more common than the latter.

I can't say how successful applying Doug's theory would be, and it isn't something I agree with as a policy... but, then again, I don't play this type of Carebear game. As a temporary policy, to maintain an alliance for a little longer, I think it has some traction, if only to give me time to wait out a possible stab later in the game. But it is very definitely food for thought.

Diplomacy and Disney at Dice Tower East

By Thomas Haver

Diplomacy returned to Orlando for another year of fun in the Sun at Dice Tower East. Each year around Independence Day a game convention is held in Orlando, Florida at the Caribe Royale Resort. Dice Tower itself has been around for almost twenty years – they're a group of gamers who create board game related content in the form of YouTube videos, podcasts, and reviews. They started hosting conventions a few years ago with a focus on fostering a fun, inclusive environment (with a massive 2,000 game library to back it up).



Last year was our first visit to Dice Tower East – we weren't quite sure what to expect because organized events weren't a primary draw for the convention like other big events such as GenCon, WBC, and Origins. Fortunately, the convention organizers were a friendly bunch and helped us acclimate to the event culture. They provided us a dedicated space to run the "Giant Diplomacy" that's become a standard at many gaming conventions. We had a successful event and managed to interest a new GM, who ran Diplomacy at Escape Winter Con. Always wonderful to inspire others to start spreading the good word of Diplomacy to others.



We had additional help this year: reigning US Champion Dan McNeill is local to Central Florida and volunteered

to help run the event. Last year Dan was instrumental in making the event happen, turning a difficult one-off event into a full-fledged family vacation. This year he came to Dice Tower East with his son to assist in running the event. We had two boards worth of players interested in learning to play on our unique setups. Prize support was generously provided by Renegade Games. Additionally, Dan donated some of his previous prizes events last year – paying it forward with good vibes.



Dice Tower East is split into several rooms at the convention center. The primary room is for open gaming and the dealer hall. There's a separate room for "large games" that either require extra space for setup or have many participants per game (like Werewolf). After a rules explanation we divided everyone into two boards. Dan & his son took over GM duties on the Giant Map, while I helped with the fabric map. Two excellent groups with players from the US (multiple States), Canada (Quebec), and the UK (Scotland). We had nearly everyone return from last year plus some fresh recruits. The fabric map had a three-way tie for board top between England, Austria, and Turkey. The Giant Map had France sitting alone with 9-centers. Plenty of goodies to share with the attendees: shirts, tumblers, hats, stickers, magnets, and of course -- The Game!

We also took advantage of the proximity to Disney World by visiting each of the four major theme parks during the week. The Resort has a shuttle to each of the parks. Thanks to Dan McNeill, we received lightning lane passes each day. This was a huge time-saver for a family of four trying to get to every ride. There are plenty of Diplomacy players in the Florida area, but the added benefit of being close to Disney also makes this a destination convention. It's quite convenient to split gaming and Disney throughout the week.



Dice Tower East has quickly become one of my favorite volunteer events. The players at the convention are nice and eager to learn, so everything runs smoothly. The convention organizers are good partners. I only allowed one board per event last year; this year I doubled the cap, and we exceeded turnout. Next year we'll add some new games with permission. With two GMs in the Florida area, we plan to have other Diplomacy events at conventions (e.g., Escape Winter Con) and local game stores.

Many thanks to BOTH Dan's for supporting the growth of Diplomacy in Florida. We have a good foundation with their support and much to look forward to in the years ahead.



Photos of the event can be found here:
<https://photos.app.goo.gl/seLbiR7JsA5RXBfK7>

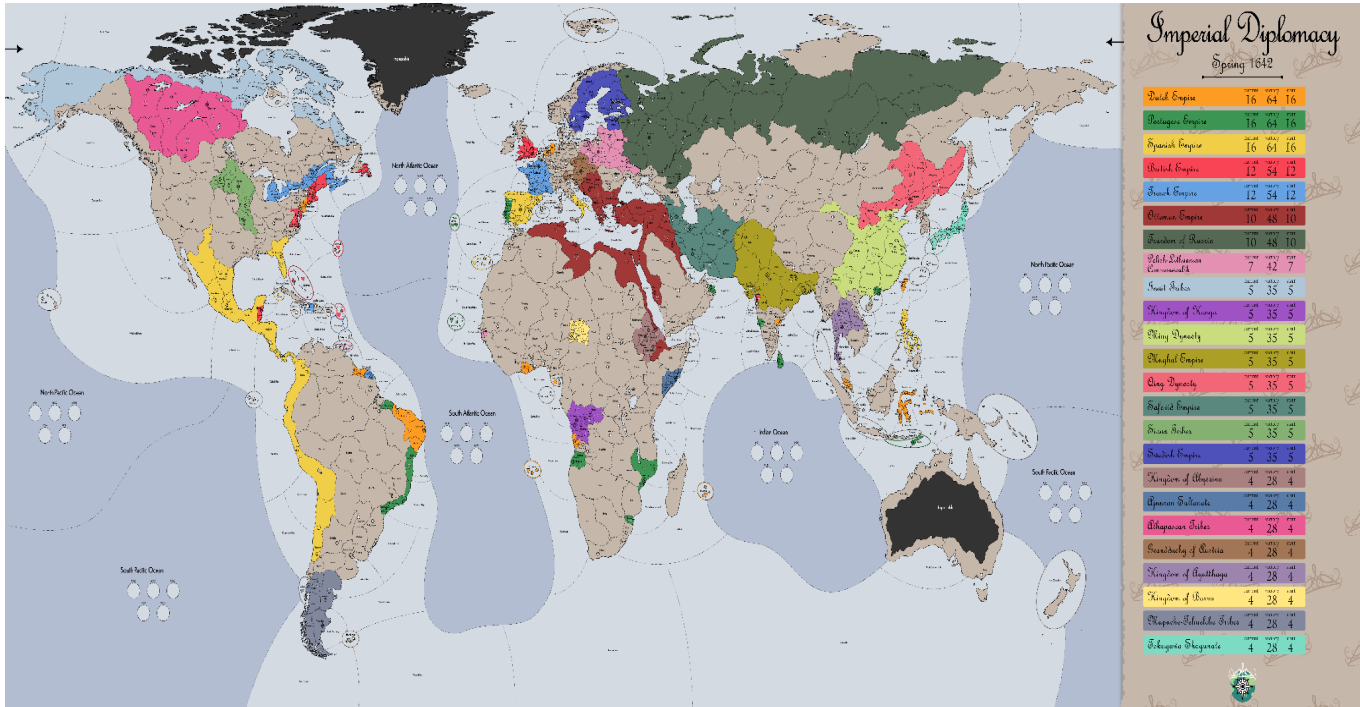
The 81 Player Diplomacy Game

By Markus Zijlstra

81 city states. 8 in-game years. 180,000 messages. This is my account of what is likely the biggest Diplomacy game ever played.

Why did it happen?

Imperial Diplomacy is a name used for multiple Diplomacy variants, but the relevant one for this article is Flare and Elisha's 25-player global variant set in 1642. It's caused quite the stir in the online variant hobby, with the most recent round of signups filling 15 games - well over 300 players!



The Imperial Diplomacy Alpha Playtest Map

A few months ago, I made a commentary video with my friend Ezio on my experience in the first Imperial Diplomacy playtest, playing Bornu (the yellow power in central Africa), for our YouTube channel DiploStrats. The timing on the video was perfect, as it was immediately after we'd gotten a shoutout from a YouTuber with half a million subscribers, and a large number of those new viewers play Paradox Grand Strategy games - so a global variant based on colonial powers got a huge amount of interest. The result was a massive influx into the discord server, and a lot of people asking when the next playtest would be.

Unfortunately, the next playtest wasn't due to start for three months. The variant creators wanted to completely rework parts of the map for balance reasons (including removing my power, Bornu, from the game entirely) and on a map this large that was going to take a long time. So, another game was planned to tide people over until the main event - Imperial Chaos Europe.

Imperial Chaos Europe

Chaos Diplomacy is a variant in which every supply center on the map is controlled by a different power. As you can guess from the name, it is indeed chaotic. On the standard Diplomacy map, 34 powers fight for control of Europe, with any dot you take in the earlygame requiring the elimination of another player - it's intense, it's a little brutal, and in my opinion it's one of the most difficult tests of a player's Diplomacy skill out there.

Flare asked himself the question - what if Chaos, but bigger?

And so Imperial Chaos Europe was born. The mod team isolated the European theatre of the Imperial Diplomacy variant, a region with 81 supply centers, and made each dot a separate nation - resulting in the biggest city state thunderdome Diplomacy has ever seen.

To add to the chaos, this would also be Public Press Only (the Woodrow Wilson Variant) - every single

message those 81 players sent would be sent in just 5 public press channels, visible to everyone.



The Imperial Chaos Europe starting map

The hype was palpable. The 81 player slots for this game filled in *under two minutes* from signups opening.

As a thank you for making the video, Ezio and I both got early access to signup, so we both managed to get in. I ended up playing as Ghent (the green province in Belgium) and Ezio played Stockholm (the blue province in Sweden).

We go through our full experiences with the game, discussing negotiations, tactics and general thoughts phase by phase, over in a four part video series on DiploStrats - if you're interested in the full story, you can find that here:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLRljirihAFB4EPA PoXU8TJSkefQPdiqO>

The fact those four videos amount to over 12 hours should show just how much went down in the 8 ingame years of this game! There's no way I'd be able to go over the whole thing in an article, so I'm going to stick to the highlights here.

The Wheel and the World Convoy

The earlygame negotiation was much less about individual gains, and more about players trying to scramble to find groups to join for their own protection. Many of these revolved around real life country or region borders, with regions like Morocco, Spain, France, Italy and the Balkans forming alliances that essentially negated any chance at early growth for any individual in favor of long-term expansion for the entire group. I ended

up in a Benelux alliance consisting of Amsterdam, Utrecht, Luxemburg, Paris and Ghent, while Ezio joined 'The Vikings', a huge group which consisted of almost every player in Scandinavia as well as a few of the northern island nations.

Two notable groups which differed from the others were the Wheel and the World Convoy. Rather than being based purely on geographical location, these groups focused on actually making something unique happen on the board together.

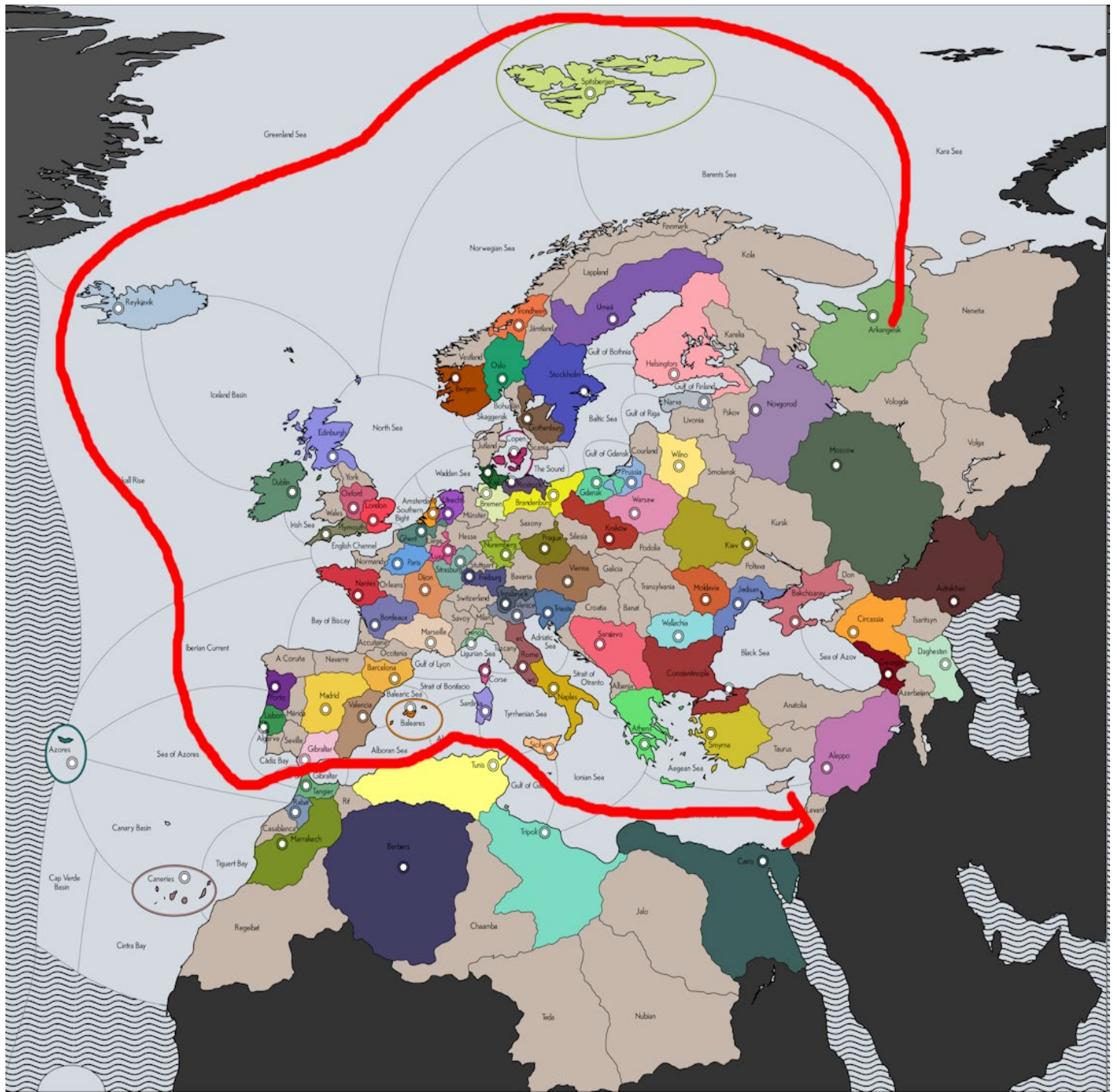
For the Wheel, a geographical quirk of the map meant that seven supply centers lay in a circle, and so these players rallied around the idea of 'spinning' - having every player move clockwise around the circle. Opinions were divided on what to do beyond that, with some players supporting the idea of continuing to spin and others wanting to push out and expand as a group - but for the first turn, they all agreed to make the Wheel happen.



The Bavarian Wheel

The World Convoy was an initiative proposed by Arkangelsk in northern Russia, and mainly supported by the island nations around the map. Much like St Petersburg-Syria on the standard map, this convoy would take the Arkangelsk army and deliver it to Levant, just south of Aleppo. The idea was to try to get the international community to make something truly difficult

happen by all working together - unlike the Wheel, this would require a large number of people to leave their supply center unguarded. It was met with some skepticism for exactly this reason, but all the required powers got on board with the idea.



The planned route of the World Convoy

Both of these goals failed spectacularly, for very different reasons. The World Convoy was scuppered when Madrid built an army, despite promising to waive, sending every single one of their neighbors into panic. None of them had built armies, so nobody had any

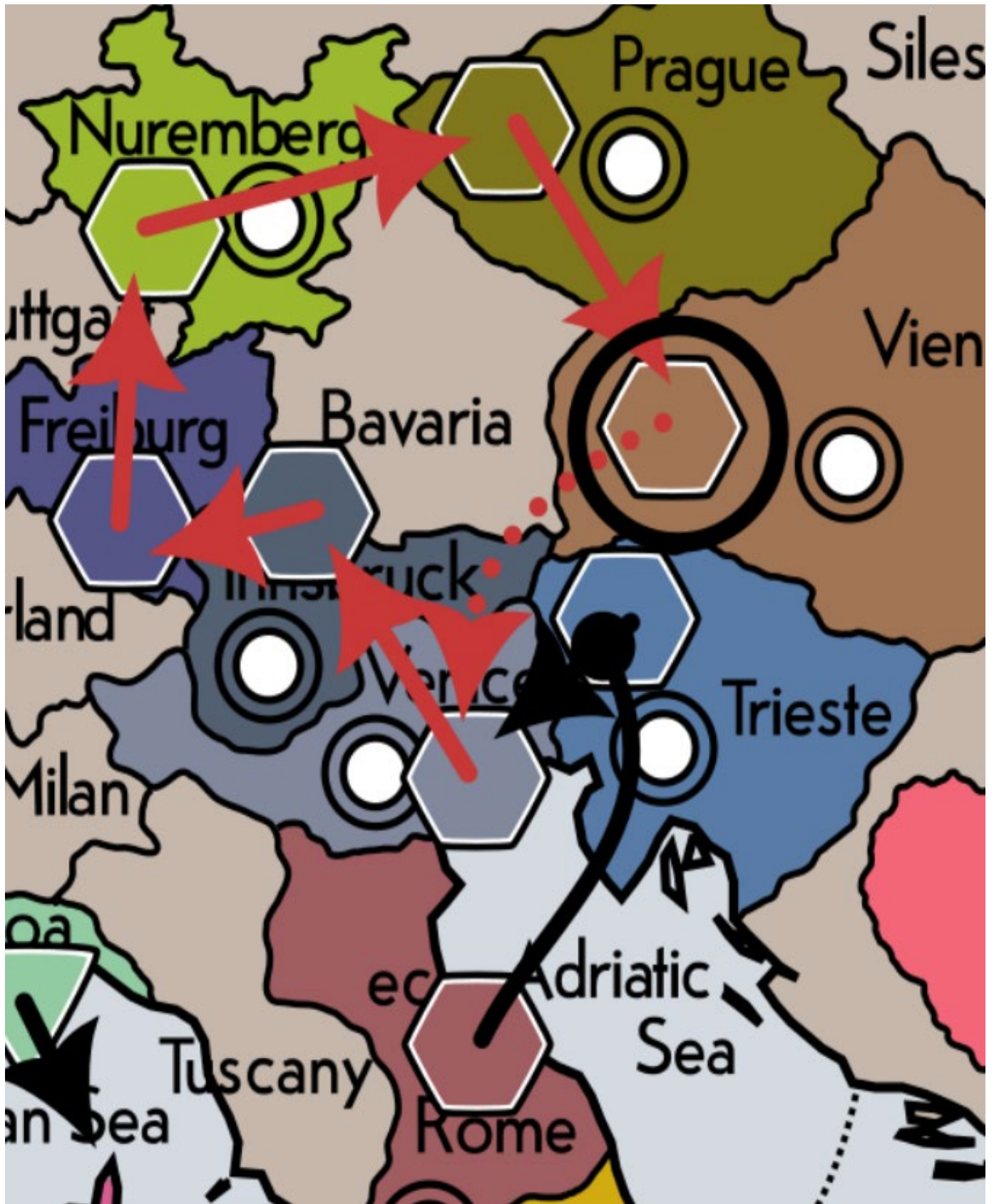
capability to deal with the threat Madrid presented, and given the convoy had been reliant on a number of these nations participating there was no longer any way to get the army past the Iberian Peninsula.



Madrid becomes the only power in Iberia to have an army, scuppering the World Convoy

The Wheel did attempt to spin, but a misorder from one player and an unexpected support from a non-Wheel member caused almost every player to bounce back, except for Trieste, who accidentally dislodged Venice. This caused some panic among the Wheel members, especially the dislodged Venetian, but some quick thinking and good negotiation from Freiberg - a Wheel member who strongly supported the idea of the Wheel

mobilizing against their neighbors - managed to get everyone on board with an attack against Benelux, something which became doubly effective as Luxemburg defected from that alliance and joined the Wheel too. I ended up being forced to become a nomad nation to escape them - something covered in much more depth in the video!

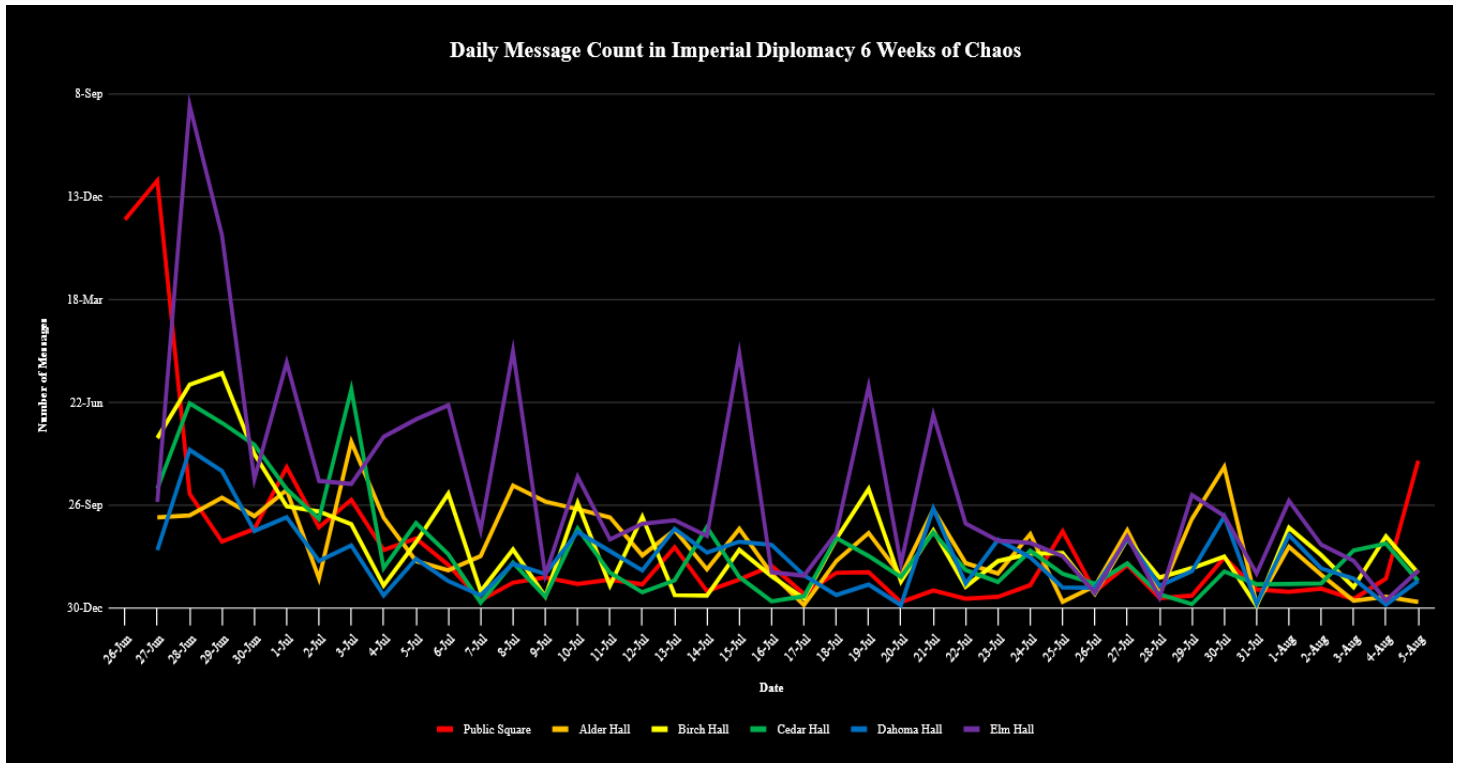


The Wheel fails to spin

ElmFire

Something incredible about this game was just how many messages were sent. The player for Azores kept a

spreadsheet for detailed statistics, including just how many messages were being sent in each of the 5 negotiation channels:

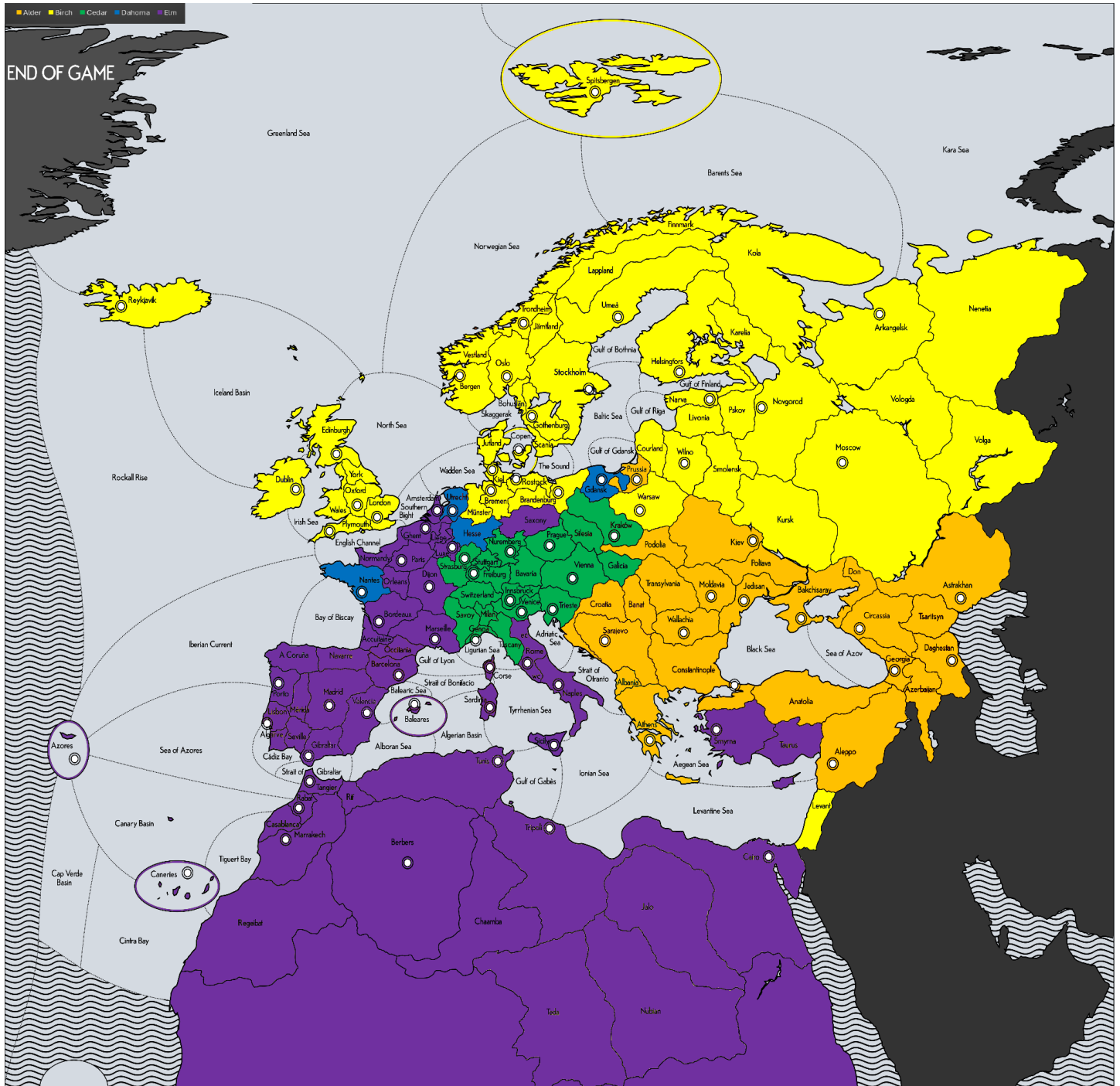


The total message count in each chat over the course of the game

The purple line is Elm Hall, the fifth chat room. This was primarily used by southern powers - everyone in Spain, Africa, Italy, the Balkans, Anatolia and even as far as Moscow mainly used this chat for their negotiations. There were times where the messages were blazing past so fast that you barely had time to read one before a reply came in - these moments were dubbed by the players as 'ElmFire', and resulted in the spikes you see throughout the graph. Perhaps the most interesting thing about ElmFire wasn't the southern negotiations, though - it was the fact that players on the other side of the map

would keep an eye out for it, and when Elm was going really fast, they would try to slip messages in to their allies to conceal their tactics and potential stabs from other players in their region. In a public press game, trying to hide your messages among the ElmFire was the closest one could get to private messaging.

Below is a map of which regions used which chat rooms the most - the Holy Balkan Empire switched to Alder at about the halfway mark, which is part of why Elm's activity decreases beyond that point.



The endgame positions of the players who primarily used each chat

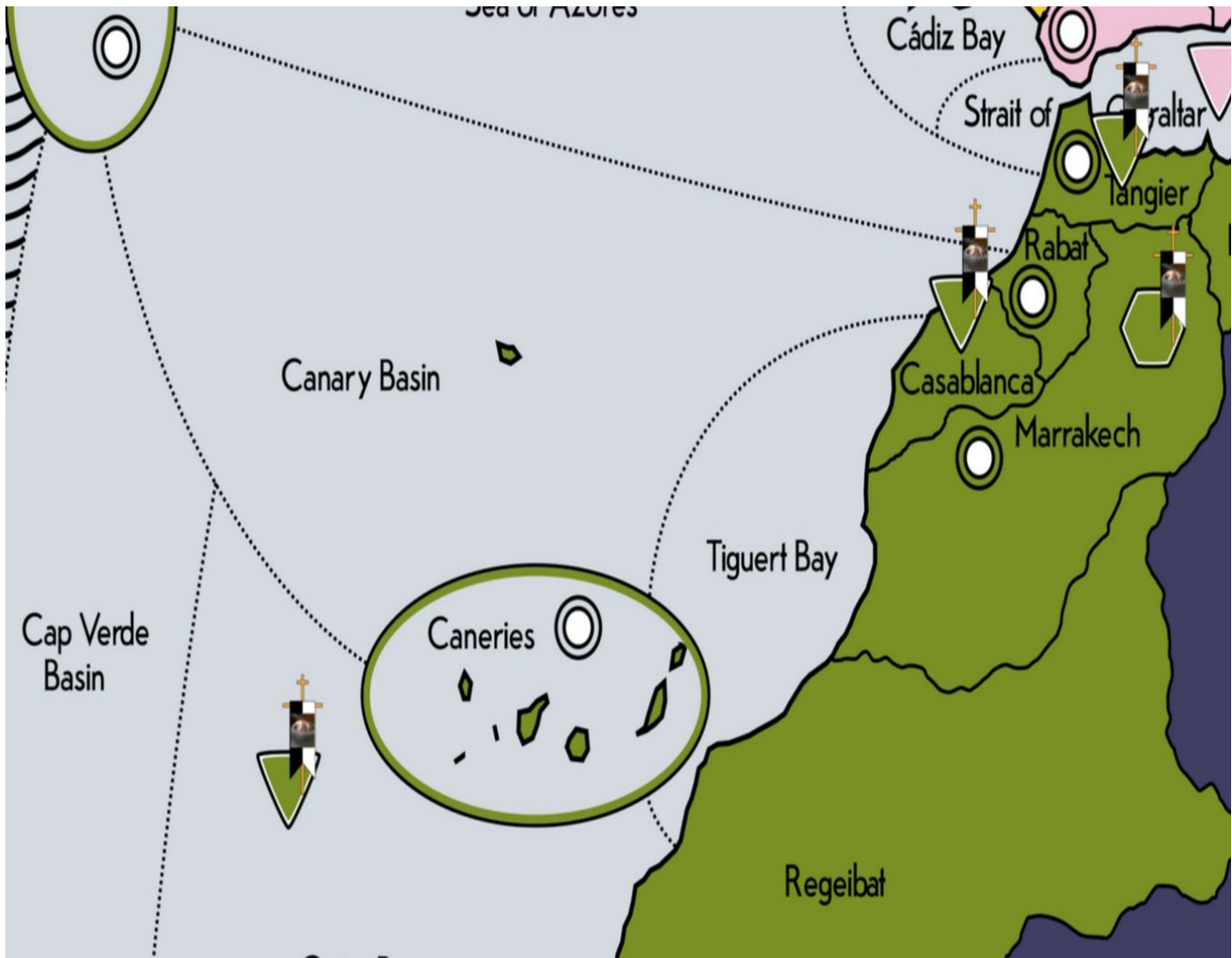
Religion

It feels strange to refer to Religion in a Diplomacy game, but this game had one emerge - Bumbleism. The player for Helsingfors (in Finland) was called Bumble, and another player renaming themselves to copy Bumble's name and profile for a joke quickly snowballed into something bigger, with many players around the map adding 'Bumble' into their name and professing to be Bumbles.

What started out as a joke became a religion when Ezio stabbed Bumble, killing them after just the first year of the game. This caused outcry among the Bumbles on the board, who quickly nominated Narva (in Estonia) as the new 'Bumble Pope', continuing Bumble's legacy. As it turned out, Narva's papacy would not last very long, as the very same people who killed the original Bumble quickly descended upon them and eliminated them the very next year.

With Narva's goodbye speech came the nomination of a third Bumble Pope, Bremen, who attempted to unite various Bumbles against the Viking alliance that had killed the two previous popes. His reign was slightly more successful than his predecessors, managing to survive two years, but the Viking alliance was so large at this point that the attempts to bring it down were futile, and soon Bremen too was destroyed.

An election among the Bumbles occurred after Bremen's elimination, deciding which Bumble would continue the papal legacy. And this was where the Viking menace was halted, because the victor was Marrakech - a power so far away as to be unreachable by the Bumblesbane. Marrakech declared a complete reorganization of the religion, declaring themselves the Caliph and naming several Cardinals who would carry the torch in the north, all of whom survived to the end of the game following Viking infighting and the collapse of that alliance.

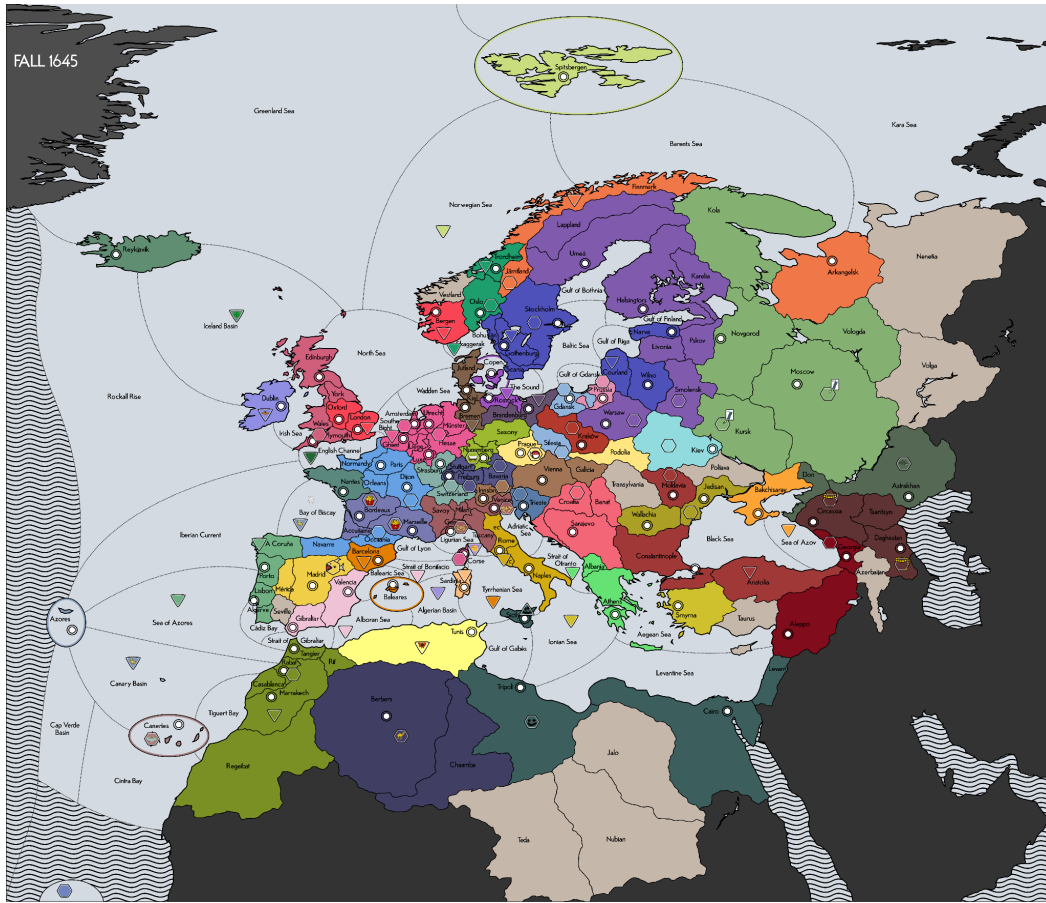


The banners of the final Bumble Caliph

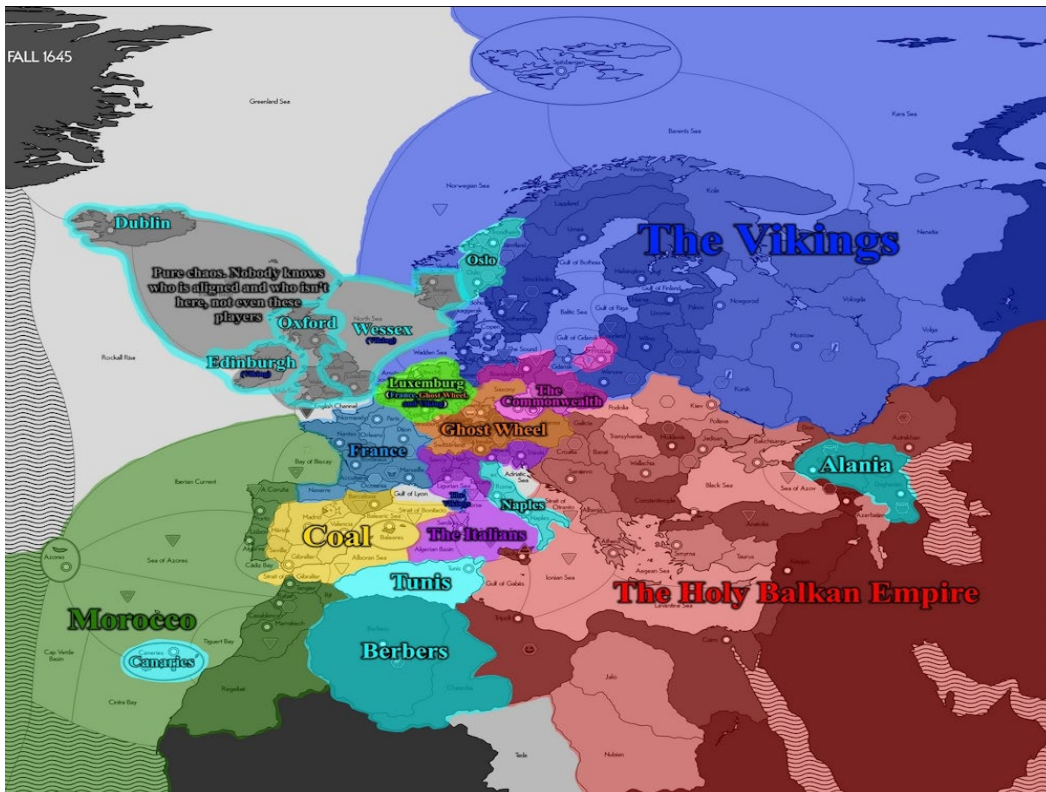
Snapshots of the Game

At two points in the game, I made Reddit posts showcasing the extent of the various alliances of the

board. As mentioned, I'm not going to go into detail on the events of the game in this article - you can find that in the video series! But these snapshots provide a good overview of the progression of the game.



Country borders in 1645, 4 years into the game.



Alliance Map in 1645. Light blue nations are not part of any alliance.

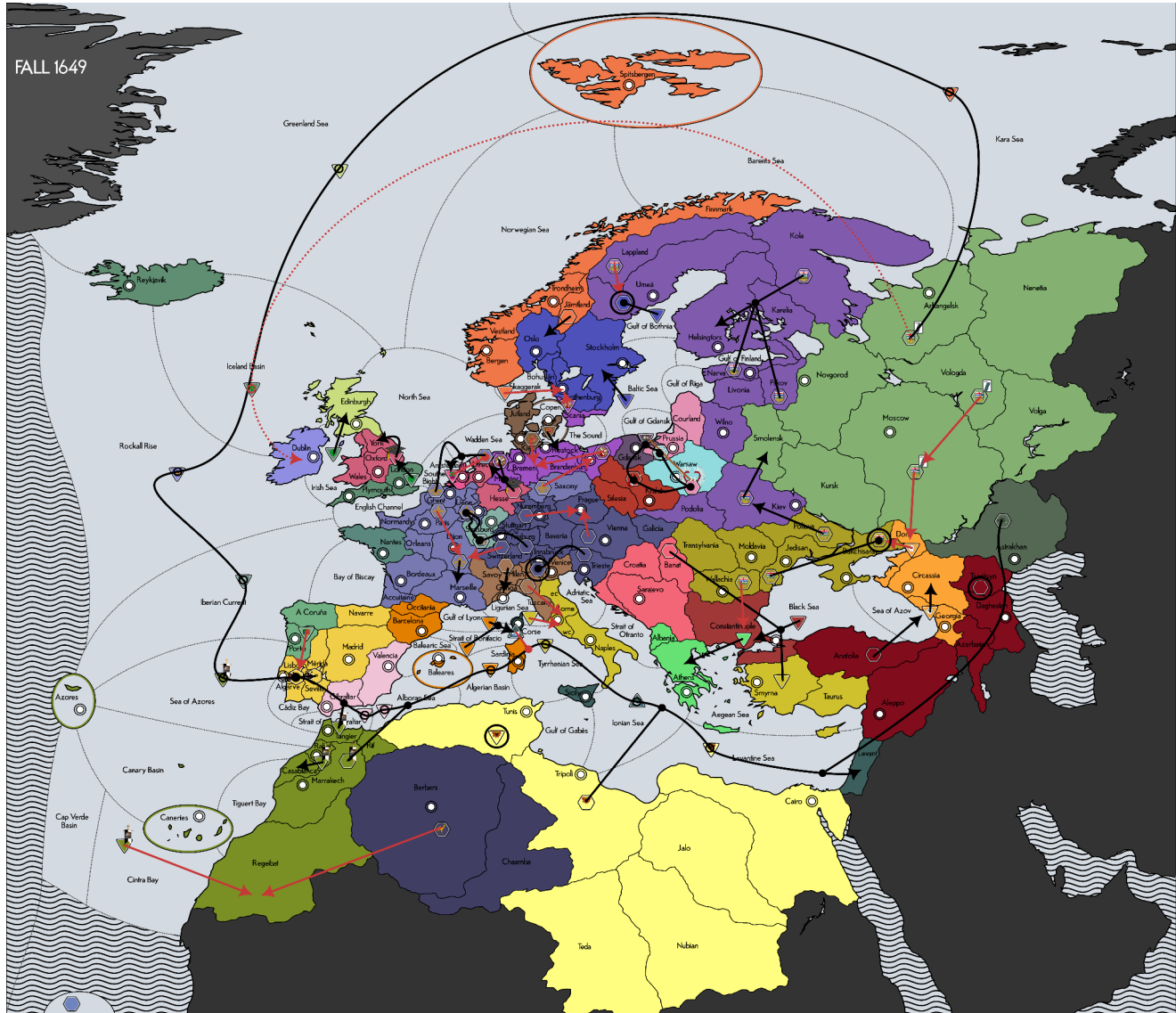
The Grand Finale

The objective of this game had been to control the most supply centers at the end of 1649, the predetermined year limit for the game. As that date approach, several contenders for that title emerged - primarily Marrakech, Finland, Kiev, Freiberg, and Bordeaux.

In the final year of the game, it was very much a two-way contest between Freiberg and Bordeaux, with both beginning the year on 6 SCs and threatening to end it on 7 or 8. With many other players out of contention, particularly those around the edges of Europe, the idea of the World Convoy re-emerged and started gaining

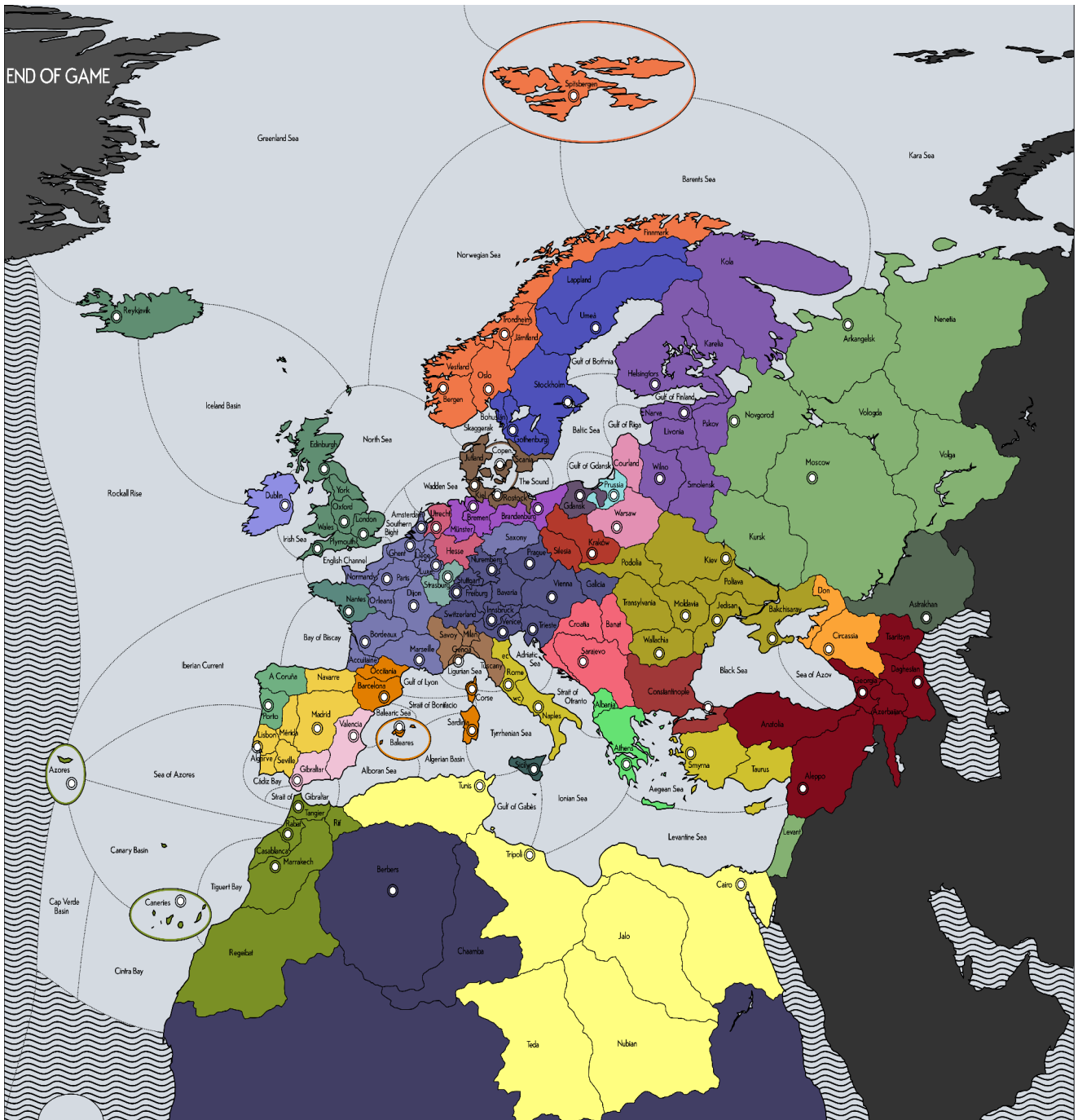
steam - with many players creating propaganda in favor of the idea, pitching it as one final way to unite the international community. Videos and posters were made, with one player even dressing up in full Viking garb and going to a local restaurant called Levant to film a propaganda piece!

In the end, it worked - the World Convoy circled the map, providing a backdrop to the fight for victory between Bordeaux and Freiberg. In the end, particularly due to intervention from neighbors who wanted to try to force a tie, both Bordeaux and Freiberg ended up on 7 SCs and took the joint victory, beating out 79 other players to do so!



The game's final turn. Bordeaux (blueish-purple in France) and Freiberg (dark blue in Germany) fight their way to a joint 7 SC victory, while the world convoy circles around them.

Note: the marked World Convoy arrow is not entirely accurate (e.g. going through Iceland Basin) but the required convoy orders were all present.



The cleaned up final map. I end up on one SC in northern France, holding just Nantes - Ezio is a little more successful, holding all 3 Swedish SCs at the game's conclusion.

This whole game was an absolutely incredible event, and I want to say a huge thank you to Flare, Foggy, Elisha, and everyone else who was involved in running it. I'm not certain whether my claim that it's the largest Diplomacy game of all time (by player count) is correct, but I think it likely is. I hope we see more of these kind of events in future, especially with the massive influx of new players we've had recently!

If you're interested in Imperial Diplomacy, their discord server can be found here: <https://discord.gg/M2AaHAeM9U>
Alpha 2 playtests will have just started by the time this goes out, but there will be more in future. And hopefully, more Chaos games too!

World Boardgaming Championships 2024

by Ryan Feathers

The 2024 World Boardgame Championships is a 9-day long gaming convention that was held this year from Saturday July 20th through Sunday July 28th in Seven Springs PA. This was my 5th time attending, you can find my experiences from [2018](#), [2019](#), [2022](#), and [2023](#) in the linked geeklists.

I once again attended for the entire 9 days of the convention and played games pretty much nonstop the entire time from 9am-12pm when they have scheduled games. I mostly woke up, ate breakfast, and then played games at the convention center the rest of the day while eating food I packed in when possible. I mostly play tournament games, while others spend more time in open gaming or doing other things. It has become not just my favorite board gaming convention, but one of the highlights of the year for me, and I continue to look forward to attending yearly. What follows are my experiences from the games I played, as well as a few other entries around travel and the convention experience itself.

Every year when I make my schedule, I talk about trying to get Diplomacy in this year. I did at my very first year of WBC in 2018, but since then I've not returned to play. The difficulty is that Diplomacy rounds are four hours, and they run at the end of the week on Friday and Saturday, which is when a lot of other games have semifinals and finals. Of course, it's a great issue to have to be in semifinals and finals of other games, but many years I wind up choosing to not prioritize Diplomacy for other opportunities.

This year, I finally did. Or rather I also didn't have nearly so many other conflicts. This first round of Diplomacy I was missing an Acquire heat and a Concordia heat, but both of them would just help make it more likely I would qualify, as is I had a win in each and would be close to making it. This is where talking to Nick Henning and some other schedule maximizers over the years has taught me that I used to value locking in SF berths a bit more, and now I'm more comfortable hoping to make it in, and being content if I don't. The other factor is admittedly I just finally prioritized Diplomacy over some other opportunities though.

Boy, am I glad I did. I wind up playing all three rounds of Diplomacy this year, and I had an absolute blast. I love this game, and I love the WBC crowd for it, and I love the energy and support the GM Tom Haver provides to the event. Not only do you get great games of Diplomacy, but there's so much swag from Renegade as support. There were tons of magnets, stickers, etc.

Every player that attended got a Diplomacy T-Shirt. There were tons of prizes and extra support. There were specialty Diplomacy boards and maps, and on top of that he just has clipboards and sheets printed out for everyone and a few aides along with timers to make the whole thing so smooth. It's an absolute delight.

I had some of the most fun of my recent WBC's playing these three rounds of Diplomacy that I really want to make sure to prioritize this event over other things as best I can in future years. It's also made me realize I'm starting to get a little tired of playing some of the same games and doing the same things at WBC--part of the fun was the new challenge of trying to see how well I can do at an event I haven't really tried to test myself in fully before. I'm hoping to figure at least one and maybe a handful of games to try and press myself in new directions in for WBC 2025.

As for this game specifically, I randomly draw Germany, and I'm quite happy. I actually love the central nations, where you have good reason to talk to so many various powers and players. I love getting in the action of everything and trying to suss out what's happening and subtly encourage things to happen in directions good for me. Of course, the downside of central nations is that you can find yourself under attack from many sides and meet a rapid demise.

The start of the game though goes great for me. Both England and France seem content to work with me, or at least expand somewhat naturally for 1901. Russia mentions that they intend to let me have Sweden, which is not particularly common. This is coming from a wily Diplomacy veteran, so I'm not quite sure what the plan is. A lot of time Germany and Russia bounce in Sweden in 1901, and it's a source of contention for them for a while. The deal seems to be that I get Sweden as long as I go after England with my extra growth, keeping Russia's northern centers free from attack so they can focus elsewhere.

Well, I take the center, but I don't quite go along with what Russia wants. I am feeling great with 6 centers and 3 builds out of 1901. It's a little worrying as that fast of growth can sometimes make you the threat, but nobody yet seems to be going against me. I don't know if they are just being nice because I appear to be new blood, or if they just all have their eyes on other players, but it's a nice spot. I can see Russia and Turkey are kind of teaming up in a classic alliance known the Juggernaut, and I'm not here for it. So, despite Russia's kindness to me, I kind of continue being friends with both England

and France, even though I think they're just attacking each other, which I find good for me. This gives me the freedom to make a play for Warsaw, which I get at Russia's expense. France has also grown pretty fast though, and they are gunning for England.

Russia and Turkey are making quick work of Austria though, but I work with Italy, and France, to get units in position to stop their growth. With Germany/Italy/France working together, we prevent much for Russia and Turkey continued growth or alliance, and they eventually look other ways.

Around this time, the Russian player suggested to me that I should be stabbing France and just going for a huge number of centers, as nobody would be able to stop me. I'm wary, as I think this may be his play back in the game--if I turn on France, and France/England/Russia/Italy can coordinate, they probably could contain me--maybe. It's one of Russia's few plays left, I think. But also, he may be right.

I don't stab France until later when it's quite a bit safer for me, but also less lucrative--right towards the end of our four hours I know I'm topping the board, but I'm not at that great of a center count. It's a strong showing and result, but I think they maybe were right--if I stabbed earlier and just went for it, I may have been able to put up a bigger score.

Diplomacy at WBC plays three rounds, and you take your two best scores to determine the overall winner. The scoring system is C-Diplo, because there are 100 points up for grabs. If someone solos they get all 100. Otherwise, you get 1 point for playing, 1 point per supply center you own, and then there are 38 bonus points for whomever has the most centers, 14 for second most, and 7 for third most. This still means I put up a strong score in round 1, and am tied for the lead in the event with others. Had I picked up a few more supply centers though, I'd have been in the sole lead, and it may have helped me out later.

I was fearful of going for the stab too early though, as that can be a way to lose a strong position. I was also at my first Diplomacy event in years, and there is some meta strategy in events like these, I'd rather mostly be known as someone trustworthy that you can work with, and I think I mostly managed to build that reputation here. I also think though this is where my rust showed--if I had had some more recent experience, I think I would have probably been comfortable going for an earlier stab, and likely would have done better, but my instincts weren't sharp on that aspect, and I feared the board could coordinate to stop me if I went for it.

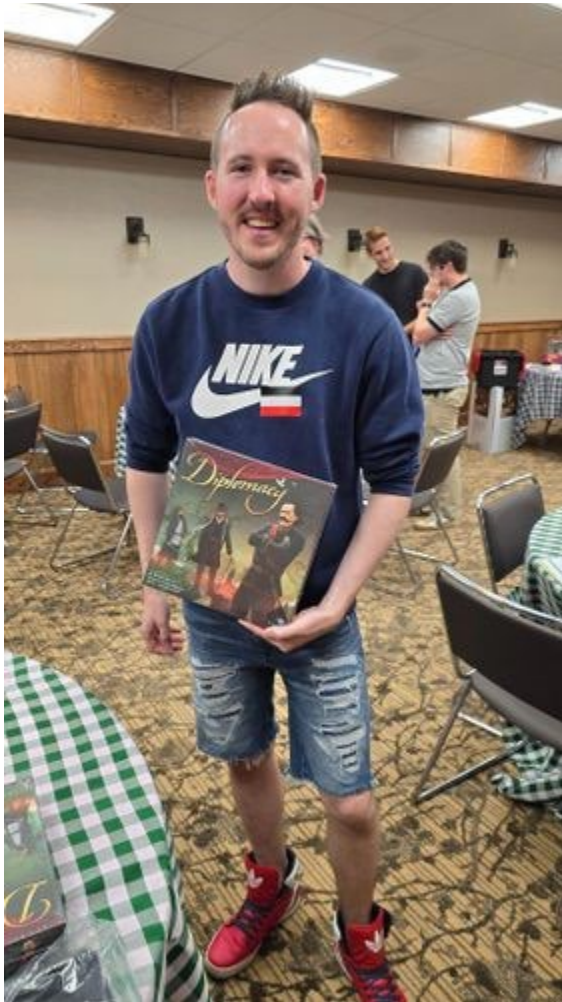


Germany (me) 10 centers 49 points
Turkey 8 centers 23 points
Italy 7 centers 15 points
Austria 3 centers 4 points
France 3 centers 4 points
England 2 centers 3 points
Russia 1 centers 2 points

I was really happy with this result still. It put me in a strong position for a Best Germany country award, but it also put me in a good spot to have a shot at winning or placing highly in the overall tournament. Furthermore, by winning my board, the GM has yet more prizes. There were several copies of new games from Renegade, the publisher for Diplomacy. I had been eyeing a new copy of Acquire, but someone from another table finished before me and nabbed it. As is, I got one of the cool new copies of Diplomacy. I have an older edition my friends and I played a lot of during high school, but it has cardboard chits for units. These ones go back to nice wooden tokens for fleets and armies. My local friends and I have been talking about organizing a Diplomacy game for years, and intend to finally do it at our now annual private gathering called Gin Con. We rent out an old mansion about an hour outside of Madison. It'll make for a cool atmosphere to christen this copy in February, sipping gin cocktails in an old mansion, negotiating how to split up Europe with friends.

That was the end of my Friday. On Saturday I was now planning to give up on the Navegador SF, and focus on playing both rounds of Diplomacy, with my strong initial result the remaining two rounds were sort of like a SF/F situation, where another good result would get me in to the top several places. I was still planning to potentially get to play the Acquire SF and Concordia SF. depending if I made it in or not. Saturday is basically the last day of WBC, as there's little going on game wise Sunday and most already are traveling back. As always, I was

already starting to miss it all a bit, but glad I still had another full day left.



Time for Diplomacy round 2. This time I pull France on the special Lego board:



This is a weird game. Germany is being piloted by a very clever fellow that came from Europe to play. He's doing some early gambits with allowing Russia in to Sweden, but getting his units and fleets in a very quick Russian attack. He seems to have England on board with this. So as France, I'm able to get my usual stuff in Spain and Portugal and grow to 5, but from there my neighbors aren't outright telling me they're refusing to give me centers, but they both keep rebuffing any offers to actually aid me. This is where experience does help--I'm familiar with this, and if your neighbors are saying nice things, but not actually helping you get any centers or attack each other, you're in trouble.

I at least position myself in annoying ways, and they wisely aren't immediately coming at me, they're going hard against Russia. I try to do what I can with them, but there's little to do. Turkey is slowly growing, while Austria/Italy sort of duke it out, but that side of the world has this slightly weird stuff going on too. I do work slightly with Italy in that they agree to allow one of my armies to wander through Piedmont and Tyrolia, and this is the other thing I've learned over the years--if you're being blocked out of most negotiations, force your units in to positions where your neighbors have to talk to you. That little unit suddenly gives me lots more options for weird dealings, and some sort of options emerge.

Eventually I talk to England some more, and his patience appears to be thinning with his German ally. See, while they are cracking Russia, it's a bit slow, and Germany is not in position to fully defend himself. I'm pitching that if he just joins me, we could swallow Germany fast.



We do kind of attack Germany, with me eventually taking Munich, and him getting some of Scandinavia. But then, England kind of flips back to working with Germany, and comes for me at Brest. I eventually send some fleets

north though. It's all a mess among us three.

In the meantime, Russia is still crippled, Turkey is growing a lot, and Austria and Italy are somewhat fading. The final year approaches, and I sense it, and I just go to maximize my centers. This is the weird part of tournament Diplomacy, knowing the final turn is there and no longer having to play for the long term, and just going for the short term. I manage to sneak a fleet past England to get a sure center, and also manage to outguess Germany and pick something off of them.

Turkey 9 centers 48 points
France (me) 7 centers 22 points
England 6 centers 10.5 points
Germany 6 centers 10.5 points
Italy 3 centers 4 points
Russia 2 centers 3 points
Austria 1 center 2 points

My last-minute maneuvering and outguessing turns out huge in the standings--I take sole 2nd place. If I do something different, I probably score a lot less points. As is, after round 2 I'm now 2nd place overall in the event, one point behind Dan Elkins. I needed either one more supply center here, or more likely those centers I maybe could have had in yesterday's game with more aggressive play are looming large. Regardless, for not having played in a while, I was feeling pretty good about these results. There was still one round left to possibly improve, or to hopefully fend off others from overtaking me for 2nd.



Time for game three. Going in I know I'm in 2nd place, and Dan has me by a single supply center. In order to improve my score, I need to get at least an 8-center 2nd place.



I pull England. The rules for the tournament are that you cannot play the same power twice, so I avoided that, but I weirdly have played only the western powers--Germany, France, England. Ah well.

I quickly get to working with Germany. The player there is largely out of the overall tournament standings, so they are playing for the next best thing: The Best Germany award. Which I currently have with my 10-center board top. So that's slightly awkward.... except I'm looking to win the tournament. So, we begin sharing that I'm perfectly happy to help Germany get to 11 center board top if I can get to a 9 center England in 2nd place, as that may help me win the tournament, but would let them win the Best Germany award.

England initially proposes a Western Triple, and I'm loosely on board. I think long term they tend not to work great, but also, I tend to think they're quite good for England. However, I sense this is a ploy to get Germany and France to team up against me, and Germany kind of confirms as much as we're talking.

So instead, when builds come around after 1901, Germany builds the armies I asked him to, and I position myself to go after France. This maybe was our mistake.

Much like my game two showed me, it's hard to take France down early while they're wary, but relatively easy to hold them to 5 centers while you gain elsewhere. We really should have focused on taking down Russia faster, as Russia was kind of annoying--they had issues in the south against Turkey, but they chose to mess around with the north quite a bit, trying to hold on to Sweden, and eventually St Pete. I would have loved to make a deal with them for them to focus on the south where they had issues and let us just have some of the north in return for not going further and then turning on France, but it was hard to work with Russia, and fair enough--asking someone to give up centers is a lot. Russia didn't seem to have a clear plan though, and indeed they admitted they hadn't played in years and it did kind of feel they were struggling to get anywhere.

In the meantime, Italy, piloted by another wily Diplomacy vet, was doing my earlier strategy as France, biding their time, and trying to force their units in interesting positions. This eventually led them to try to sail and push stuff in to France, as France was blocking me and Germany from expanding much.

Then, slight disaster--I bungle writing some orders and don't get my armies in the right position. Germany times a stab on Italy/Austria with some armies at a great time, catching them flat footed. Italy is rapidly becoming a threat as he's set to pick up Spain and Portugal from France, and Marseilles. He still is a little away from actually getting those centers, but if he doesn't get hit by someone, he's going to be tough to do anything about. Germany agrees, but then when writing orders, he decides he can get away with also attacking Austria, expecting Austria is defending their home centers, and he wants to bounce them out to keep them at bay. This is a really smart maneuver... except Austria gambled that Germany wouldn't want to attack him, instead focusing on the fight against Turkey, and so suddenly Germany has Austrian home centers, Italy gets away with a build, and I'm out of position. Ah the issues of live play and making gut calls in Diplomacy, this one turned out wrong!

Prior to that, I think we were going to make our goals--I suspect Germany and I bust through France and Italy centers, Austria/Russia likely holds on for some centers, but Turkey likely is mostly gone, and between Germany and I, I think we could have made our 11/9 center split like we wanted. Now that's not really on the table.

We do what we can, I get knocked down hard. At the end of the game, I'm forced to actually attack Germany in the final year just to try and hold on to whatever I can standings wise, and make sure Italy doesn't get too much (I know in the overall standings I need Harold/Italy to not get too good of a score, lest they surpass me!)

Germany	10 centers	49 points
Italy	8 centers	23 points
England (me)	6 centers	14 points
Austria	5 centers	6 points
Turkey	4 centers	5 points
Russia	2 centers	3 points
France	0 centers	1 point

After our game completed, it was time for all the awards. The Diplomacy GM instantly adds things up and hands everything out. However, there was a bit of an awkward thing--Brady and I had exactly tied now for Best Germany. He asked us how we wanted to resolve it. Fortunately, the Best Country awards had two parts, a plaque and a specialty drinking glass. Brady leaned towards wanting the glass, and I didn't much care either way, so we made an agreement and shared our Best

Germany award:



Then, the top 7 were announced, which is the Top Board in Diplomacy. In some tournament structures the top 7 players would play another game, but that's not how WBC does it. Still, Tom announces the positions. I know I'm up there, but not sure how far. However, they eventually get to number three and it still isn't me, and Dan still hasn't been called either. At that point we both know the standings and are excited for each other. Dan gets the win, which is slightly amusing--he's a great player and highly rated in Russian Railroads and Great Western Trail, but he has yet to win an event at WBC. I don't think any of us, including him, expected his first WBC win to be in Diplomacy! Regardless, congrats on joining the centurion club Dan! I was pretty thrilled to be taking 2nd place and joining all the others making the "top board":

The swag didn't stop flowing either. As a member of the Top Board, I got a Diplomacy hat, and a clipboard, along with my 2nd place plaque from WBC. I was quite happy with this result, as I also hadn't really played in a competitive Diplomacy environment for some while, and was happy to do as well as I had. Those missed centers in game one did hurt a bit, knowing I was so close to a win here. Heck even had I tied Dan in points, I think it likely I win the tournament, given my dropped score of the third place in this final round was better than Dan's. In fact, if you added up overall points for all rounds, I was the leader! But alas, that's not the rules, and I was just short. Ah well, just will have to get it next year!

So wrapped up my Saturday night. I wandered around a bit trying to show off my results a bit to those who were around, but also just to say goodbye to many. A few I would see Sunday morning, but a lot would just be getting on the road or shuttle. The goodbyes are always a bit sad, but for many of us we know we'll gather again in a year to do it all again. I have fun talking more with many of my condo mates for another hour or so before bed, many of them are leaving early in the morning, so this too is the end of our time. I eventually go to sleep, knowing I too need to be rested for my drive tomorrow.

Overall, I had a pretty good year. I got 2nd place in Santa Fe Rails, Agricola, and Diplomacy. I took 4th place in Beyond the Sun, and nabbed 6th place laurels in Orleans. I should be somewhere in the 60's for laurel count probably which is still a good showing. It's quite a fall from my wild 2023, but I didn't expect to do that well again.

Still, it was a slight bummer to not actually win an event. Especially given that Agricola was basically a coinflip, and Diplomacy was also super close. Alas, there is



always next year!

My plaque haul for the year was pretty good for those results, because I also got to pick up my 4th place for 2023 Agricola this year (due to an error with it not existing last year), and also got the extra Best Germany plaque from Diplomacy, and got my Team Tournament trophy from 2023:



I really had a fun time overall trying hard to make a repeat run at Consul though and jamming my schedule with so many tournament games. I suspect I'll continue doing so, but perhaps with a slight focus on making sure Diplomacy fits and trying to find another new game/event or two to fit in too, as I had a lot of fun with Diplomacy and the new aspect of it to me. My stats for this year though:

Heats:
12 1sts
9 2nds

5 3rds
0 4ths
1 5th

QF:
1 3rd (St Pete)
1 4th (Thurn)

SF:
3 1sts (Beyond the Sun, Agricola, Santa Fe Rails)
2 2nds (Orleans, Race for the Galaxy)
3 3rds (Vegas Showdown, Acquire, Concordia)
2 4ths (Five Tribes, Egizia)
1 Did not play (Navegador)

F:
2 2nds (Agricola, Santa Fe Rails)
1 4th (Beyond the Sun)

And then there was the 1st, 2nd, 3rd in the 7 player Diplomacy rounds, which it's hard to know how to count them but were good results.

Beyond the results though, as always, I just had an absolute blast at WBC and will be returning next year. I'm as enamored with this convention as when I first attended in 2018. Due to pandemic this was my 5th time here, and I'm looking forward to the next five just as much if not more--at this point just seeing so many familiar faces and friends helps make the week so great and special.

I'm hoping to see everyone there again next time. If any reader of this hasn't gone before and is considering attending, by all means do so. It's great. If you ever have any questions on the con, please reach out, I'd be happy to answer them.

Great Power Calculus, or Intermediate Goals in Diplomacy

by Jonathan Frank

Can we identify specific and objective indicators of progress in a game of *Diplomacy*? Victory entails a usually arduous process of growth from three centers – or four, in Russia's dubiously lucky case – to eighteen. On any specific board, in any given year, it will seem evident to players or observers that some powers are closer to victory than others. Comparing center counts provides a simple estimate for that single game, but a complete analysis of the dynamics of that snapshot would have to account for alliance structures, tempo, the position of the units supported by those supply centers, and so on. However, while not a full substitute for that

kind of analysis, I believe that by considering the game in the abstract, center count does give us significant information about the progress of individual players – especially the board leader.

The obvious place to start with any project of understanding the game in this way is to go back to its origins and the scenario it presents in emulation. Described this way, victory in *Diplomacy* represents the reduction of seven Great Powers to one. The immediate implication is that if a player can affect a reduction in the number of Great Powers, this represents a step towards

victory. But how can we tell practically when such a reduction has occurred?

Let us review the basic problem of dividing the board's 34 centers between a given number of Great Powers. The results look like this, rounding down to the nearest whole center:

7 powers	4 centers each (plus 6)
6 powers	5 centers each (plus 4)
5 powers	6 centers each (plus 4)
4 powers	8 centers each (plus 2)
3 powers	11 centers each (plus 1)
2 powers	17 centers each
1 power	34 centers (credited to the winner when 18 are actually held)

An even division is simply not possible in most cases. In actual play, openings will result – barring major errors – in power sizes between 4 and 6 centers after 1901, with no definite damage to any power’s prospects. On the other hand, it is quite evident that full elimination is not necessary to effectively – at least in the short term – remove a power from direct contention with the leaders. Still, the conclusion is virtually forced that powers with some difference in simple center count may be really strategic equivalents.

Reviewing a variety of quite common game states forced me to the conclusion that at almost any point the range of centers which might be held by legitimate contenders for the victory will be quite large. The opening stages, as just explained, require that we include a range of at least 2 centers difference from the leader. Accounting for the fact that the different theaters often develop at different rates provides a strong argument for considering the actual range to be 3. (In fact, I suspect the range between numbers of centers held by viable contenders might in a better model not be constant, but should expand even further in the midgame, before contracting again as the largest powers near the victory condition. However, I have not been able to solidify this argument to even my own satisfaction at this point, and so preferred here to stick with a constant range.)

Applying this idea that powers may have a range of center counts while remaining in active contention for eventual victory determines the following description of possible competitive situations based on the actual leader’s centers. Bearing in mind the original framing, such contenders are the real Great Powers:

4-7 centers	up to 7 Great Powers
8 centers	up to 6 Great Powers

9 centers	up to 5 Great Powers
10 centers	up to 4 Great Powers
11-13 centers	up to 3 Great Powers
14-17 centers	up to 2 Great Powers
18 centers	1 Great Power (victory, 34 centers credited)

The method of calculation here is to take the leader’s centers out of the total, then divide the remaining centers to find out how many powers might also be on the board having at least the lowest number of centers defined to be in contention. Any remainder must be rounded down. For a range of 3, the formula is $1 + (34 - n)/(n - 3) = 31/(n - 3)$. Of course, nothing guarantees that the number of powers possibly in contention actually exist. It is probably rarer than otherwise for a board to actually split 10-7-7-7-3 (note that in this 4 Great Power case, the player assumed to control the remainder of 3 centers is not considered in direct contention in the moment), at least before the endgame finalizes a draw. Where play is left in the position a real game might likelier be split 10-8-6-5-4-1 or any number of other irregular ways.

However, comparing the two tables suggests that there really are key numbers that provide nearly universal benchmarks. A significant error to avoid is that of trying to assert definite meaning to board states too early in the game. But at 8 centers, the leader will have accomplished the first effective reduction in number of active contenders. An 11-center leader will have reduced number of active contenders to less than half the original number of players. At 14 centers, the leader has at most one serious rival left. And of course, at 18 centers – victory!

Maybe – with schools back in session in the US for this issue - we could use these benchmark numbers to assign some grades to actual results:

18+ centers (victory)	A+ (or for the video-game inclined, S)
14-17 centers	A
11-13 centers	B+
8-10 centers	B
4-7 centers	C
1-3 centers	D
0 centers (or defeat)	F

The sets suggested here to differentiate results are of course not a “scoring system” as such, although it seems entirely possible that they could be integrated into one. But as a reasonable description of achievement within the game, the breakdown seems to me to pass at least a basic eye-test.

Big Sky – Big Fun

By Chris Brand

I must admit that a week before SkyCon I found myself thinking “why am I doing this?” Bozeman, Montana is not a very easy place to get to, and the weather in Vancouver was likely to start changing soon – I could have just stayed home. But flights had already been paid for, so backing out wasn't very attractive either. I did have fond memories of the previous SkyCon, but it was such a long time ago that I wasn't sure how reliable they were.

So, I flew through Seattle, where the bathrooms are gender-neutral with changing tables and toddler seats in every stall, to Bozeman, where the bathrooms are for “Men”, “Women”, and “Mothers”. Wandered through the airport looking for Diplomacy players but got all the way to the exit without seeing them. Managed to get in touch with Craig, who led me to the bar, where Siobhan Nolen, Jason Mastbaum, Katie Gray and he had been making themselves at home.



Hugs were exchanged. Somebody put a beer in my hand. Catching up ensued. Right. That's why I came.

When I finished my beer, Craig drove us to the hotel where we would be staying and playing. Not sure what I

expected, but it was surprisingly nice. A bit of time settling in and we were off to a restaurant with not one but two elk dishes on the menu, which was a good chance to reconnect with other travellers and to meet some of the local players. Sadly, there were several last-minute cancellations, so it was going to be two boards per round. Briefly checked out the bar by the hotel and decided to adjourn to the hotel's fire pit. All very enjoyable.



Dave Maletsky Summoning a Demon

Early start on Saturday. In the morning, I played Germany. After Keith Worstell in France and I were both attacked by Justin Bottsford-Miller's England and so were forced to work together, we ended up with a bizarre western guys versus eastern ladies battle where they clearly had the upper hand. Siobhan chose not to take a 4-dot stab, and the east had the better position. Fortunately, they agreed to draw in 1905 when Keith and I still had 6 to Katie's 8 and Erin Tate's 7.



Katie Gray, Erin Tate, and Siobhan Nolen



Riaz Virani, Chris Brand, Keith Worstell, and Justin Loar

Lunch turned up. Looking back, this was a theme of the weekend – food and drink just seemed to magically appear. It was quite amazing. Great job Craig and helpers!

With a bit of a gap to the third round, David Maletsky and I found the pool and hot tub, which we had to ourselves.

My afternoon game was better, despite drawing Turkey with Riaz Virani in Russia. Riaz and I have a long, long history, with vast numbers of house games in the Vancouver area in which we always ended up fighting each other. Throw in David Maletsky in Austria and this didn't seem like it was going to be easy. As it turned out, though, Riaz and I were able to work together to take David out, and then to continue west with me eventually taking all of Italy while he took all of Germany. I ended up topping with 11 to Peter Cook (in England) and Riaz's 10.

There were some non-Diplomacy games played in the evening – Avalon is always fun with Diplomacy players. I haven't played Secret Hitler before, so of course I was Hitler in the first round. This is also lots of fun with this sort of crowd. I stayed up later than was probably wise, but these days I care less about doing well in the Diplomacy tournament and more about the stuff around the tournament.

Sunday was another early start. Looking at the standings, Katie was leading with 13000 and something and I was in 3rd place with 11000-odd points, with Erin in between. That's not too big a gap under Carnage scoring, even in a timed round. The board call put most of the leading players (including Katie and Erin) on one board, with me playing Italy on the other. This one did not go my way. We drew after 1903 with me only on 4 after I failed to find an ally pretty much everywhere. Meanwhile Matt Crill topped the other board with a 12-centre Turkey with Katie finishing in second place with 8 centres as Germany, so Katie finished just slightly ahead of Matt. A very well-deserved win!

Awards were handed out (produced by a local blacksmith) and most of the attendees headed in to Bozeman itself to find brunch, which it seemed everybody else in the area was also doing. We did eventually find a place that could accommodate us, and had a very enjoyable meal. Then it was back to the hotel and on to the airport to head home.

Overall, this was a great event. With only 15 players, there was plenty of opportunity to get to know everyone. Craig did a great job as TD, and I already mentioned the amazing hospitality. I'm pretty sure that's the last event I'll be going to this year, and I'll definitely attend the next one.

What Makes a Game “Great”?

by Lewis Pulsipher

(I originally wrote this as a “Worlds of Design” column on enworld.org in 2017. I thought it might be of interest to DW readers, as *Diplomacy* is certainly a great game by my criteria. Slightly edited from the original.)

"Lifestyle games," games that are hobbies in themselves for players who rarely play anything else, are almost always great games: *Diplomacy*, *Bridge*, *Chess*, *Magic: the Gathering*, *Dungeons & Dragons*. But not all great games become lifestyle games. What makes a game "great"? Not good, not a flash-in-the-pan, rather an all-time great game?

In other words, I discount common discourse these days where the word “great” has been bastardized to merely mean “something that’s well above average.”

A game is never "great" to everyone. *Chess* is a great game, but many gamers can't stand to play it (though a great many have tried). We can say the same for *D&D* or any other RPG.

Longevity is important. Some will say a new game is "great", but we cannot tell until years have passed, no matter how much we like it when it comes out. Furthermore, not every great game is great by current "design standards", but it may still be a great game in terms of how it has affected people and the enjoyment it has given to people. "New" doesn't necessarily mean "good" and "old" doesn't mean "bad".

Popularity is not a criterion. There are many popular tunes, movies, games, books, that disappear from our notice in a year or three. Great games continue to be loved year after year, just as great novels, movies, music are enjoyed perennially.

If a game is one of hundreds that people might want to play, can it be a great game? No, it should stand out from the crowd. If you play a game just to kill time or socialize, then the fact that you're playing it certainly doesn't make it a great game, no matter how many times you play. Not "oh, yeah, I guess we can play that," it must be "I'd ***love*** to play that" - again and again. If you can spend your valuable time just to play this game or think about this game, not merely to socialize, when you have other things to do, then it may be a great game. If lots of people don't play it hundreds of hours each, over many years, can it be a great game?

Great games often engender much discussion, and often a literature, about the fine points of good play. *Chess*, *Bridge*, *Diplomacy* are obvious examples.

I'd say:

if a game is played by a great many people who love to play it (they're not just passing time/killing time/playing to socialize) who play it for hundreds of hours (per person) over the years who can still enjoy it many years after it was first published who make variants that are fine games,

then it's probably a great game.

Monopoly is poorly-designed. It's certainly the ***most-sold*** commercial game. You can argue that it's usually played by default, because it's traditional, rather than because people truly **want** to play it. I'd say it's not a great game because it fails the "love to play it" test as well as the variants test (most “opoly” games are reskinned but rules etc. are not changed).

Reference Books: *Hobby Games: the 100 Best* and *Family Games: the 100 Best*, both compiled and edited by James Lowder. I wrote about Avalon Hill's *Stalingrad* in the first, and *Blokus* in the second, and I'm glad to say my *Britannia* is in the first book.



It Burns!

A Tale of Diplomatic Indigestion

By Mal Arky

On my blog, [The Diplomaticon](#), I'm writing a series of posts – a very extended series, as it turns out – on opening moves. I started with England some time ago and I'm still on England. The idea is that I only discuss opening moves that make some kind of point... generally.

An exception to this, with England, is the infamous 'Yorkshire Pudding Opening'. Maybe it shouldn't be, and I debated with the cat and dog about whether I should include it. Their opinion on the matter was noncommittal. *Well*, I thought to myself, trying not to show any degree of disappointment in their lack of help, *it isn't a sensible opening in any way, but why not?*

For anyone who hasn't heard of this opening, it is a set of Spring 1901 orders that has each unit moving to Yorkshire. There's really no point to it at all but it is, perhaps, the most well-known of stupid openings. And, if I'm including England's 'Western Opening' (that involves F Edi-Cly in S01), I may as well include this, for the sake of completeness. There aren't that many named openings for England in the first place; it wouldn't take me long to write the post, and would England's openings be fully discussed *without* it, recognizing its notoriety?

As it turned out, although discussion of the moves themselves took very little time, the post wasn't quite as quick to write as I thought. I wandered off into a discussion of menu options involving Yorkshire puddings themselves, inspired by my long-deceased grandmother. I can remember her, at various times (i.e. not in the same meal), serving Yorkshire pudding as a starter, as part of a main, and as a dessert. I think if you *did* try all three in one meal you might well find yourself experiencing indigestion to the degree that the Yorkshire Pudding Opening seems to have caused the UK Hobby (or, at least, one member of it).

Diplomacy is a game that takes time and effort to play. It requires resilience and persistence. It is a game loved by devotees. Games can be an emotional rollercoaster; they can cause a range of feelings, from rage, frustration and disappointment to delight, satisfaction and fulfilment. The way it's played, changes to the rules, scoring systems... all have caused discussion and debate – often heated debate – in the Hobby.

It's called passion. People who played Diplomacy were so passionate about it that it became a hobby, and 'the Hobby'. As I've said elsewhere, the Hobby was

specifically about playing Diplomacy by post, and the zines that facilitated that. Today I think we use the term more generally (I do, anyway) to mean everything to do with playing Diplomacy.

Now, take the passions that playing the game encourages and apply them to the Hobby itself. We can see that today in the way people tend to be loyal to where they play the game as well as how they play it. Because most games are played remotely, online (in some form or other), this leads to a different focus, although personal rivalries and disputes continue. In the days of the postal Hobby, with smaller playerbases, and when people were more likely to meet each other in person through local, national and international meets, things seem to have been much more personal.

Little did I think that writing a simple blog post about the Yorkshire Pudding Opening would open up a can of worms. In fact, more than that. It was more like the person who wrote to me had a belly full of acid that had been bubbling away since the 1980s.

I received an email, sent on 6 July, from someone who I shall keep anonymous. If they'd commented on my blog, I wouldn't do so; comments include names or usernames and, therefore, are public. As this came by email, I think it's only fair to keep it anonymous. I'm also going to keep the people mentioned in the email anonymous. If you were involved at the time, you may know who's who; if you weren't then you don't need to have names.

The email was actually sent *before* I wrote my post about the Yorkshire Pudding Opening. On 6 July I'd published two posts; each one features a list of posts that will make up the series on England's opening moves. (Currently, this is an incomplete list, because I haven't yet added the full list of continuation openings, those that go beyond S01.) I'm assuming, then, that the sender of the email was responding to the contents of this list. Possibly a little unfair to comment on an as yet unwritten post but, well, the comments were about including it in the first place... or so I thought.

The email started with: "*Have no idea why you would bother writing an article about the so called 'Yorkshire Pudding' opening for England.*"

Well, given my doubts about including it anyway, I wasn't overly surprised about this comment. In fairness, it's

included in the [Library of Diplomacy Openings](#), too. If you want to go and read what it says there, be warned that in the 'Interactive Library' (which isn't interactive at all, but anyway...) the dropdowns aren't working for England (or for France, Italy and Turkey). To read about England's openings you need to go to the ['old fashioned' library](#).

In my blog, I am renaming some of the openings. I give my reasons in the [introductory post](#). It isn't to try to garner some fame for myself as the person who named the opening (as if!), but to remove some of the confusion that *could* be caused given the similar names openings tend to have, especially in England's case.

The Yorkshire Pudding Opening has been called this since its use. I would say its *only* use but I know that some sad players, perhaps to show their deep knowledge of openings, have used it since, although likely not in an arena game. Honestly, it should have been its only use... and shouldn't have been used in the first place!

Anyway, I should have picked up something from the words "so called 'Yorkshire Pudding' opening", I guess. After reading the whole email, I could see that these suggested this wasn't going to be a simple "Why bother?" email.

The next paragraph of the email went on with:

*"It was nothing more than [typical] attention seeking in some tournament from spoiled rich brat Denis Jones (former editor of failed **United** and other games zine **Five Year Plan**, which he was ironically expelled from later by subsequent editor Mick Cox after he demanded other players were thrown out for 'racism', only to be kicked out himself), and which was hyperinflated by ?? (along with his brother and fellow ?? brown-noser ??) of the so-called 'importance' of it, because he liked to hype up the merest actions of everyone that licked his arse."*

And the tone was set.

(I've left Dan's name in as it's used in the [Library of Diplomacy Openings](#) and in the [Diplomacy A-Z](#). I've also left Mick Cox in as it doesn't seem to have any real importance in terms of what the email's about. Other names I've replaced with '??'.)

I've read somewhere before that it was used in a tournament; everywhere else I've read it as being used in a postal game; I suppose it might have been a postal tournament(?). Either way, it really shouldn't have been.

Now, I don't know Denis Jones. I don't know what he is (or, hopefully not, was) like. And I don't know the other two people named by my email's author, although one of

them is someone who wrote a number of articles about Diplomacy that are included in the Diplomacy Archive. The named Dipzine, *Five Year Plan*, is listed in the [UK Zine Archive](#), although no copies are uploaded. *United* is something I've heard of, although I might have seen it played in another zine; I didn't go in for any other game zines.

Although I don't know these people, I also don't know the writer of the email, so I'm not going to take what they say into account. Especially as this was an email full of so much vitriol that anyone would be hard-pushed to take it at face value.

Here's the next section of the email:

"All the 'Yorkshire Pudding' encapsulated was the major, fatal problem with the UK Diplomacy hobby in the late 1980s to early 1990s that ultimately ensured its long term doom - ageing Oxbridge graduate has-beens mourning their lost youth abusing their positions of trust to inflate themselves and those who licked their arses as catharsis for their real life failures in their careers, their marriages or as parents.

"They in turn created a new monster from the likes of the thoroughly [sic] evil ?? and his pet toadies ??, ??, ?? and ?? (the latter whom [sic] ?? lusted after), who used the hobby in turn to compensate for their own life and psychological failings (and in ??'s case his own bizarre agenda of turning the hobby into some sort of 'deviancy rights' platform - which resulted in the trainwrecks that came from encouraging the likes of ??, ??, etc. in from the SF hobby's S&M section)."

So, now we're getting into the region of slander and, potentially, homophobia (based on "*the latter whom ?? lusted after*"). If the person who wrote to me is reading this, and feels like adding the names I've deleted in a response, I'd suggest they don't. I think the rant is bad enough as it is, no matter how accurate it may or may not be. Again, three of the names in this section are known authors of Diplomacy articles, one of them repeated from the first section.

I should say I don't take the fact that some of the named people have had articles published has any impact on what they were or weren't like. I'm not sure the email's author isn't a name I've seen published previously (although I think it may be that I am mistaking them for another prolific writer with the same initials). The fact that they are published writers means nothing. But it's notable.

Frankly, I don't care about any of this. The people involved, the named "has-beens", "deviants" or "trainwrecks", and the writer themselves, aren't people I'm interested in as people outside of what they have to

write about Diplomacy. I'm certainly not inclined to get to know the author. This level of hatred isn't particularly an endorsement.

A couple of things to say, however. No matter what you happen to think about the people involved, and their alleged impact on the UK Hobby, I'm not sure how one ridiculous set of opening moves "encapsulates" all of that. Perhaps the inclusion of the opening in things like the Dip A-Z and the Library might signify the impact the people involved had on the Hobby.

I also feel that any group of people, on their own, would have ensured the UK Hobby's doom. Given how much division was apparently in the UK Hobby, it certainly won't have helped its survival! But things change, and everything evolves; especially if you take the strict view of the Hobby being based around postal zines and PBM – or even PBEM – games, it's difficult to see how it could have stayed the same once the internet established itself as the place for remote play.

Perhaps it is more important in the near demise of FTF play in the UK. Certainly, if your level of hate for people is as high as this, you're not going to want to spend any time with them at meets, conventions or tournaments. Again, though, this might be a contributing factor, and unlikely to be the principal one. Again, the Hobby evolved.

Here's the final stretch:

"End result, unnecessary division between those who ought to have been working together (eg. the ludicrous bickering between ?? and the !! over variants), discord seemingly with every new zine issue about some piece of chickenshit or another, and a high number of very talented editors growing disillusioned and dropping out - eg. ??'s !!, ?? and ??, ??, etc. - for pastimes not poisoned by SF fandork pretensions about there being something 'noble' and 'fun' about 'feuds' which did more than anything else to disuade [sic] new blood and ultimately kill the hobby stone dead."

This *could* be a factor in what affected the UK Hobby – the feuds. Once more though, this is more likely to have contributed to the UK Hobby's decline rather than caused it alone. Fair enough: it needed to be an inviting environment to keep people there.

Still, discord is always something you'll find in any group of people as large as this. Nobody agrees with everyone else about everything. Pretty self-evident. Adults acknowledge this, debate things, but get on with it.

Also, with something like the UK Hobby, you'll find different waves of people joining. This is likely to cause

friction if they have ideas that are different to those that are established.

In the last section of the email, I've removed a named group of people, replacing it with *!!*. I'm not sure if the writer is referring to a group of editors that emerged from a named Dipzine, or the readership of that zine. It doesn't really matter. What it does is identify a group within the Hobby who were working as a unit *before* the new group the email's author clearly hates entered.

This is what happens with groups in society. Within each sizable group of people will be smaller groups incorporated within it: different cliques of people who share similar opinions. Should two or more cliques become involved in some sort of conflict of interest or ideas, the chances are it will cause schism.

This wasn't confined to the UK Hobby. Go to the Diplomacy A-Z and look up the entries under the [International Diplomacy Association](#) and [The Diplomacy Association](#). There were other differences in the UK Hobby. I first got into PBM Diplomacy through the zine *Springboard*, which was published by Danny Collman and was for newbies. I'm told by no less a person than Stephen Agar (without any judgement on Stephen's behalf) that Collman's zine caused friction in the Hobby because it seemed to be taking newbies from other zines (that don't seem to me to have been making any effort to get new blood into the Hobby). There was also a similar division about how the Hobby should be run to what was happening between the DA and the IDA(s?) over how much organization was required to run the Hobby.

Alright; why have I written about this? Well, let me say first that I haven't written this article to spread bad news about the Dip Hobby. This is all decades past; its relevance today is minimal (which suggests it isn't worth writing about in the first place, I know).

I wrote this because I was genuinely shocked by the email I received. This *is* all roughly 40 years ago, and yet an acidic hatred still simmers away in at least one person. Why?

I've implied my answer to this above: to play Diplomacy is to activate emotions, some of which you're not likely to feel when playing other board games, certainly not to the same intensity. To be invested in the Hobby (whatever form you take that phrase to mean) requires passion. And passion can go either way – love or hate. Of the two, hate is much the easier to sustain, sadly.

But it is still long ago. Even if we accept the assertions in this email, Diplomacy has changed, evolved, into something different. It would have done so anyway. I can understand a nostalgia and a longing for what the Hobby

once was; what I can't understand is, no matter how passionate you are, holding onto this hatred for this long over what is ultimately a game. What do you gain by doing so?

What I find more remarkable is that something as silly as the Yorkshire Pudding Opening should spark such hatred to light. The most favorable thing I've seen about this opening is from the [Diplomacy Openings WikiDot](#). It's suggested here that it might be a useful tool to disarm competitors in a game. I doubt it, myself. It's a joke... clearly not one appreciated by all.

What's important is that Diplomacy is doing OK. I'd go so far as to say that it's thriving online. The introduction of vFTF play has given it a boost in the arm, which is

somewhat ironic given that it came to prominence as a result of the Covid pandemic.

There are divisions, of course there are. There always have been, and always will be. Perhaps it isn't what makes the modern Hobby great but the diversity in the Hobby should... providing we make the Hobby inclusive. We aren't going to achieve that by allowing ourselves to suffer with indigestion from something that disagreed with us decades ago.

The Hobby should always have been, should be now, and should remain in the future, about playing Diplomacy. Not about feuds. Not about organizational differences. Not about schism. What we all should be focused on is playing the game and celebrating the ways, means and people who allow us to do so.

Selected Upcoming Events

Find Conventions All Over the World at <http://petermc.net/diplomacy/> and <https://www.thenadf.org/play/> and <https://www.diplomacybriefing.com/diplomacytournaments> and <https://diplobn.com/schedule/>

Nuke-Con (Teaching Event Only – No Tournament) – October 4th – October 6th, 2024 - Council Bluffs, Iowa - <https://www.nuke-con.com/>

Asia Pacific Diplomacy Championship – October 12th – October 13th, 2024 – Melbourne, Australia - <https://discord.gg/BAZ6zQybwK>

Hechtstechen 2024 – October 12th – October 13th, 2024 – Dresden, Germany - <https://hechtstechen.com/>

Virtual Diplomacy League Event – October 19th, 2024 - <https://diplobn.com/vdl/>

Carnage 27 – November 1st – November 3rd, 2024 – Killington Grand Resort, Killington, Vermont - <https://carnagecon.com/>

Canberra Open – November 1st – November 3rd, 2024 – Canberra, Australia – Email: diplomacycbr@gmail.com

Dutch Diplomacy Championship – November 2nd – November 3rd, 2024 - Groningen, Netherlands – Details: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/13nUuVUcCBD3R33SUTkfdDxRHgbRi3OB7/edit?usp=sharing&oid=113750156858112962108&rtpof=true&sd=true> – Registration: <https://forms.gle/XcfTzbGCRmSVrEvC7>

Virtual Diplomacy League Event – November 9th, 2024 - <https://diplobn.com/vdl/>

BGG Con (Teaching Event Only – No Tournament) – November 13th – November 17th, 2024 – Dallas, Texas - https://boardgamegeek.com/wiki/page/BGG_Events

PAX Unplugged (Tournament and Teaching Event) - December 6th – December 8th, 2024 – Philadelphia, Pennsylvania - <https://unplugged.paxsite.com/>

Virtual Diplomacy League Event – December 14th, 2024 - <https://diplobn.com/vdl/>

Cascadia Open – February 1st – February 2nd, 2025 – Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada – email: cascadia.open@gmail.com

PrezCon – February 21st – February 22nd, 2025 – Charlottesville, Virginia - <https://www.prezcon.com/program>

World DipCon 2025 at Whipping – April 4th – April 6th, 2025 – Hotel Spero, San Francisco, California – Email: worlddipcon2025@gmail.com - <https://www.thenadf.org/world-dipcon-2025/>

Circle DC – April 4th – April 6th, 2025 – Washington, DC - Email: tjhaver@gmail.com – <https://www.fortcircle.com>

Ask the Hobby Historian: It All Started In 1993

By David Hood

You may have heard that DBN personality Karthik Konath from California just won the 2024 European Championship, hosted by Christophe Borgeat in Sion, Switzerland. I of course have no interest in promoting *that* fella in any way, so that's all you will hear from me about his victory. Let's talk instead a little about the history of the event itself, the EDC.

It all started in 1993. In those days, the French hobby was mostly run through an organization called the FFJDS. To comprise the 9th annual French championship, they announced that in 1993 said championship would be held during six separate events, one located in each French home space on the board! No, not kidding. They literally had six different tournaments, with the scores aggregated together in some fashion which I cannot remember. The first one was held in Caen, to be near the Brest supply center, with the last one to be held in Paris. In addition, the French decided that Europe needed its own Dipcon, a continental championship, and further decided that the Paris event would suffice. Samy Malki of the home team won that first EDC, with fellow Frenchman Patrice Blandin taking second and Phillippe Gomes of Portugal coming in third.

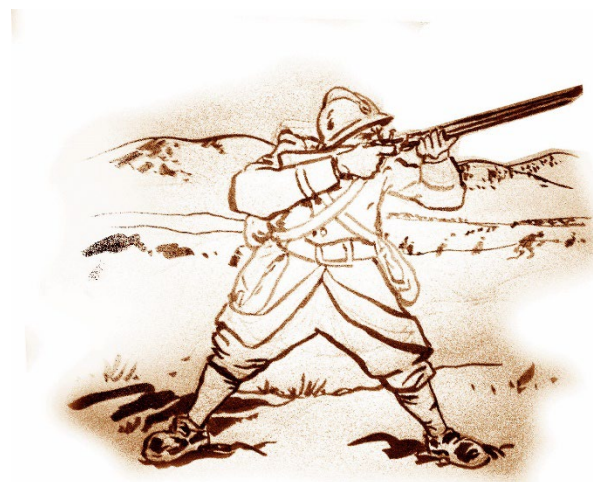
Want to hear some familiar names? Cyrille Sevin, who came in third this year at the Sion event, won Best England at that inaugural EDC, and Lei Saarlainen, who helped to organize last year's World Dipcon in Bangkok, was named Best Tactician for the 1993 EDC. Cyrille would go on to win the event himself twice, in 1997 at Namur, Belgium (this was a warmup for Namur bidding for and hosting the WDC two years later in 1999) and then again at the 2015 EDC in Leicester, England. Lei would also win an EDC, the Paris event in 2018.

Speaking of Paris, the Europeans decided at that first event that the EDC would rotate around their region in a similar fashion to the Dipcon and World Dipcon site selection processes. So, the 1994 event moved to Linkoping, Sweden (though won by another Frenchman, Xavier Blanchot) and then to Cirencester, England for 1995 (where the French hold on the title was ended by Norwegian Inge Kjol. The event did return to Paris often, however, as that city has hosted the most European championships at six. Other multiple hosts include Namur, Marseilles, this year's host Sion, and Serravalle in San Marino.

Was Karthik the first non-European to win the event? Not at all. That distinction goes to longtime hobby

veteran Edi Birsan of California, who won the 2004 EDC hosted in Darmstadt, Germany. By the way, although the German hobby has hosted EDC twice, its face-to-face scene had lain dormant for years - but is being revived this October by Robert Schuppe in Dresden (I am happy to report!) The other non-European winner was Australian Peter McNamara, who took the 2014 title at the Rome EDC that year. As far as champions from Europe itself go, the EDC has been won by France fourteen times, way more than from any other country. The next closest is the UK, with three victories.

The EDC used to be just one of many tournaments hosted in Europe, although certainly the most important one (at least when WDC was not held in that region.) Unfortunately, many of those other events have fallen by the wayside over the years. While there have been other events held over the last several years, the European circuit has been smaller than it should be for sure. Luckily, that is changing. In addition to the Hechtstechen in Germany that I mentioned earlier, this fall will also see the premiers of the UK National Championship in Warrington in early September, an event in Spain called the Basque Open in mid-October, and the Dutch National Championship in Groningen in early November. When combined with the explosion of face-to-face events in Australia as well as the continued strength of the circuit in North America, this is truly an exciting time for the in-person play of Diplomacy internationally, particularly when combined with the growth of virtual face to face play and extended deadline press play over the past several years. Bravo to us all!



WBC 2024: A Surprise Diplomacy Champion Among Veterans

by Thomas Haver

Last year's WBC Diplomacy tournament was timed with the release of the new edition by Renegade Game Studios. I made a giant 12' x 12' walkable map with large pieces pushed by plotter rods and made numerous other custom boards for the event. We count laurels at WBC, and as the GM of Diplomacy I can't rest on mine. More for the event, more for the players.

In addition to the mountains of swag like Diplomacy t-shirts, hats, pens, pins, stickers, and magnets – we had our board game prizes courtesy of Renegade. I created an all-new LEGO Diplomacy map, which you can see linked in the photo album below. For our players, I had

TWO Best Country awards made for every Power: a wooden plaque (beloved by WBC Diplomacy players) and a set of laser-etched whiskey glasses. This year I also provided "Tournament Veteran" medals to every player who has competed at WBC for at least five years. This was my way of saying thank you to the players for keeping the event going strong. I won the GM of the Year event in 2023 thanks to their consistent and vociferous support of Diplomacy. Many thanks again to our tournament veterans, who will be listed in the results section.



Before the first round, we conducted a Demo Session upstairs. This year we were joined by international Diplomacy traveler Christophe Borgeat of Switzerland. Christophe runs the Swiss National Championship and is the GM of the European Championship this year. This was his first WBC. Befitting a regular organizer, Christophe joined the Demo Session to help teach new players the game. Several made the jump into the tournament later. Thanks, Christophe!



★ ROUND ONE ★

We kicked off Round One in style with four boards and multiple former champions competing for the crown. On Board One, Jef Halberstadt provided a 1971 edition board to play on. The board was filled with tournament veterans – Ed Prem as Germany, Steve LeWinter as

Turkey, and Jeff Hayman as Austria – but it was our tournament newcomer Dan Elkins who topped with 10-centers as France. He won the board on a successful attack of Italy and late game capture of English dots. On

the other side of the board, Steve LeWinter's Turkey teamed with Christophe Borgeat's Russia to eliminate Austria then hang on for 2nd and 3rd place, respectively.



Board Two had another former champion in Harald Henning (Turkey). He was joined by regulars Michael McKibbin (Italy) and Paul Konka (England). From the get-go the plan was to attack Russia. By virtue of an all-out attack, Russia did not get a single build in 1901. They would not build for the entire game, being eliminated in 1903. Sometimes the game is not in your favor. All you can do is play out a position to a valiant end. That was Russia in this game. One of the impressive displays in this game was by newcomer Nico Parada as Germany. He managed to play both England and France off each other for most of the game –

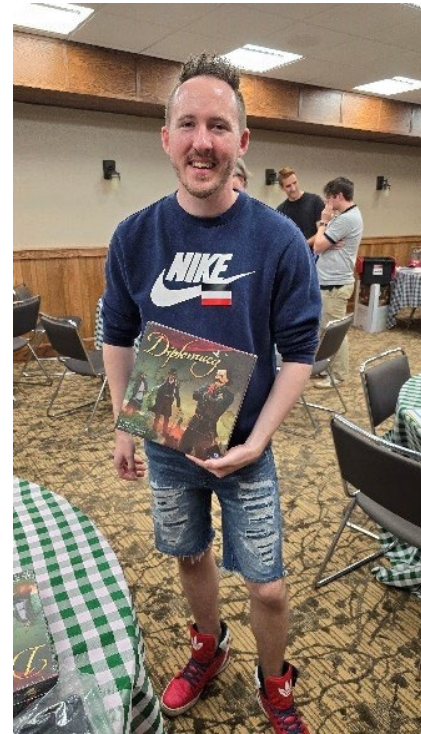
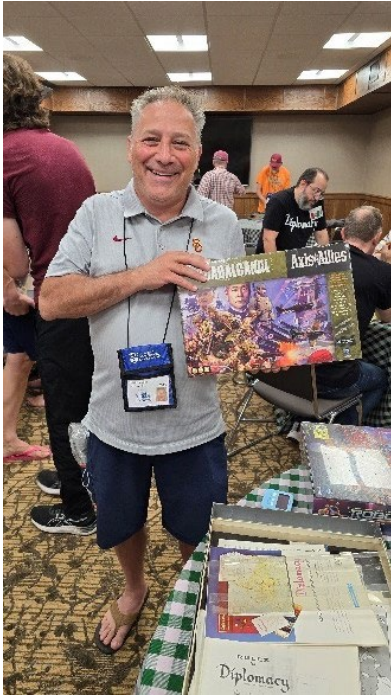
peaking at seven centers – before the vultures descended in the final year of play looking for tournament points. This game also saw the tournament debut of Sebastian Benedict, son of past champion Nick Benedict. As Austria, Sebastian took part in the dismantling of Russia. The late game was also unkind to the newcomer. Italy and Turkey combined forces to capture centers from Austria, propelling Harald Henning's Turkey to a 1st place finish. The lesson learned for all first-time players in the tournament is when the end of the game approaches, be on the lookout for stabs.



Over on Board Three, Robert Zahn (Austria) was making his title defense on the custom wooden board. This board was the closest of the Round, with multiple Powers vying for the top spot in the final year. Former champion Nick Benedict (France) paired with Geoff Mize

(England) late game against Germany to share a board top. These two were not alone though because newcomer Joe Romano (Turkey), who had attended the Demo Session only hours earlier, paired with Austria to attack Russia to make his own play for board top. The

push up to Moscow and Warsaw was successful by the pair, which meant Joe was also at 7-centers. We had a three-way tie for 1st place, which meant the players split the bonus points for first through third place.



★ ROUND TWO ★

Board Four was the triumphant return of Ryan Feathers (Germany). For many years he had successfully been pursuing championship qualifiers in other games, which meant no Diplomacy the last weekend. This year, he purposely set out to play Diplomacy. Woe to the other players on his board -- even past champs David Rynkowski (Russia) and Anton Wilsbach (France) -- because Ryan is a savvy, charming player with solid tactics. He kicked off 1901 with a triple build and never looked back. There was a storm of fighting around Germany this game (England and France, England and Russia, Italy and Turkey, Russia and Austria), and Ryan was the calm eye of the storm. The second most impressive play on this board was by Alex Smith as Austria. Dropped down to one-center at the end of 1902, he stayed alive and via alliances fought back to three-centers by game end. A remarkable turnaround for someone competing in their first tournament. The other impressive game was delivered by Evan Walter (Turkey) who fought to keep pace with Ryan's Germany. They ended the game with Germany on 10-centers and Turkey on 8-centers.

Round Two continued the next morning with donuts & pastries provided to the players. Board One starts on the LEGO map with some creative play. Christophe Borgeat (Germany) opens fairly standard into Denmark, Kiel, and Ruhr. However, he follows this move by sending the Fleet into Baltic Sea, Army Kiel to Denmark, and Army Ruhr to Holland. In the Winter Phase, he builds Army Berlin and Army Munich. An anti-Russian gambit play that pays off, as Russia loses both Sweden and Saint Petersburg the next year. Romain Jacques (Turkey) takes advantage of this situation by grabbing Rumania. The West, however, remains less clear. Throughout the game, alliances between England-France-Germany shift, resulting in each Power pulling the other down. The primary beneficiary of this is Turkey, who with a foothold in Russia is able to effectively push against Austria in the late game to take 1st place. Ryan Feathers' France ends in 2nd place, with Jack Wilsbach's England & Christophe Borgeat's Germany tied for 3rd place. Christophe is pleased with the game even though it netted him a 3rd place finish: the gambit against Russia was successful. After all, what fun is Diplomacy if you use the same opening moves every game?



Over on Board Two, Jay Boring (France) opts for a creative opening himself: Paris to Brest, Brest to Mid-Atlantic Ocean, and Marseilles to Spain. He follows the move in the Fall with a convoy to Portugal. This is not a typical opening and requires tremendous trust with Germany. Alex Smith obliges by opening anti-Russian. Coupled with the Northern opening for Robert Zahn's England, a Western Triple formed on the board. In the East, there is unanimous support among Italy, Russia, and Turkey to eliminate Austria as quickly as possible. Despite the two builds in Winter 1901, Austria is quickly taken from five-centers down to two-centers the next year and eliminated in 1903. When a Western Triple attacks, either the East gets into gear quickly to stonewall the attack or they get taken apart. Jeff Hayman's Italy helped orchestrate the dismantling of

Austria quickly enough so the builds placed by Russia and Italy could stall the Western Triple. Realizing his opportunities for centers in Italy would be limited, Jay Boring instead sent his fleets North against England, who was struggling taking down Russia after a misorder. He was also able to leverage his armies against Germany, who was overcommitted against Russia at a key juncture. France-Italy is certainly not the most discussed alliance on the board, but when both players are coordinating effectively, it's difficult to stop. Jay Boring's France finished with 10-centers, matching the 10-centers from Jeff Hayman's Italy after taking all of Austria and pushing the Turks back to their starting positions. Two games done and two creative openings. What surprises will Board Three bring?



Board Three opened with another Western Triple. Only this time, Dave Rynkowski (England), Geoff Mize (France), and Anton Wilsbach (Germany) were all on board. The other side was ready too. Russia setup a defense up North and Turkey pushed their fleet into the Tyrrhenian Sea to support the defense against the French fleets. The game seemed destined for a deadlock, except for two key moments in the midgame: (1) England, realizing a chance for the board top, cut a deal with Russia to take Denmark and Kiel, respectively; (2) Austria, seeing a wide-open Russia in the south,

made a stab at the same time. The net result was growth by Austria & England at the expense of Russia & Germany. Once again, the Western Triple would be tossed aside as allies vied for the board top. England pressed the advantage to a 9-center board top while the Austria came in 2nd with 8-centers. The loyal French ally had to settle for 3rd place at 6-centers. If you're a fan of shifting alliances and smart tactical play, this was a great game to watch. Every Power was left on the board at game end, with balance-of-power play ruling the day. Well played by all.



★ **ROUND THREE** ★

Round Three at WBC always brings some fireworks. Players are competing with fervor for the championship or a Best Country award as their last chance to win at WBC before the convention comes to a finish. There were seven players with strong chances to win the event going into the final round. Sometimes those players can earn a first-place finish or even a solo to seal the deal. This time around it was about the upstarts staking a claim to glory. Two players, John Stevens & Ed Prem, elect to sit out the round to make the numbers work for multiples of seven. Both were awarded board game prizes as thanks and a round of applause by the assembled group.

weak from behind and with Austria teetering on collapse, Turkey made a play to stab. So, Turkey stabbed Italy. Turkey also stabbed Russia. . . and Austria too for good measure. Round Three the blades come out and Turkey wanted his board top. Stab. Stab. Stab.



Board One is played on the wooden board. It features defending champion Robert Zahn as France and a couple of competitors for the championship: Geoff Mize as Austria and Jeff Hayman as England. The notable plays from 1901 are the triple build from France and Italy sneaking into Trieste. The game proceeded with a Juggernaut: Paul Konka's Russia and Jack Wilsbach's Turkey finding common ground to leave the Black Sea open and push against Austria. England and Germany allied to fight Russia in response to the Juggernaut with success as Germany managed to place an army into Livonia to crack the Russian defense. Italy's early advantage from taking Trieste waned as the French sent their units South. France managed to take Tunis from Italy, putting them into a disband. Realizing his ally was



Realizing Turkey would continue rolling on the eastern half of the map, the England-France alliance proposed a draw to end the game: Turkey to board top with 10-

centers, followed by France with 9-centers, and England at 8-centers. In this tournament, draw votes occur via secret ballot. If just one player votes down the draw, the vote fails. Every player still alive gets a vote. In the Spring turn, the draw vote failed. The questions started to fly: Was Turkey going for a solo? Could Jack do it? Was the England-France alliance going to break up? All for naught, as during the Fall turn the players held another vote that passed after talking it out as a group. Each of the top three Powers were happy with their performance. Board One was the first board done and players were free to get some drinks at the bar while they waited for the other boards to finish. There are liquid benefits to finishing early.



Board Two also had two players with a legitimate shot at winning: Harald Henning as Italy and Ryan Feathers as England. Both had first place finishes in earlier rounds, and one more board top could win it all. Once again there's talk of a Western Triple, but this was all a ruse. Germany and England end up allying against France. Germany supported the English convoy into Belgium; England follows with double fleet builds and Germany builds two armies. Anton Wilsbach's Turkey makes an early move on Russia and takes Sevastopol in 1901 for the two-build. France does get two builds as well, so it will be a defensive battle.



Italy is slow playing the board, trying to keep everyone down in center counts while positioning for a big turn. This pays off eventually, as Jay Buckwalter's Austria makes a big play on Turkey at the same time France has

been left open in the south because of the England-Germany alliance. Harald Henning's Italy presses for the win. This is where things get really interesting. With Austria and Italy committed against Turkey and France, respectively, Brady Detwiler reverses course from attacking France. Austria gambles that Germany won't stab when Russia is close to death. The gamble doesn't pay off. Germany picks up three centers and is suddenly in the driver's seat. Italy also grows, and it's looking like Harald Henning may win his second championship if he gets a few more centers. England flubs an important order set and instead of building, he remains even in center count. After two great games, the tournament is slipping away from Ryan and he says as much openly on the board.



At the end of the game, England must make some creative plays, including nabbing a center from Germany to both stay in the bonus and limit what Italy gets. The final tally: Germany board tops at 10-centers, Italy in 2nd at 8-centers, and England in 3rd at 6-centers. Would this be enough for either Ryan or Harald to win the tournament? Now they play the waiting game as the final board finishes.

Board Three is played on the LEGO map. I spent most of my time as TD watching this board because it was one of the most wild games I've ever witnessed. The board: Christophe Borgeat (Austria), Evan Walter (England), Jay Schoenen (France), Jay Boring (Germany), Nick Benedict (Italy), Dan Elkins (Russia), and David Rynkowski (Turkey). In the first year, Italy opted to open Venice to Tyrolia followed by Tyrolia to Bohemia in the Fall. The real fun starts in 1902 though. Italy builds a fleet Naples instead of an Army in Venice after a change of plans with France coming South. Austria takes advantage and moves into Venice in the Spring. Only, there is yet ANOTHER Western Triple brewing. England and Germany both press Russia while France sends the fleets South. After some animated discussion, Austria decides to voluntarily move out of Venice in the Fall – to Tuscany.



who by this time is in Piedmont, Gulf of Lyon, and Western Mediterranean.

With Russia on the way out, Austria continues the march by sending that army into Armenia. With the Italians help, Austria moves into Piedmont and France elects to disband rather than retreat. France, getting tired of the lack of progress against Italy, shifts gears and puts two units North and turns the rebuild into fleet Brest. Russia, having given up hope of any sort of defense, abandons the North to send two armies against Austria – walking out of defensive position to have some spite moves against the Power that cost him a few centers. Austria is not prepared for this sudden shift and Russia can walk into Budapest or force Rumania.



France and England are arrayed against each other, but Austria makes another creative proposal: shift focus against Germany instead, with Tyrolia supporting Burgundy into Munich. The game isn't so much determined by alliances at this point but instead a free-for-all. England moves on Germany, taking Denmark. Italy takes Greece and then Bulgaria. Austria abandons Sevastopol to Russia in exchange for Rumania to get some defensive positioning back with Italy making gains. The last three years of the game, the leader was at 7-centers and three other Powers were at 6-centers. The leader shifted each of those three years. When the smoke cleared and the game was done, Austria and England topped the board with 7-centers each. In a three-way tie for 3rd place was France, Germany, and Italy. It was truly a wild game, with players helping each other in one theatre while stabbing each other in another theatre. The most amazing stat: three times Austria moved to Venice and all three times voluntarily left. Whew, what a game!

While the Western Triple is unfolding, Christophe's Austria is experienced enough with the alliance to NOT want Turkey lurking behind you. He arranges for Russia to send an army to Armenia while supporting the fleet in Rumania to take Bulgaria in the Spring. In the Fall, he promptly takes Rumania from Russia while also moving to Galicia. Germany and England are running the standard anti-Russian playbook by convoying an army into Livonia while forcing Sweden. The game opens up.

Stung by the betrayal, Turkey elects to send his fleet from the Ionian Sea into the Adriatic to harass Austria. Christophe pushes farther, taking Sevastopol while England forces Saint Petersburg. Austria once again goes into Venice in the Spring, only to leave again in the Fall turn. It's all part of a guessing game with France,

★ FINAL RESULTS ★



On the heels of that last wild board finishing, I went into calculating the final scores. The top three positions in the tournament were each separated by a point: First place was 72 points, second place was 71 points, and third place was 70 points. Dan Elkins and Ryan Feathers entered the last round one point apart and neither improved their score. Harald Henning made a valiant attempt to win the tournament, but his second-place finish as Italy in Round Three was not enough.

We had a first-time Diplomacy tournament player win WBC and join the champions club. Dan Elkins of Katy, Texas came to WBC not knowing much about tournament Diplomacy. By the end of the weekend, he had spent time reading prior event reports and general Diplomacy history after learning from the experienced hands. He learned quickly enough, winning Best France and the Championship. Dan also took home a custom wooden board. Congrats on the well-deserved victory. We'll be back next year with more fun for our players. Here are the final details.



Event Total

10 boards / 33 players

The Top Board were the top seven finishers in the event, essentially forming the best table. Each player received a custom Diplomacy map clipboard with printing to indicate this was won at WBC.



Top Board

1. Dan Elkins
2. Ryan Feathers
3. Harald Henning
4. Jack Wilsbach
5. Evan Walter
6. Jeff Hayman
7. Brady Detwiler

The Best Country awards were given out to the best single game score for that Power. We had a tie for Best Germany in the event. The discretion for breaking ties is up to the GM. Given we had TWO awards for each Best Country, I asked Ryan and Brady if they wanted to split. Ryan got the wooden plaque and Brady took the whiskey glass set (for apple juice only until you turn 21, right Brady?).



Best Country

Austria - Christophe Borgeat

England - David Rynkowski

France - Dan Elkins

Germany - Ryan Feathers & Brady Detwiler

Italy - Jeff Hayman

Russia - Christophe Borgeat

Turkey - Jack Wilsbach



Tournament Veteran Award Recipients (players who have competed in at least five Diplomacy events since the tournament returned):

David Rynkowski
Evan Walter
Paul Konka
Trevor Schoenen
Harald Henning
John Stevens
Andrew Sherwood
Keith Boone
Carl Shapiro
Ron Fisher
Geoff Mize
Kevin Youells
Jay Schoenen
Jeff Hayman
Jay Boring
Michael McKibbin
Brady Detwiler

Some interesting notes about the tournament:

- ★ Jay Boring returned to the event for the first time since the move from Lancaster to Seven Springs. He promptly topped his board.
- ★ Ryan Feathers rejoined us after spending a few years hunting for the Consul title at WBC. He promptly topped HIS board and finished the tournament in 2nd place.
- ★ We had TWO types of Best Country awards to give away: wooden plaques and branded whiskey glass sets. This came in handy when Ryan Feathers and Brady Detwiler tied for Best Germany. By my GM powers and their mutual agreement, Ryan took the plaque and Brady took the whiskey glass set.
- ★ Christophe Borgeat made his first US tournament appearance. The former EuroDipCon champ won two Best Country awards in his debut (Austria and Russia). Not too shabby.
- ★ Nick Benedict brought his son to play his first ever tournament. We now have enough parent-child pairs to run two full family boards. Diplomacy Family Feud event in the future?

A link to the photos from this event can be found here: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/s9CumtgDwvrf98z6>

World DipCon 2025 at Whipping




April 4-6, 2025 in San Francisco, CA
Hotel Spero

Four rounds of Diplomacy to crown the 2025 World
Champion!




Want more info? Scan the QR code to register for email updates!
Website: <https://www.thenadf.org/world-dipcon-2025/>

Knives and Daggers - The Diplomacy World Letter Column

 **Mark Nelson** - As I'm sure any number of people will point out; it is correct to note that WDC I was held in conjunction with ManorCon. However, ManorCon was held in Birmingham NOT Manchester. Anyone interested in learning about the pre-history of WDC should read through back issues of Mad Policy.

If anyone is to "blame" for the concept of WDC, then that person would be Simon Billenness. At one stage he floated the idea that DipCon should be held in the UK. That idea didn't gain any traction, as for a start it involved changing the rules about where DipCon could be held. However, once it became clear that DipCon in the UK was a none-started his idea was modified to make it World DipCon in the UK.


 **Chris Brand** - In the letter column of DW #166, Davide wrote "At Bangkok in 2023 San Francisco was set for 2025, but not Milan for 2024". That's not correct. At the hobby meeting in Bangkok, Lei Saarlainen held a vote for Milan 2024 and it was accepted. I was there (and voted in favour). It was recognised that we were in an odd place with no venue for 2024 after postponements due to COVID.

As David Hood pointed out in his article in that same issue, Larry Peery's year 2000 article about WDC (see <https://diplom.org/Zine/F2000M/Peery/WDC-history.html>) clearly says that Canberra is the "probable site" for 2002, contrasted with his description of Paris as "the designated site, in February 2001".


Also, arguing that "There is no provision in the WDC charter to delay or cancel a WDC but we saw 2020 and

2021 canceled" is a little ridiculous – COVID was completely unprecedented and institutions everywhere had to make things up as they went along. It's very impressive that David Maletsky and Lei were able to roll with the punches and postpone their events to 2022 and 2023 and a little offensive to demean those events, which were both very enjoyable.

We really should have both agendas and minutes for these hobby meetings.

 **Peter McNamara** - I am writing in response to Davide's letter which appeared in both GSTZ and DW and contains factual errors about the recent history of selecting WDC, which I can clarify having attended the recent WDCs.

In 2022, it is true (but irrelevant) that no future WDC host was selected, because there were at that stage no bids for 2024. In 2023, at the hobby meeting it was agreed that both 2024 would take place in Milan and 2025 would take place in San Francisco.

 **Thomas Haver** - Remember to add RenCon to your calendar on Friday, October 11. <https://renegadegamestudios.com/renegade-con-october-2024> The 1130am PST slot for new reveals will have some new game reveals for 2025. We have some exciting news about the future of Diplomacy to share with everyone! <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKwDYsOyitZAQFS76KBj1vQ>



Circle DC Diplomacy Tournament 2025

Please join us in our nation's capital for Circle DC: A Conference on History, Education & Play. Registration for the three-day event is \$99.

Last year we were joined by an amazing group of game designers including Jason Matthews, Tory Brown, Volko Ruhnke, Sebastian Bae, and many more. Come join old friends and meet new friends at the friendliest game convention on the planet.

Circle DC will be hosted at the Shakespeare Folger Library (<https://www.folger.edu/>). The Folger Library is located a block from the US Capitol and is home to the world's largest Shakespeare collection.

April 4th – April 6th (2025), in Washington, DC

Teaching - 1pm-5pm Friday
Round One - 7pm-11pm Friday
Round Two - 10am-2pm Saturday
Round Three - 7pm-11pm Saturday

Scoring: C-Diplo
Rank: Best two out of three rounds

Contact: Thomas Haver (tjhaver@gmail.com)
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Tournament Victors All-in-One - 2024 Edition

by David Hood

For the last two years, I published a list here in Diplomacy World of all the tournament winners starting in the Virtual Era (so 2020 forward) so that folk could see at a glance who all had been winning what in the last few years. My plan has been to make this an annual tradition, just adding onto the list from the previous year. Yes, these things can be looked up on the World Diplomacy Database, at least to some extent, but I thought it might be helpful to keep this running total for the DW readership.

Now, as I have mentioned before, another great resource you can use to see who's who in tournament diplomacy is to visit our Diplomacy Broadcast Network website. Brandon Fogel and the rest of the DBN team has compiled a wonderful online resource chock full of tournament information, as a by-product of tabulating the current scores in the race for DBN Invitational tournament bids for each season. That race for the 2024 season to qualify for the Feb 2025 DBNI is really heating up, so check out the site at <https://diplobn.com/competition-group/?GroupType=DBNIQ&GroupID=2025>. I should point out that not all events in the world qualify for DBNI inclusion. Also, one particular organizer prefers to isolate himself and his players from the wider hobby and thus his events are not listed for DBNI points. I have nevertheless listed his non-teaching events below for the sake of completeness.

So, here are some recent tournament results, in the same random order as the list I published last year, with location of FTF event or location of virtual tournament organizers. I have left off a few events which either were not classic Dip events, which had single digit participation, or which have not run since 2020. I have also added a few recent winners of extended deadline online tournaments just for completeness, but have not added league winners even though such leagues are eligible for DBNI points. If I missed any events, I apologize ahead of time and please tell me. Note that quite a few tournaments have not held their 2024 events at the time of this writing (a number of such events are coming up in October/November/December):

Cascadia - British Columbia/Canada

2024 Katie Gray (FTF, Also Dipcon)
2023 Riaz Virani (FTF)
2022 Siobhan Nolen (FTF event in July)
2022 Tommy Anderson (Virtual event in January)
2022 Siobhan Nolen (FTF)
2021 Ed Sullivan (Virtual)

Poppycon (replaced for 2024 by Melbourne Open) - Victoria/Australia

2024 Jamal Blakkarly (FTF)
2022 Peter McNamara (FTF)
2021 Jamal Blakkarly (FTF)
2020 Peter McNamara (FTF)

Euro Dipcon - Rotating/Europe

2024 Karthik Konath (FTF)
2023 Jelte Kuiper (FTF)
2022 Christophe Borgeat (FTF)
2021 Alex Lebedev (FTF)

Bangkok Diplomacy Open - FTF/Thailand

2023 Jamal Blakkarly (also World Dipcon)
2022 Sascha Heylmann

Boston Massacre - Massachusetts/USA

2024 John Bihn (FTF)
2022 Robert Schuppe (FTF)
2021 Farren Janes (Virtual)
2020 Tanya Gill (Virtual)

Carnage - Vermont/USA

2023 Jason Mastbaum (FTF)
2022 Dan Lester (FTF, also was World Dipcon)
2021 Adam Silverman (FTF event in November, also Dipcon)
2021 Katie Gray (Virtual event in May)
2020 Bill Hackenbracht (Virtual)

Dixiecon - North Carolina/USA

2024 Karthik Konath (FTF)
2023 Mikalis Kamaritis (FTF, also Dipcon)
2022 Brandon Fogel (FTF)
2021 Karthik Konath (Virtual)
2020 Christian Kline (Virtual)

Regatta - Denver/USA

2024 Zachary Moore (FTF)
2023 Ed Sullivan (FTF)

WeaselMoot - Illinois/USA

2023 Adam Silverman (FTF)
2022 Seren Kwok (FTF)
2021 Russ Dennis (Virtual)
2020 John Anderson (Virtual)

Whipping - California/USA

2024 Steven Hogue (FTF)
2023 Matthew Crill (FTF)
2022 Tanya Gill (FTF, also Dipcon)
2021 Jason Mastbaum (Virtual)

2023 Red Candle (PlayDiplomacy)

Hung Parliament Handicap (FTF) - Canberra/Australia
2024 Leena Hu

Cane Toad Classic (FTF) - Queensland/Australia
2024 Jamal Blakkarly

Skycon (FTF) - Montana/USA
2024 Katie Gray

Diplostats Gauntlet - Online/Extended Deadline
Gauntlet II (finished Sept 2024) - Jamal Blakkarly
Gauntlet I (finished July 2024) - Tim

National Diplomacy Masters (FTF) - Nevada/USA
2024 Katie Gray

UK National Diplomacy Championship (FTF) - Warrington/UK
2024 Dan Lester

GenCon - Indiana/USA (FTF)

2024 Robert Zahn
2023 Dan McNeill
2022 Erick Zahn

Origins - Ohio/USA (FTF)

2024 Andrew Boyd
2023 Dan McNeill
2022 Geoff Mize

World Boardgaming Championships (FTF)

2024 Dan Elkins
2023 Robert Zahn
2022 Anton Wilsbach

Spirecon - Chesterfield/UK

2022 Bradley Grace (FTF)

French Championship - Paris/France

2022 Cyrille Sevin
2021 Briec Thibault (FTF event in November)
2021 Cyrille Sevin (Virtual event in March)

Swiss Open (FTF)

2023 Davide Cleopadre

Italian NDC (FTF)

2024 Nicholas Sahuguet (also World Dipcon)
2023 Thomas Haver
2022 Luca Pazzaglia

Olympus Main Event - Online/Extended Deadline

2024 Jordan Conners
2023 Bradley Grace

Nexus Main Event - Online/Extended Deadline

Season 8 Koke Animal
Season 7 Ed Sullivan
Season 6 Greg Matthews

vWDC Summer Classic - Virtual

2024 Johnny Gillam
2023 Seren Kwok
2022 Katie Gray
2021 Seren Kwok

Virtual Diplomacy Championship (VDC)

2023 Jamal Blakkarly
2022 Riaz Virani
2021 Nicolas Sahuguet
2020 Morgante Pell

Online Diplomacy Championship (ODC)



Victorious or Vanquished in Vegas?

by Jeff Hayman

Hello fellow Diplo-folk! My name is Jeff and I recently attended the Diplomacy tournament at the World Series of Boardgaming in Las Vegas, between September 23rd and September 25th of this year. This was my tenth Diplomacy tourney, but my first using the central clock and utilizing a final board to determine the winner. It was also my first trip to Vegas, so how could I not go?

Tom Haver and Renegade hosted the tournament. Years ago, I had attended a previous event that Tom hosted, and it was Tom's support and promotion of the game that assured me that the trip from Virginia would prove worthwhile.

The tournament featured C-Diplo scoring, three games each day at 4pm, a 1907 conclusion, a top board on night 3, a central clock, and hosted dinners after each game for the players and families. And because it was a 'Tom Haver hosted event', I knew there would also be great SWAG!

Tom also invited a number of well-known players from the Diplo-world (there's lots of clubs, conventions, and organizations) and I found it very informative to learn about other games, tourneys, rules, and venues. I had heard about many of the other players but had never met them. I enjoyed getting to know everyone and their family members, and there were even a few newbies as well.

The venue was the Horseshoe Hotel and Casino and there was ample time each day to attend some other attraction or event. Many of our Diplomacy players were also playing in a game or two in the World Series of Board Gaming, which was the larger convention being hosted. I didn't play any other games, but I did attend the U2 concert offering at the Sphere. Excellent I may add!

For this tourney, a computer program would designate player the board and country assignments (I'm used to pulling wood blocks blindly out of a bag LOL).

For my first game, I was assigned Turkey. Long story short, I had a good alliance with Russia, but my new friend (Manus) fell to a combined English/German/Austrian attack (events would prove I should have learned from this development). The game turned into a Western Triple vs a 'now' united AIT. The last turn saw the inevitable stab of Germany by Nick's England and Mark's Austria stabbing Rob L's Italy. We all took a vote (Austria could have played kingmaker between my Turkey, Nick's England, and Richard's France...Nick and Richard were VERY tight allies in this

game) but decided to end the game with Nick's England and my Turkey tied at 10 centers. Nick and I hoped this would be good enough to get us onto the final board two nights later. So, to sum up, there had been five survivors with only the eliminations of Russia and Italy.

Afterwards, Tom and Renegade took us to dinner at Guy Fieri's. Fantastic food and drinks! Great start to the tourney and I had met many new friends to boot!

For my second game, I was assigned Germany. I was between the previous night's 'other two board toppers': Katie was France (who had a 9-center Turkey from the day before), and Jack was Russia (who had a 12-center Turkey the day before). I made it clear that I had nothing to gain from stabbing them (even my 10-center Turkey was hors de combat now), and I would certainly appreciate the reciprocation being as they were also bound for the top seven final board. The three of us banded together to quickly take down England. It was a fortuitous decision on my part as I quickly determined that they were both better players than me LOL. They were gracious, allowing me to score a board top as a 9-center Germany with them at 8-centers each. I called for an end game vote which would also allow everyone (other than England) to survive.

For this evening's dinner, Tom and Renegade took us out to Carmine's. Again, a GREAT evening! Everyone was getting along, there had been some really good play, and nobody had yet earned an unnecessary roughness penalty LOL.

For night three, again there would be three boards played. The top seven finishers would play for the tournament championship while the other two boards would be playing hard for the Best Country awards. And boy, did those two other boards play HARD.

The good news was that I was assigned Russia and had a solid ally in Turkey (Turkey was Ed Prem, we had never played together before but we knew of each other). The bad news for me was that Nick Benedict was Germany and Richard Sweat was England (the two very solid and tight players from my first game). Katie Gray and Jack Brawner were France and Italy, respectively. Alas, a tad further away than I would have preferred them to be. Mark Egerman from my first game was Austria. He was a very solid and strategic player and this was his second Austria for this tourney. There were several 'duplicate' country pairings.

So, things did not go as well for me on the third night. I didn't realize that if my Russia died or was severely constrained, then Richard's England was assured a Best Russia award from his previous game two (and of course Nick stood a good chance of garnering a Best Germany). So, Richard's England and I apparently had different motivations for this game. I was trying to win, whereas he was trying to actively KILL me (remember when I told you that Tom gave out really nice swag? He has really cool Best Country awards which apparently, people really REALLY covet!). Richard diplomatically traded his English position to Germany and France to ensure my destruction, and I could never get Germany to back away. An early disorder on my part did not help matters.

However, I did pull off a surprise move late in the game. I used my Russian fleet in the North Sea (yes, there had been a lot of retreating) to transport Richard's sole surviving English army/unit from Norway to assault a German occupied Belgium while simultaneously asking for (and receiving!) Katie's French support. It worked! And I slipped into Norway and managed to survive until the end of the game! In the south, Turkey and I held off a combined (and rather ingenious) Italian-Austrian assault for 3 years, but eventually, Rumania cracked. Austria then attacked me and stabbed Italy. Sheesh. Turkey turtled. France went on a tear. England's last unit died in Belgium. We took a concession vote and Katie was crowned our first National Masters Champion! Mark's Austria was second and Nick's Germany was third.

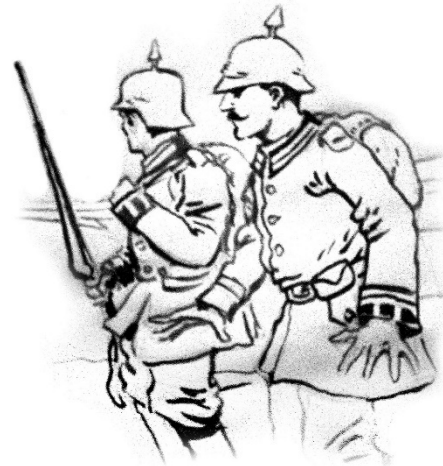
I 'thought' my efforts to 'at least' restrain Germany would prevent Nick from beating my 9-center Germany. They did, but over on the other two boards, the fourteen players were absolutely crushing it trying to win Best Country awards. So, in the end, the other two boards deprived Ed/Turkey and I/Russia of our previous Best Country awards with a 14-center France and Germany, respectively. On the Top Board, ONLY Mark's Austria earned a Best Country award from our championship game. Even Katie, the tournament winner, did not earn a Best Country. Still, Tom broke out the swag on the awards presentation and all 7 Top Board finishers got a lovely wooden coin case. Why a coin case? Because Tom also presented EVERY player with their own

challenge coin representing the Vegas event. Seriously, you have to attend a Tom Haver event, you'll take home something nice.

Then we all went out to Giordano's and enjoyed our last meal together. Bottom line – a GREAT TIME in Vegas! I can't remember everyone that I met, but I hope to stay in touch with my new friends Katie, Paul, Nick, Richard, Markus, Mark, Ed, Joe, Manus, Mike, Rob L, the Humphreys 'brothers', and Phil. I even got to see a few folks from WBC like Ryan, Rob Z, and Paul.

I don't really have any negative comments. I stay mostly on the east coast, so this was a new experience for me. Personally, I think I'll also stick to the best two out of three game format tournaments in the future. I thought I'd like the central clock as well (I like standardization) but I frequently ran out of time to write my orders. I personally need a little more structure to keep me on track LOL. But those are MY limitations, not due to the game or tournament.

So, Tom and Renegade, thanks for a wonderful five days in Vegas!



Larger Player-Count Variants Played Recently, and My Thoughts Thereof

by Bob Durf

A couple weeks prior to this issue's deadline, I had the pleasure (is that the right word for a Diplomacy game? Probably not) of playing a NoPun Diplomacy variant called the Order of the Dragon.

The game included the Diplomatic Point system for dealing with neutral powers, with some additional

wrinkles. Players could build Heirs, and use those heirs for additional Diplomatic Points and to create Thralls out of neutral centers (becoming semi-neutral centers that would value the thralling power's diplomatic points at a 2 to 1 exchange) or Vassals (made from a player's supply center to share with another rival). Both new ways to use Diplomatic Points led to of course much shenanigans.



I joined as a replacement in a tournament structure, which meant the game was played only to an

abbreviated conclusion, and I mention that as well because the tournament set-up encouraged a very dull

end-game where vassal creating led to an alliance group boosting each other into the finale of the tournament while playing more straight-up diplomacy against the rest of the board. All's fair in love and war (or Diplomacy), I only say that as a caveat that some of the extreme vassal usage in my game would have been unlikely in a stand-alone match.

With that preface, I think the map is a great example of building large player-count variants with dynamic and interesting negotiations with everyone on the board. And while the graphic design is top notch, and the player base is excellent in NoPun's discord server, what really made this variant so interesting is the Diplomatic Point system. I would invite any variant map designer who wants a large map to consider implementing a similar system.

The DP system was first implemented, to my knowledge, by Baron Von Powell's Ambition and Empire variant. The system was implemented, it seems by the early articles, to control extremely unbalancing and a-historic growth by those near easy groups of neutrals, and to provide additional negotiation opportunities. Ambition and Empire was wisely designed with an upper cap on DPs (three) to allow larger countries to have more sway but not an ever-increasing number of DPs to throw around. I observed a match of Ambition and Empire a couple of years ago and enjoyed watching how the diplomatic point system could pair with a more crowded board of players to allow higher player counts without larger boards to pr

What Order of the Dragon implements is a way to increase DPs with the more heirs a power has on the map--but by requiring DPs be used to move vassal troops around or influence your own thralls, the system has a built-in sink for spending the additional DPs to avoid an overabundance of DPs on any one location (usually).

This expansion of the DP system is a great way to introduce additional wrinkles into Diplomacy without changing Diplomacy into something it is not. The introduction of vassals and thralls creates a three-tiered system within the DP structure that presents different opportunities and challenges at each level. The basic neutrals can be influenced to support or move but are complete free agents. Thralls will be easier for their patrons to influence and count towards victory requirements, but still can betray their patrons with

enough counter-influence. Vassals are safe from outside influence, but require a sacrifice of a supply center and can still be influenced by the other vassalizing power--but each has more incentive to keep the vassal alive as, like thralls, each supply center the vassal owns counts towards each power's victory requirements.

This tiered system created a game that, despite the large number of players, was remarkably involved negotiation-wise with almost everyone on the board until the last phase of the game. Without the DP system, I, as Golden Horde, would not have talked nearly as much with the opposite side of the board, and I would've had less resources to try to donate or receive from those far-flung powers. The DPs remained always useful as the game progressed because of the vassal system, meaning their diplomatic and strategic use did not lessen but rather changed as the game progressed.

To be fair, the variant was not perfect, but the flaws in the game seemed to be more in map tweaks than system tweaks. Burgundy seemed to get shellacked in each game I observed. Kalmar Union seemed to be the easy-mode Power with no threats whatsoever posed against it until later stages in the game. Small map tweaks are easy to make however when the system underlying the map is so inviting and engaging.

In conclusion, any aspiring variant creator should be encouraged to consider utilizing the Diplomacy Point system when designing larger player-count variants. Rather than leave everyone segmented off from each other in different corners of the map, such a system can keep bigger player count games just as dynamic as the base game, where everyone has immediate reason to talk to each other.

Next issue, I hope to talk about a variant I played a couple years ago, Dawn of the Enlightenment by David Cohen, in which different design strategies were employed in creating an absolutely huge map that was also very enjoyable to play.

<https://nopunin10did.com/order-of-the-dragon-rules-repository/> is the source for further rule information on Order of the Dragon.

<https://nopunin10did.com/the-2024-diplomacy-tournament-through-time/> is the source for further information on the ongoing variant tournament.

2024 National Diplomacy Masters Tournament Review

by Manus Hand

I was privileged to be invited to attend the National Diplomacy Masters tournament in Las Vegas, which was a featured event during the World Series of Board Gaming. Somehow, I was selected as one of the first four "Masters" for the inauguration of this tournament, and the plan is that each year four lucky people – the previous year's winner and three others – will continue this tradition. As a "Master" I brought home a way-cool name-in-lights Vegas-style neon face thing, to keep at my desk in case I ever forget my name or what I look like, and many other very nice things. I'll just say that being named one of the "Masters" going into the tournament is well-worth it and everyone should strive to get so lucky!

With the tragic death of my son just a few days before I ran the Rocky Mountain Area Diplomacy Championship tournament a couple months ago, my trip to Las Vegas got turned into a family affair, with no fewer than eight members of my family deciding to board various airplanes to accompany and support me (and to feed the Las Vegas economy).

It was so great to see Steve Cooley, who I hadn't seen in years, and Katie Gray, who I hadn't seen in months, and finally to put faces to the names of so many players who I have long been aware of but hadn't ever met in person. Not only that, but the tournament brought in a good handful of brand-new players who learned of The Game during the event. This was aided greatly by the fact that the Diplomacy tournament, with all the huge boards, great big banners, and awesome awards on display, had the most visible primo space in the entire convention area.

I got to be involved in teaching one of these new players, introducing her not only to Diplomacy but to our community and our social spirit, and for this – I couldn't believe it! – I was awarded a briefcase containing one of the big beautiful fabric boards and 3D-printed piece sets that were used during the tournament, and which has already seen use in my local games after my return home! (This new player, with her gaming friends, by the way, is already acting on my referral and is reaching out to get involved with the organized Bay Area Diplomacy group!)

The event was very well-run, and the backing of Renegade Games, the publisher of The Game, was very apparent and appreciated. In addition to the high-quality awards, game-giveaways, and copious amounts of swag, the Diplomacy players were treated for dinner each night, and I'm talking dinners at high-class, high-

price Vegas restaurants, not McDonald's. The social time at these incredibly expensive meals was great and I made so many new friends, all of whom I very much hope will show up at the Jameson Hand Memorial ARMADA Regatta in Colorado next summer for me, where they can and will meet so many of my old friends.



Now a quick run-through of the thing that every Diplomacy player wrongly thinks that every other Diplomacy player wants to hear all about: how my games went.

I'll start by saying that I could blame the fact that my face and name were on constant display at the awards table throughout the event for putting a target on my back and thus causing my first two rounds to have such incredibly disappointing results. However, the honest fact might instead be that I just sucked. Perhaps I'm rusty from doing mostly organizing, recruiting, teaching, and mentoring and not much playing, or perhaps, again, it's that I just suck. Either way, here's the sad story of those two rounds.

In the first round, I drew Russia, which immediately gave me a bad feeling, because in the regular ARMADA

games played here in the Rockies, taking the Russian pieces has lately been basically a death sentence. In my game in Vegas, I approached the Turk about removing my Sevastopol fleet and then rolling west together. The particular tactical way that I proposed to do this – making his dislodge seem to be the beginning of a Russo-Turkish war – was something that he hadn't seen before, so I (mistakenly, as it turns out) assumed that the other players on the board would be fooled by it. Nope. The board was alerted (without telling me, of course) to what was up, and my entire game went quickly to pot. The death knell was that I was actually so gullible as to not bounce the Austrian in Galicia out of Warsaw in Fall of 1901. Combined with the bounce out of Sweden, yeah, my goose was fully cooked. You know, now that I see it written out, I'm definitely starting to lean heavily towards the "I suck" explanation.

How about round 2, though? Could I possibly suck even more? Being assigned Turkey, I felt a bit more confident that I'd make a better showing. That feeling managed to survive until the Spring 1901 move orders were being read, when I realized that I truly had written Con-Bul, Smy-Con, and (OMG, did I really?) Ank-Con. That may be the stupidest set of orders I have ever seen in my 40+ year career, but there they were, written plainly in my own handwriting, and there I was, with an army sitting in Bulgaria all alone, and with his only two friends far away back home. Why Russia (eventually) decided to stay with me and allow me to survive, I don't know, but had it not have been for his rescuing support turn after turn, I was dead meat. Although I did manage to grow to six with the Russian's help, I felt that the right thing to do was to toss him dots at the end when all the players who could earn "bonus" points were trying to work out how to distribute them, and thus determine who would qualify for the tournament's top board. My dot-tossing (I finished on one center) did push my Russian savior onto that top board, and (sorry, Phil Burk!) deny that spot to the German player by only a point or two.

Thankfully, the next day's third round saw me put together a better game. As France, I ended 1905 with 14 centers, and I perhaps could have pushed for a solo rather than accept a five-survivor ending, but it wouldn't have made a difference in the tournament rankings, so that's where we called it. I earned the nice big Best France award for that performance, but more importantly, I earned back some of the respect from my grandson (who is so deeply into Diplomacy!) that I'm sure I had lost after my first two catastrophic rounds.

Before I traveled to Vegas, I told anyone I talked to about the tournament that if they wanted to wager on the

event, their best odds would be to put their money on one of two bets to win: Katie Gray or The Field. Although it was a bit of a joke (because there were truly a bunch of high-quality and talented players there, and Katie definitely had a fight on her hands!), sure enough, Katie went to the WSBG Awards Ceremony to receive the first-ever NDM Championship award and to publicly declare her love for The Game to all and sundry. Congratulations, Katie! (Incredibly, and unfortunately for my own wallet, I couldn't find a single sports book in any of the Vegas casinos that would let me lay a bet on my friend, so that I could have financially benefited from her success. Vegas needs to get with the program!)

To conclude, I just want to repeat my thanks to both Tom Haver, the tournament organizer, and to Renegade, for such an excellent experience, and to all my fellow competitors, who were so kind to me (even when my moves were absolutely idiotic), and so sympathetic toward me and my family given our recent tragedy. As the NDM's evolve and grow (moving to become a weekend event in the next years), I truly look forward to competing in Vegas again, even if only to try to make up for some of the moronic moves I made in my first two rounds this year.



Diplomacy

Cascadia Open 2025

When: 1st - 2nd Feb 2025

Schedule:

*Optional meal and social event
Friday evening.

*Round 1 9am Sat the 1st

*Round 2 5pm Sat the 1st

*Round 3 8:30am Sun the 2nd

Registration 15 minutes before each
round.

**All games will end in a solo victory, after
1909 fall retreats, or earlier if all surviving
players agree.**

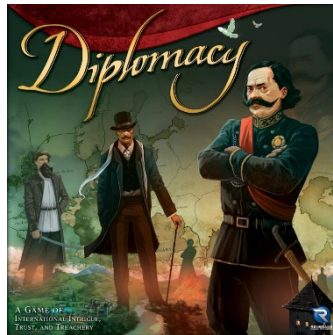
Where: Holiday Inn Express 15808 104th
Ave, Surrey, BC, Canada

Cost : \$30Cdn

Wise: @christopherb4580

Paypal: cascadia.open@gmail.com

Tournament Director: Chris Brand
Questions:? Cascadia.open@gmail.com



February 21-22, 2025

Diplomacy has a long history at the PrezCon gaming convention. Diplomacy was part of the first PrezCon in 1994 and the convention previously hosted DipCon in 2006. Last year we brought PrezCon back and we're happy to announce the PrezCon Diplomacy Tournament will return in 2025. The three-round event will be held on Friday night & Saturday (2/21-2/22) in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Details about PrezCon

"The PrezCon Annual Convention presented by Faceless Men Productions, LLC, is proud to have been hosting their Winter Board Gaming Convention since 1994. PrezCon has grown into a big event. It is now attended by hundreds of people from around the globe. We host over 100 Tournaments and dozens of demos during the convention! Our Open Gaming rooms entertain over 200 players utilizing our 500+ board game library. PrezCon Winter Nationals include some of the old favorites and many new tournaments as well."

Purchase Tickets here:

<https://www.prezcon.com/program>

Dates:

February 17th – 23rd, 2025. The Diplomacy tournament is February 21st – 22nd.

Diplomacy Tournament:

Contact - Thomas Haver (tjhaver@gmail.com)

Tournament Details - PrezCon is an annual gaming convention held at the Hilton Doubletree in Charlottesville, Virginia. The 19th edition of the Diplomacy tournament will be three rounds over two days. The best two rounds of three will count towards the tournament score. Best Country awards and tournament prizes will be provided by the organizer. Firm time limits for negotiation and order writing will be followed to ensure expedient play for competitors with other events on their schedule. The style of play is open to all skill-levels and encouraging for new players to gain experience. **The NEW Diplomacy game will also be on display to demo during the event – the first convention appearance!**

Intro/Demo: Friday 2/21 from 5pm to 7pm

Round One: Friday 2/21 from 7pm to 11pm

Round Two: Saturday 2/22 from 10am to 2pm

Round Three: Saturday 2/22 from 7pm to 11pm

Scoring System: [C-Diplo](#)

Rank: Best two out of three rounds

2024 Event Pictures Here: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/5hZCmwARv7rBVuRD9>



RENEGADE
GAME STUDIOS

