

# SPRING OFFENSIVE 59

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*Spring Offensive* is a monthly Diplomacy zine available from:

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## EDITORIAL

### MASTERCON

To the surprise of many, including myself, I did manage to get to MasterCon for the odd game of Diplomacy. I knew I was never going to be able to stomach the idea of four rounds of Diplomacy - I think I have only once managed two games of Dip in one weekend and I am unlikely to ever repeat the experience, which makes it inevitable that I will ever get near the top of any Tournament. In the event I played my one game of Dip on the Friday night, growing to a 7 centre Germany before being cruelly stabbed by France to end the game on 4 centres. FtF Diplomacy always gives me a headache and I certainly don't find the game relaxing, so perhaps I am not a natural player. A quick game of *Binga Bonga* (or something which sounded like that) and it was time to find the bar. By the time I got to bed (after 2.00am) I knew I wasn't going to make the Diplomacy in the morning, so I decided to enjoy the luxury of a lie-in without being jumped on at 6.45am by an enthusiastic 3 year-old who wants to wake me up to tell me its light outside. Apologies to Shaun for not letting him know the night before.

I didn't actually play any more games until the Saturday evening, preferring to sit in the bar, eating and drinking, talking to Jeremy Tullett and Pete Birks. A quick visit to the shops in Bedford managed to secure presents for the kids, including a Winnie the Pooh stencil set and a bright pink pen for Kate and a "Dipsy" for Freddie (those with small children will know what this is and how desirable an object it is if you are 16 months old). I tried to get a game of *Colonial Diplomacy* in the evening, but when we were unable to muster seven, Steve Cox, John Boocock, Mike Jordan and myself had a game of *Mediterranée* instead. I quite like this game, a decent length (2½ hours), lots of pretty plastic ships with colourful flags to move around the board, and thoughtful strategy to boot. Subsequent games played into the early hours included *Hare & Tortoise* and a couple of games of *Ave Caesar*.

I thought the hotel was quite good for a games Con, the staff were well trained, the bar stayed open, food was available into the early hours, an ample car park and convenient town centre location. My only reservation is crowding an awful lot of Diplomacy games into a relatively small room made for a claustrophobic atmosphere. I also disliked the idea of playing Diplomacy on the Saturday night, which is a far more suitable time for eating, drinking and being merry. The mix of foreign players (this being EuroDipCon as well)

made for a cosmopolitan event, though they seem to be mainly hardcore Diplomacy players. Some people do seem to take their FtF Diplomacy very seriously these days, which I think is a pity. Many thanks to Shaun Derrick for organising the whole affair and it was nice to see Nick Kinzett again, who did a sterling role as Shaun's right-hand man

### DIPLOMACY SLEAZE?

Is all fair in FtF Diplomacy? Exactly how far can you go in order to win? These are pertinent questions given the revelation that leading players in the FtF Diplomacy scene have been willing to bribe another player with cash in order to enjoy an advantage in a game. Is this within the spirit of the game? How would you feel if you lost out to someone else in a Diplomacy Tournament, only to discover that they had enhanced their score by bribing another player to throw supply centres to them? I don't want to sound to po-faced about this, but I do think that this is going too far and that bribery should not be an accepted part of the FtF game. All respectable tournaments should specifically outlaw bribing other players, and players caught doing such a thing should be expelled from the Tournament concerned.

For example, at MasterCon, three of the players on the top board are alleged to have been known to bribe another player in order to secure an advantage, two of them having done so at MasterCon itself. In Round 2 of the Diplomacy Tournament it is said that both Player A and Player B paid money to John Boocock in order to secure a tactical advantage and get John to attack another player. John Boocock has also claimed that later in the same game, Player B paid John an additional £5 in order to get him to concede extra centres in the closing stages of the game. That means that John finished the game £15 better off than when he began it. I do not know if Player B would have qualified for the top board without the additional centres, but extra SCs are worth quite a lot under the C-Diplo scoring system that MasterCon uses. You cannot just dismiss all this as a joke, as real money changed hands and the players doing the bribing did get what they wanted.

The third player on the Top Board who has resorted to this tactic on "several occasions" (if John Boocock is to be believed) is the well-known and successful Player C. That said, I am not aware that Player C bribed anyone at MasterCon itself, although I did hear him offer John £10 to join his board as a replacement for Austria to his Italy (for what reason we can only guess at). When the above

story was being told to me, someone within earshot also announced that Player C had offered him money before in a Diplomacy game, but that he had declined.

I am not saying that what these players did was in breach of the Tournament rules, indeed I understand that Shaun Derrick, the Tournament Organiser, ruled that it was not illegal to bribe other players. What I am saying is that if such a ruling was given then it is plainly wrong. Players should have a reasonable expectation that other players will play to improve their positions to the best of their ability and if we are to countenance bribery, then we might as well start to auction trophies and dispense with the need to play the games at all. I think that it is extremely sad that three such outstanding players can allow their natural competitive spirit to have to resort to cash to supplement their Diplomacy.

Now I could have named Players A, B and C, but I thought it would be more revealing if I gave them the opportunity to name themselves and attempt to justify their actions (especially as two of them are zine editors). If they won't do so, it speaks volumes. I do think that a debate on the appropriateness of this behaviour is required, and I don't want to distract attention from the principle at this stage by referring to personalities.

As Toby Harris says in the latest **Freaky Fungus** if you have a Top Table in a tournament then "...those who have played the best at the event to date" should be at that Top Table... "so, when the winner wins, they are a worthy winner and there is no dispute whatsoever as to how they got that win." And with that I would agree – it's just I don't equate best play with a willingness to bribe others. It seems if you want to improve your chances of winning a Diplomacy Tournament, you'd better visit a cash machine first.

### SPECCY AND STRETCHY

It's never easy to come up with a subject for an editorial, but fortunately Messrs. Duncan and Stretch have managed to come up with the goods in the nick of time – both have made themselves look rather silly for the entertainment of the rest of us. Just as Toby was threatening to make good old-fashioned feuds a thing of the past, a raucous (if dispiritingly good-natured) feud bubbles up to keep us amused.

For those of you who were not blessed to receive **The Cunning Plan**, a couple of issues back it contained a marvellous rant by Neil against Mark for allegedly losing some orders which Neil gave him at OxCon. Although I can't comment on the perceived civility (or lack of it) of Mark's response when Neil complained about his NMR, it is quite clear that the person in the wrong here is NEIL DUNCAN. To give an editor orders at a Con is foolish, but forgivable, provided you are not and have never been an editor. But for one editor to try this trick on another is reckless in the extreme. Anything given to an editor at a Con (zines, orders, subs) is fair game to be lost or forgotten about. I have lost track of the subs I've accepted and then drank, and the zines I've received and then left on some table or another. No, Neil deserved everything he got. As for devoting almost a

page in **TCP** to rubbishing Mark for being a crap GM – well, that was fair game, as such jibes are what fanzines are all about. But Neil can't hide the simple fact – Neil Duncan, what a wally!

But what of Mark Stretch, does he come out of this as squeaky clean? No, dear old Stretchy manages to come up with one of the silliest GM decisions in recent time in the following issue of **One Man's Rubbish**. The game in question is *Trintigant*, where apparently, one player sent in some orders purporting to come from another player and Mark used them in error. The player whose control of his units was unfairly usurped rightly complained. Mark has decided that as some player has deceived the GM, and he's not sure who (although he suspects Neil Duncan) then he will abandon the whole game! Now I know that **OMR** is a bit games-heavy, but isn't this a rather desperate way of cutting down on one's GM responsibilities? Obviously Neil Duncan was right, MARK STRETCH can't GM for toffee. The season should simply be readjudicated excluding the fake orders and perhaps Mark should take more care next time. That way the perpetrator doesn't benefit from his deception, but the other players get to keep the game on which they have presumably expended some effort. You just can't hide the truth - Mark Stretch, what a plonker!

### AROUND THE ZINES

**The Sprouts of Wrath** continues to impress, issue 25 clocking in at a chunky 72 pages. Of particular interest isn't the lesbian pornography inside (though as its hidden away on page 19 it's easy to miss), but given that this is the hobby's first exposure to the strap-on plasticine dildo it can't be allowed to go unremarked. It will be interesting to see if anyone complains at all about its inclusion. As Pete Birks reminds us in the latest **Greatest Hits**, the cover of **NMR!** No.48 caused 14 subscribers to write and say they were considering cancelling their sub and even Pete admits it went over the top even by his liberal standards. Arguably the piece in **Sprout** is far more pornographic than the somewhat bushy pubic hair on the cover of **NMR!** 48, but I suspect that Mark will not get hardly any protests at all these days. Maybe I'll send James Hardy a copy of the **NMR!** cover to see if he will print it in **SNOT**.

What is of interest is Mark's observation that it is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first broadcast of **The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy**, surely Douglas Adams's finest hour. I have the six CD set of the complete **HHGTTG** broadcasts and it tends to come out when I have to do the decorating, so I can listen to the full 6 hours in one go. I also have the videos of the TV series, which was fun, but never really gelled. It's a shame that the 90's haven't really seen any quality output from Douglas Adams – I greatly enjoyed **Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency** (from which the hobby derived the zine name **Electric Monk**), and the sequel, **The Long Dark Tea Time Of The Soul** was pretty good. But the 4<sup>th</sup> **Hitchhiker** book was weak and the final 5<sup>th</sup> **Hitchhiker** book is crap, bearing all the hallmarks of something written in a hurry to pay the mortgage. The best way to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary

of **HHGTTG** would be for Douglas Adams to produce something new, fresh, exciting and funny for 1998 – but the signs are not good.

In **Sprout** you can find numerous subzines, one of which is Vick Hall's **Girly Installation** (an anagram of **A Little Original Sin**), which must be one of the hardest things to actually read in the whole hobby. If you are going to use the 8 point type photo-reduced to about 6 point (and I don't think you should, as it is much too small) then you should at least put it in two columns. I nearly didn't bother to force my eyes through the dense and tiny text, but I am glad that I did as it told the story of some of the best of our hobby relaxing in a series of gay bars in Amsterdam in a drug induced haze. I am obviously too old and staid for such activity, but I can take comfort from the fact that I am probably in the majority.

Having complained that **Back to the Dark Ages** hadn't been seen for over six months, issues 116 and 117 have turned up since the last deadline (though I noticed one player did think that after a turnaround time of 6 months, for a Gm to give the players 17 days to diplomate before the next deadline was a bit on the short side. As to the Zine Poll rankings system Ryk says "*I am quite happy to change but need a system which is fair to high and low circulation zines and cannot be affected by grudge votes*". Well, such a system probably doesn't exist, but it is undoubtedly true that many systems exist which are closer to this nirvana than the one currently used by Ryk, indeed the system Ryk inherited and then abandoned was probably as best a compromise as you are going to get. I don't understand this fixation on grudge votes – if a zine gets lots of grudge votes then that must be a reflection of a lack of popularity and so can scarcely be called a "grudge vote"; yet if a zine only gets one or two grudge votes then the difference it makes to the poll result is minimal.

**Borealis** is a low-profile zine which is always a welcome addition to the pile on the doormat and issue 38 is no exception. Great news is that Ian has been promoted at work and landed a big pay rise, and it couldn't have happened to a nicer bloke. Ian laments the death of the Diplomacy variant – certainly there seem to be very few zines offering variants these days. Why, I am not quite sure. I do hope that Ian does not fold, as he threatens on the back page of the latest issue. **Borealis** is a zine to treasure and I would miss it a lot.

Issue 2 of John Wilman's **The White Cat** was as individualistic as ever, from a short piece on philosophy to computer chess to poker to poetry. I'm not quite sure what John's target audience is, and I think he may struggle to get many games started, but I think it may become one of my firm favourites.

Another individualistic zine is Keith Smith's **Who Me?** Keith has a very entertaining and vivid writing style that sets **WM?** apart from other zines – it is undoubtedly unique. One of Keith's friends, Edward Case (assuming that is his real name and not a pen name for someone who would not want to be publicly associated with the views "Edward" expresses – e.g. Tony Dickinson) writes

entertainingly. It's also nice to see the rumour that Mark Stretch has two love children continue to wend its way around the hobby. Personally, I think he should make an honest woman of her. Worth subbing if you want to play in a game of Third Age II, a little slow for Diplomacy.

Best wishes to Jill Parr who is recovering from a longish spell in hospital and emergency operation, but who appears to be making a speedy recovery. I certainly hope so. Similar best wishes to Susie Horton who has just been in hospital with appendicitis, though she was obviously recovering well as she made it to MasterCon.

**The Freaky Fungus** No.12 has some talk about the future of the national Diplomacy Championship, a subject about which I had a long chat with Jeremy Tullett at MasterCon. It seems we're stuck with C-Diplo, a scoring system that I dislike even though it is almost identical to the system I invented four years ago for the NDC qualifiers. However, Jeremy has agreed that he will not disclose the final year for each round in advance (somewhere between 1907 and 1910) to try and discourage some of the sillier endgame tactics. That would be an improvement. As far as getting more players to the NDC, Jeremy is going to try and do a lot more about publicity this year, operating semi-independently of the **G3** mob. I will make a special effort to get to MidCon this year, as I think Jeremy deserves as much support as possible in helping to grow the NDC.

As predicted last issue issue 18 of **Life's Rich Pageant** has turned out to be the last and Kim has now returned all outstanding subs. I must say that if you are going to fold, then that is the way to do it. I understand that Tony Dickinson is going to go independent with his subzine, but whether that will turn into a fully-fledged zine or simply be a way of finishing off the games remains to be seen. I very much hope the former as I have always enjoyed Tony's style. Kim suggests that the final impulse to fold was prompted by Paul Cockayne's editorial on his reason for folding, the recognition that there are many other things that one would rather be doing than putting a zine together. That is an excellent reason for folding and one I have great sympathy with. My personal dilemma is that although there are many things I would rather be doing, none of them are feasible given the state of my finances and the responsibilities of having a small family. That means, rather perversely, the drivers that made me want to scale down and even fold **Spoff** 18 months ago, now supports its continuation, albeit in a slightly reduced form.

Kim has contributed much to the hobby in the past few years and I hope we don't lose her controversial contributions forever. One remark that Kim made didn't ring true, namely that she "could do without the juvenile and sometimes quite unpleasant mentality which seems to be rife in the hobby at the moment." I have two observations to make: first that the hobby is no more juvenile or unpleasant than it has always been and second that, if it is juvenile and unpleasant, then Kim has been a full contributor to that state of affairs. People in glass houses etc.

Nice to see **Quartz** No.66 turn up, even though it does appear to be going through a bit of an unpredictable phase. It reminded me that I haven't seen anything of **Gesundheit** the former **Quartz** sub-zine which went independent before Christmas – I don't know if there is a problem or whether I'm just not being sent copies. Given its production problems over the years, it is incredible that **Quartz** has so many games running, especially variants, and appears to have a relatively stable subscriber base. Nice to see that there's at least one other zine which is not afraid to print Diplomacy strategy articles.

I haven't mentioned **Springboard** for a while, now up to issue 110, but down to 55 players and 12 games. I say "down to" as this is well below past glories, but it is still far more than most zines (including this one). Danny is now trying to get games started for experienced players in order to help sustain the zine, so consider this an advert. You could certainly do a lot worse, as **Springboard** always has plenty to read apart from your game report and has more of an inclusive club-type atmosphere than many zines. However, given the very low rate of people joining the hobby through the flyer (probably more join through the Internet now), I think there is a question as to whether a zine focused on novices is still needed.

First issues of new zines are always worth a mention, so I can't let pass the news that issue 1 of **Winter Retreat** has appeared. It's 12 pages A5 individually printed on a colour bubblejet. It's a bit of a long spacefiller really, though first issues often are until an editor gets sufficient feedback to generate contents, Matt needs 3 more volunteer to get his first game going (2 if you take into account that I have volunteered myself to help get the zine going). Its really too soon to judge how this one will turn out, but I for one will try to give it every encouragement.

**The Cunning Plan** No.61 boasts all the games and subscribers from the recently folded **TIM**, plus a new extract of flighty Gihan Bandaranaike's diary, masquerading as a sub-zine called **The Kindness of Strangers**. In it it is sad to see John Colledge peddling, yet again, his own distorted version of why he thinks ill of me - but life is too short to spend it challenging John's fantasies, so the best I can hope for is some sort of truce. It's always difficult to argue with someone who applies a selective memory to the facts and then makes a moral judgement based on that selective memory. There's a few exchanges in the letter column with Nick Parish rushing to the defence of Mark Stretch's honour and Nina Somoraki suggesting a "Can You Recognise Your Editor's Penis?" all-reader competition. Sounds like fun to me, but I think one or two members of the hobby would have an unfair advantage...

**One Man's Rubbish** 27 is massive – some 67 pages of A4. Can Mark keep it up? (as Nina Somoraki may well ask). **OMR** has three sub-zines, all of which could be zines in their own right, and some of which are larger than many established zines anyway. The administrative burden on Mark must be immense, but provided he

enjoys the pressure then the reader gets a good deal, provided they don't mind paying £1.50 per issue (and Mark must make a loss even on that figure). Having such substantial sub-zines does tend to detract from the personality of the zine, which I think is a shame, as Mark's voice can sometimes be lost amongst the weight of material from his contributors. Lots and lots of waiting lists on offer, I only hope it never folds as no one could take on the sheer size of this zine, which given its bulk is run very efficiently.

### NEW GAMES

Many other zines have games which the entire readership can participate in, so in order to increase involvement in the zine I am jumping on the bandwagon, though with a difference. On page 5 you will find the rules for Steve Doubleday's variant **Vote**. Can I encourage everyone to use your vote, you all have one, and participate in this game starting next issue. No diplomacy is required, NMRs don't matter, but it can be a bit of a laugh. Readers with email will find it extremely easy to take part. As part of a controlled experiment you will also find some waiting lists on the back page for non-Diplomacy games – is there any interest?

## DIARY DATES

### BAYCON XII - 16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> April.

Exeter Court Hotel, Kennford. B&B is £46 per night (shared) and £35 (single). Convention fee £10. Contact Clive Palmer, 36 Ravensfield, Barstable East, Basildon, Essex. SSI4 IUG. (cheques made payable to BAYCON).

### SETTLERS OF CATAN TOURNAMENT – 26<sup>th</sup>

**April.** Organised by WAMDSAD Games Club (Maidenhead). Venue: WAMDSAD Building, Braywick Road, Maidenhead, Berks. Doors Open 11:00 - play from 11:40. For more details, e-mail john@sagames.demon.co.uk

### BEER & PRETZELS - 16<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> May

Burton on Trent. Details from Spirit Games, 98 Station Road, Burton on Trent, Staffs. DE14 1BT

### FURRYCON - 22<sup>nd</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> May

Old Ship Hotel, Brighton. Details from SFC Press, Freepost LON11137, London, E18 1DX (pevans@sfc.co.uk).

### STABCON - 26<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> June

Manchester University. Details from Stabcon, 17 Davenport Road, Stockport, Cheshire, SK2 8JU

### MANORCON - 17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> July

Birmingham University. Contact Iain Bowen at Flat 11, Victory House, 64/68 Trafalgar Road, Moseley, Birmingham, B13 8BU

### MIDCON - 20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> November

Birmingham. Details from SFC Press, Freepost LON11137, London, E18 1DX (pevans@sfc.co.uk)

# VOTE

by Steve Doubleday

0. The rules of Diplomacy will apply, except where stated otherwise.

1. Every reader of **Spring Offensive** is assigned a country, as follows:

AUSTRIA: Steve Ade, Edward Ainsworth, Brian K. Alden, Steve Allen, Simon Appleyard, Jason Asker, Louise Auty, Richard Bairstow, Gihan Bandaranaike, **Paul Barker**, Drew Barlow, Andy Bassett, Andy Bell, Peter Berlin, Bryan Betts, Steve Bibby, Pete Birks, Sandra Bond, John Boocock

ENGLAND: Iain Bowen, John Breakwell, Geoff Brown, Colin Bruce, Jef Bryant, Dr. Walter Buchanan, Jim Burgess, Roy Burnett, Mike Byrne, Fiona Campbell, Geoff Challenger, Nic Chilton, Dave Clark, Andrew Clawson, Paul Clayson, Paul Cockayne, Ian Coleman, John Colledge, Danny & Kath Collman, Anthony Coogan, **Roland Cooke**, David Coope

FRANCE: Malcolm Cornelius, Alan Coulthard Mk.I, Alan Coulthard Mk.II, Jimmy Cowie, **Steve Cox**, Andy Cox, Stewart Cross, Stuart Dagger, Fred Davis Jr., Tim Deacon, Tony Dickinson, Chris Dickson, John Dodds, Allan Doodles, Ryk Downes, Martin Draper, Neil Duncan, Peter Dunnett, Pete Duxon.

GERMANY: Richard Egan, David Evans, Stuart Eves, Thomas Franke, Warren Gillham, Dave Gittins, Mike Goldthorpe, **Allan Gordon**, Jim Goulsbra, Steve Guest, Vick Hall, Alex Hankin, James Hardy, John Harrington, Toby Harris, David Harris, Ian Harris, Paul Harrison, Mick Haytack

ITALY: Kim Head, Colin Hobbs, Bob Holliday, George Hornby, David Horton, Chris Jones, Craig Jones, Matt Kane, Geoff Kemp, Doug Kent, Nick Kinzett, Chris Latimer, Dave Lomas, Keith Loveys, Matthew Male, John Marsden, **Brad Martin**, Douglas Massie, Brent McKee, Jamie McQuinn, Martin Milarky

RUSSIA: John Miller, Emeric Miszti, Edmund Morgan, Tim Neale, Dave Newnham, Geoff Norwood, Dylan O'Donnell, David Oya, Chris Palm, Nicholas Parish, Alan Parr, Tim Powell, Paul Prebble, Paul Reeves, Tony Reeves, Berry Renkin, Alex Richardson, Paul Ridout, **Richard Scholefield**, Richard Sharp, Ken Simpson, Graham Smith, Colin Smith, Keith Smith

TURKEY: **Allan Stagg**, Graham Staplehurst, Mark Stretch, Dave Tant, Roy Taylor, Keith Thomasson, Chris Tringham, Jeremy Tullett, Graham Tunnicliffe, Tom Tweedy, Mark Underhay, Rob Walk, Mark Walker, Richard Walkerdine, Steve Watts, Steve Wells, Mark Wightman, John Wilman, Derek Wilson, Derek Wood, Ivan Woodward, Per Wrestling

NB. Players who are **bold underlined** are the team's captains. Players not in the list should insert themselves under the correct Power (the player list is alphabetical and based on recipients of **Spring Offensive** 58).

Players then submit orders for that country's units. The order which is most often mentioned (receives the most votes) will be followed. Where there is a tie, that unit will be ordered to stand, unordered. Each player will receive one point for each unit that follows their orders. The Player with the most points at the end of the game, in the winning country, will be declared the winner. Non-submission of orders will not held against any player. NMRs will not be counted as votes and neither will illegal orders be accepted as legitimate votes.

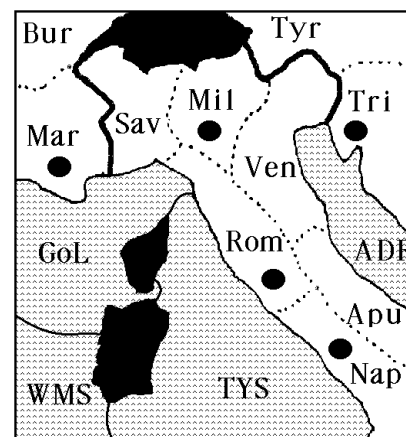
## Subversion

2. Players have the option, instead of ordering their own country's units, to 'subvert' one unit of another country. This means that they order one of the other country's units and this will count as one vote. If the subversion is successful and the subverted unit follows the orders of the subverting player, he will receive two points and he will also have the option of joining those ordering the country whose unit he ordered. This option exists only for the move immediately following the subversion. Builds alone cannot be subverted.

## Captains

3. Each country will have a 'Captain'. This captain submits one set of orders, but it will be treated as equivalent to two sets of orders for the purposes of determining which orders to follow. Captains may resign their position with a set of moves. If there is no nominated successor or volunteer then the GM will determine a successor by a random method and publish the changeover of captaincy. No country may be without one player, the Captain. If all remaining players in a country leave, then the Captain must remain in post. Once that country is eliminated its Captain may join another country's panel. In the event that no one submits orders for a country, then the GM will seek a volunteer to change to the country in question and submit orders. NMRs are not allowed!

*SA: This version differs slightly from the version in **Gallimaufry** No.17, in that I have removed the penalties from an unsuccessful subversion, to encourage more player participation.*



MILAN DIPLOMACY

## Ohh, You Are Awful...

### The True Story of Filibuster Game Six

By Richard Hucknall

(Reprinted from *Fall of Eagles* 67 (Feb 82))

With *Filibuster* having folded recently, and with John Marsden unlikely to be doing anything about re-housing this particular game as he knows what has been going on, I suppose it's time that the hobby learned just what this infamous game was all about. I was one of the people instrumental in setting up the game so I suppose I should put the record straight.

For those readers who have never heard of this particular game, I should explain that it featured seven rather 'strange' individuals, some of which wrote even stranger letters to *Filibuster's* editor Adrien Baird. The game itself also had some odd moves, plus an attempted convoy from Smy to StP via fleets of almost every player. It fizzled out with virtually every country in anarchy.

The story behind the game began at one of the Red Lion Hobbymeets that used to be held in Nottingham every month. Clive Booth suggested that we set up a hoax game with seven players playing under false names and using accommodation addresses, and have some fun at the expense of an established editor. We decided that it wouldn't be fair to involve a new editor, or to involve anyone who believed they were playing in a genuine game. Adrien Baird and *Filibuster* were selected, mainly so that Clive could invent a character with which to perplex Adrian. My task was to ensure that Adrian accepted the CGS game that I offered him. Having learned to lie convincingly over the phone (a spin-off of playing Diplomacy for eight years) I succeeded in selling the game to Adrian and so the stage was set.

Five other conspirators were roped in; Tom Tweedy, John Lee, Dave Pollard and two more that I cannot recall, and Clive set the ball rolling with issue 1 of a mini-zine entitled *Ooh you are awful*. The idea was that one player would decide on the moves for each of the players, and send a copy to each player so that he could write out his orders and send them on to Adrien. Several ideas were mooted; the convoy from Smy to StP being one, Russia growing rapidly to 17 centres and then being knocked down to 1 centre, everyone handing over their units to a certain player during one season, everyone NMRing at the same time, and so on. The following season another player would decide on the moves, and the rota would continue as long as the game continued.

Initially the hoax began well, but unfortunately it started to fall apart after a few seasons and it soon became apparent that something strange was happening. The first problem was that not enough thought was put into the moves, and often units were misordered or left unordered. There was no overall policy and the game took on the appearance of a horse designed by a committee. The final failure was the Smy to StP convoy that failed due to an NMR.

The second problem was that Clive Booth really did overplay his character. OK, so Clive wanted some fun at Adrien's expense, but to invent a six and a half foot semi-literate West Indian from Ilkeston who was in trouble with the police and asked questions so silly that novices don't normally ask them, did tend to give the game away. To give him the name of Rufus Kinton didn't help either. Perhaps the funniest moment was when Rufus intimated that he and his friends' steel band might descend on Adrien and Co. during a houseboat con in Ashby. Overall Rufus was just too ridiculous to believe in.

Eventually Adrien smelled a rat, so naturally he phoned me and I pleaded ignorance and that if the game was a hoax then, some genuine players were being hoodwinked as this game included my brother-in-law. (I didn't tell him that my brother-in-law was my alias, and that the address was my accommodation address.) It seemed that my ability to tell lies was still pretty good as I'm confident I convinced Adrien that I too had been fooled if the game was a hoax.

It was shortly after that that the convoy failed and then the game began to fall apart quite rapidly. Most players lost interest (myself included) and the majority of the countries went into anarchy.

As a hoax, the idea was excellent. Unfortunately, not enough thought or effort went into the scheme, which was disappointing. I hope Adrien will not be offended at what has happened - if he had turned the game down originally I could be apologising to Pete Birks now. I doubt if this kind of hoax will ever be repeated - it's so difficult to set up, and just as difficult to maintain. Once again - sorry, Adrien.

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## The Ultimate Tactical Ploy and Diplomatic Challenge: The Rulebook Contradiction

by Mark Berch

(first published in *Diplomacy World* issue 29)

Let's be candid: rulebook paradoxes are, generally speaking, a bore. These arise in peculiar situations where there are two possible adjudications, each internally consistent but different from the other. This hardly presents a problem. After all, the GM is "right" with either one. Oddly, the ruling that most use is to say that all units hold, which is consistent with neither adjudication! Most of them are so complicated, involving multiple convoys, that just about the only way they can occur is if the players decide to harass the GM. They are of interest mostly to those who write computer programs and scholars of the Rulebook.

The Rulebook contradictions are another matter. These are situations where, rather than two correct adjudications, there are none. That is, the GM is wrong whichever way he rules. These arise when there are two

rules which are in conflict with each other, and the Rulebook fails to state which has priority. Furthermore, these are not complicated, requiring only one single fleet convoy. Further, they actually have a military use to them; there's an advantage to setting them up. They will be discussed in turn, with ramifications that have not been hitherto presented.

#### A. The unwanted, unnecessary convoy

Consider the following situation:

England: F(NWG) C FRENCH A(Cly)-Edi

France: A(Cly)-Edi

Russia : F(BAR)-NWG, F(NTH) S F(BAR)-NWG

France points to rule VII.1, third paragraph. His army moves to an adjacent province and is unopposed, so the move succeeds. Not so, retorts England. Rule XII.3 says that if the convoy is disrupted (by dislodging the fleet) then the army cannot move. That being so, England is free to retreat to Edi. This is the military advantage - just moving F(NWG)-Edi would not have gained the centre. The problem is, the Rulebook does not state which rule takes precedence.

Rod Walker, in addressing this situation, refuses to believe there is even a conflict. In The Gamer's Guide to Diplomacy he simply proclaims that "the convoy order is not relevant". In Appalling Greed issue 13 he flatly states that "there is only one possible ruling here. Rule VII.1 is controlling..." No reasons are given as to why he selected that one rather than XII.3. In Diplomacy World 28 he is calling the contradiction "nothing more than a red herring" and a "technicality", and XII.3 "not even applicable".

I don't see it that way, and neither did Alan Calhamer. In Tau Ceti No.5, he is quoted as saying, "I am afraid we simply need another rule to cover this case." I agree. The player's best move is to lobby the GM, to direct his diplomacy at the GM! But which is the better choice? I believe that a strong case can be made for the notion that XII.3 should control. That is, the army should not move.

1. Let's add the following orders to the above (nationality irrelevant): F(NAO) & F(IRI) & F(ENG) & F(NTH) C A(Cly)-Edi. Now we' have three paths: a good convoy, a disrupted one, and the overland route. In order to have the army move, both XII.3 and XII.4 must be violated. Immobilising the army breaks only one rule. Isn't it better to break one rule rather than two?

2. There is also the question of the intent of Rule XII.4. Generalizing slightly, this says that if there are two routes to go from A to B, and one of the routes is a disrupted convoy, then the army doesn't move. That is, the army is fatally attracted to the broken convoy rather than the other available route. If we apply that to this situation, the army will not move.

3. Looked at another way, the core question here is whether the convoy can be "refused". Some have suggested getting around this problem by giving the player this "right" explicitly, either by allowing him to say "via" to specify which route he wants, or by saying "convoy refused". But the list of things that a player can

do in a move season is limited and closed: move, support, convoy and hold. You cannot hop, skip, jump - or refuse. If "Refuse" can be added, then the doors are open for other additions as well. And even if we stop at "refuse", think of the new problems. If one can refuse a convoy, it seems only logical that one can refuse a support. That would wipe out the "Reinhardt Gambit", whereby one foils a self-standoff by supporting one of the moves. So far as I know, no present postal GM would allow a player to refuse a support. Yet I suspect that the first person to see his self-standoff foiled by the Reinhardt Gambit argued that- he didn't "intend" for his move to be supported, in much the same way that the French player above did not "intend" for his unit to be convoyed. In short, it seems to me that if you can be victim of an unwanted support, you can be victim of an unwanted convoy.

4. The most direct way of viewing this is as follows: If a move can be viewed as both a convoy and a non-convoied move, which takes precedence? In fact, the Rulebook directly answers that question in its very last sentence: the convoy prevails. Consider the following: A(Pic)-Bel, F(ENG) C A(Pic)-Bel, A(Bel)-Pic. Nationalities do not matter. The A(Pic)-Bel move, if viewed as an overland or non-convoied move, would be blocked by A(Bel)-Pic. But if viewed as a convoied move then it can go. The last sentence of the Rulebook indicates that the latter view will prevail, the convoy view takes precedence.

5. Finally, there is the argument from values. Diplomacy as a game values the sly, the cunning, the underhanded, the crafty. It would seem a shame to turn down such a cunning manoeuvre without a compelling need.

#### B. The Finessed Cut

So far as I am aware, this is the first time the following has been presented:

England: F(NTH) C FRENCH A(Bel)-Hol

France: A(Bel)-Hol

Russia: F(Den)-NTH, F(Hol) S F(Den)-NTH

Once again, in this example England would like to be dislodged - presumably to take a strategic retreat. Russia doesn't care to risk Hol, so the support comes from there. France's motives are not known. Perhaps he wants to thwart the dislodging of F(NTH); perhaps he wanted to cut another possible support which F(Hol) might give; perhaps he just wanted to move into Hol. At any rate, under Rule X, A(Bel)-Hol has indeed cut the Russian support. However, XII.5 says that a conveyed army's attack does not cut support given to an attack on the conveying fleet - the attack does not "protect" the fleet and without that protection, the fleet is dislodged. The problem here is XII.5 and X are in conflict, and there is no place where the Rulebook says which is to take precedence. My own recommendation, as given above, is that the convoy rule takes precedence, and England be allowed, his crafty finesse of the attempted cut.

### C. Chicken & Egg Convoys

Consider the following:

England: A(Yor)-Hol, F(NTH) C A(Yor)-Hol, A(Kie) S A(Yor)-Hol

France: F(ENG)-NTH, F(Lon) S F(ENG)-NTH

Russia: F(Den)-NTH, F(Hol) S F(Den)-NTH

The nationality of the armies does not matter; for simplicity they are made English. Ignore the convoy for a moment. F(NTH) is a "Beleaguered Garrison" (Rule IX.5). Since the French and Russian attacks are of equal strength, neither enters and so the fleet is not dislodged. Now consider the convoy. Since the fleet is not dislodged, the convoy is still valid (XII.3). The convoyed attack on Hol does not cut the -support given by F(Hol) for F(Den)-NTH (XII.5). This is just as well, since if it did cut the support then the French attack would dislodge F(NTH) and then F(Hol) wouldn't be cut, leading to an internal contradiction. OK; XII.5 says that F(Hol) doesn't have its support cut, so the convoy is still intact due to the Beleaguered Garrison rule. But F(Hol) has no support, and A(Yor)-Hol is supported from Kie, so F(Hol) is dislodged. However, Rule X says explicitly that a dislodged unit cannot give support under any circumstances? What is to be done? Again, target your diplomacy toward the GM. Here the argument that the support of F(Hol) is cut runs into an insoluble problem: cutting that support destroys the Beleaguered Garrison situation and thus the convoy, meaning that F(Hol)'s support can't be cut. That was the type of problem XII.5 was designed to avoid.

Finally I wish to unveil what I dub as "Berch's Ghastly Mess". In the contradiction above, replace the English A(Yor)-Hol with a German A(Bel)-Hol and amend the English fleet to order F(NTH) C GERMAN A(Hol)-Bel. This then combines both A and C one has to deal with both contradictions to sort that one out.

What kind of solution is best? Ideally the Rulebook should be modified, but the chances of this happening are very small. GMs can deal with the problem when it comes up, or can add a houserule to take care of these situations. Such a rule should cover all of the problems discussed above, and not introduce any new ones. I suggest the following:

*"In case of any rule contradictions, Rule XII shall prevail."*

Such a provision would resolve A, B and C above. It would treat the army's move as a convoy in A and B, and would keep the convoy intact in C. Those, who like Rod Walker feel that the army move should be considered overland, not convoyed, won't like that. However I cannot think of a simple rule that would cover their adjudications to A and B and also deal with C as well. That is, perhaps, the best argument of all for the supremacy of Rule XII over VII and X when they conflict.

**SA** *The most recent UK 1989 rules (which, by common consent are very badly drafted) offers no solutions. Indeed, it amazes me that anyone can even understand*

*the 1989 rules, which are hopelessly ambiguous in places. If anyone out there is depending on the 1989 rules I'll supply a copy of the 1971 rules for free - consider it a public service). The Avalon Hill 1992 Deluxe Edition Rulebook says: Rule XIII.6 (BOTH A CONVOY ROUTE AND AN OVERLAND ROUTE) says: "...one route must be considered and the other disregarded, depending on intent as shown by the totality of the orders written by the player governing the army"... God knows what you make of that.*

## Improving Colonial Diplomacy

By Brandon Einhorn

Turkey stinks and must be fixed. I would have no interest in playing Turkey as she now stands, and neither would most other players. I have been corresponding with others who have posted articles on Colonial Diplomacy strategy. I have given this some thought and we will be using the following variant:

*1. Syria is a Turkish home centre and supply centre. A Turkish army starts there. Shiraz is no longer a supply centre.*

This makes Turkey much stronger, but she can still fall to a combined Russian English alliance. It will take longer to vanquish her, and may give China an opportunity to come to her aid. This hurts England in that its not so easy for her to simply pick up a few extra supply centres to allow her extra builds in the east.

Japan is much too strong, and much more important, virtually unassailable. She is almost her own stalemate position. Because of the set-up, Russia and China can never build fleets to contest Japans control of the sea. Even if Russia and China ally they can not attack Japan, just hold her in check. They need a strong navy, either Holland or France, to weaken Japan:

*2. Kyoto is a neutral supply centre, it's no longer a Japanese home centre.*

This will greatly slow the Japanese expansion and give Russia and China a chance to contest her naval power. But China and Russia have a very unstable relationship, and if they don't work together, Japan can become the Beast of the East. This helps Russia and China.

The effect of these two changes is to weaken Japan and strengthen Turkey. It also strengthens China by reducing the Japanese threat and giving her an ally against England and Russia. It weakens England a little since she can't steamroller Turkey as quickly. It strengthens Russia a little as the Japanese threat is reduced, but the Turkey has more staying power. France is slightly weakened, because China is stronger. Holland gains a little, because there is a little less pressure from Japan and England. Hopefully, the overall effect is to make the game more balanced.



Let's start with the punchline from last issue's joke:

"The first time he tried it he was sick, and the second time his hat blew off."

Chortle! Hello and welcome again to issue fifty-six of UP AROUND THE BEND, as ever a monthly postal games zine from Sandra Bond of the usual address.

<silence>

Er...

Okay, I admit it, I admit it all. This is issue forty-one of

## UP AROUND THE BEND

and the first one in well over a year, from Sandra Bond of 27c Outram Road, Southsea, Hants PO5 1QS (☎ 01705 737433, email sandra@ho-street.demon.co.uk). Except that for reasons detailed below you should ignore the phone and the email, and send stuff to c/o 24 Kinfauns Road, Goodmayes, Ilford, Essex if you want me to get it straight away instead of lord knows when.

Well then. I am not going to go into excuses for my absence lasting lo, these many months, because some of the reasons are personal and most of them are boring. Suffice it to say that though I still desire to run a gameszine, I currently do not have the facilities to do so. Perm any several from lack of cash, lack of computer, lack of printer, general incompetence (though that never stopped me) and now that all but the first and last of these are resolved, the computer doesn't like my address database. Does anyone out there know what a file with the suffix '.wdb' is likely to be? *I* thought it was a Microsoft Word database, but now I've got Word again at last and it turns its nose up at the file. Perhaps this is because Fiona's machine had Word 2 and I now have Word 6, but I thought upward compatibility took care of such things. This may have resulted in a few readers of shorter standing not getting *SpugOff* and has certainly resulted in most peoples' credit details being hazy, except for super-efficient Chris Dickson who keeps track of every penny he has spent for the last five years, seemingly.

Thanks to all those who were kind, supportive, and generally told me that they didn't give two hoots about their sub money or even their games, as long as *U-Bend* came out sometime they weren't bothered. This is just about everyone who expressed an opinion, with the exception of John Marsden; of whom more anon.

In fact, of whom more now, because I've wanted to say this for several months and this is my first chance. John Marsden's behaviour as OGRE has been atrocious throughout *U-Bend*'s troubles. To my mind the first quality the holder of this post should have is tact. Marsden lacks this, in spades. At least, he didn't show me much, though he's generally reckoned a good Dip player so he must have some tucked away somewhere.

First off, rather than any queries about what was the matter, would I need help, etcetera, I started getting little sarky notes tucked inside my trade copies of *Ode* saying things like 'Is there going to be a *U-Bend* this year?' -- which didn't exactly endear him to me. Then at ManorCon I sought the man out, wearing my Responsible Hat for a change, and tried to explain my current position and the reasons for my delay to him; whereupon he laughed in my face and walked away as I was talking to him. I have never felt so close to sticking two fingers up at the hobby and walking away from it, and damn any outstanding games, subs or whatever.

Luckily I soon calmed down, and didn't even adopt the tactic of another recently folded editor of dropping his copies of *Ode* in the bin unread and indeed unopened. But Marsden's antics, while they haven't contributed to my absence, didn't exactly make me want to run and sort the situation out.

Compare and contrast Nick Kinzett, the voice of reason.

Or compare and contrast Stephen Agar, who out of sheer goodwill and dedication has offered a home for any or all my games for as long as they, or I, or he, lasts.

Games? Well, despite Stephen's pessimism last issue, I am quite happy to run the ones Stephen is unable to run if sufficient players want me to. Not having been in contact with Stephen I don't know what sort of response there's been, but if there's been none I won't be too surprised, though I will be disappointed. Whatever the outcome, I intend to maintain a presence here in *SpugOff* for a while.

This, however, is dependent on my imminent move to London. Having secured employment there I expect to be moving to the address shown above on a temporary basis in the next fortnight or so, and to have a permanent address in the capital shortly thereafter (cross fingers), so everything is rather vague again now. However, *if* my finances improve (as they should with the pay rise coming with the new job, though no doubt the Chancellor Support Agency will gobble most of it) and *if* I find time allows and *if* inspiration takes me I may go back to independent publishing (if I've any games left, or if anyone trusts me to start any more -- I'm not sure which is the more unlikely). Meantime, if anyone is crazy enough to wish to continue trading with me, all zines will be gratefully received.

Incidentally, the permanent address is planned to be a house-share with Simon Amos, winner of The Bonking Game in *U-Bend*, and Mark Conner, who some may recall as the poor soul who got turned off the hobby for good by a drunken James Hardy at the 1995 London tournament.

At this point I'll call a halt to my editorialising and leave you with an article from the half-completed ruin that was going to be the real *U-Bend 41*. Sayonara, punks.

## POWER IN THE DARKNESS

Every zine editor, at least once in their career, comes up with the traditional line about why-this-isn't-better-and-had-to-be-left-to-the-last-moment. Here's my entry for that award.

Last night, when I had an evening I'd deliberately left free to write my editorial and several overdue letters, I arrived home from work and turned on my hall light. Nothing happened.

Damn, I thought, first blown bulb in the new flat. Went through to the living room. Turned on the light. Nothing happened.

The fridge wasn't on. The computer didn't come on. Nothing worked.

Hell, power cut. Or...

But the hall light had worked. And the street lights were on outside.

Checked the fuse box. Everything looked normal. I flipped the switches back and forth; no effect.

I managed to find my torch in the bedroom (don't ask why it was there) and looked up the electricity company in the phone book. Dialed. "Ere, I've got no power."

They told me they'd send someone out. "We'll prioritise you." "OK, how long will it be then?" "Oh, we can't tell you that." "Will it be tonight?!" "Of course!" (This delivered in hurt tones. Well, *I* didn't know, did I?)

Fumble to the bathroom to find the candlesticks (don't ask why they were there). Dig the bag of candles out and offer blessings that me and my Special Bloke had been to Price's candle emporium at Wandsworth a couple of weeks before. Light candles, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven. Stand them around the room in strategic positions.

Decide that I'd better tidy the place a bit if the electricity bloke is coming round.

Do so for half an hour, then sit exhausted and read autobiography of John Otway by candlelight for a bit.

The absence of electricity was really quite frightening. Child of the present that I am, this lack was enough to get my adrenaline flowing. What if they don't turn up? Or can't fix it? What if I can't get my email tonight? (Spot the signs of the addict, my children. Don't let this happen to you).

(Mind you, I suppose most people would worry about the telly in the same way).

I finished the book at half past seven. Two hours since my phone call. Rang again. "He's somewhere in Southsea, should be with you soon."

"How will I know he's there? My doorbell doesn't work and my flat's on the first floor."

"Er..."

I spent a lot of the evening peering out of the window.

Eventually he rolled up at half past eight and looked at my meter, in a box on the wall downstairs next to the other three flats' (IMPORTANT PLOT POINT). "Well, your meter's going round," he said, pointing at the little wheel.

"Then how come I've got no power? Who's been using my power?" I asked, like the Three Bears deprived of their porridge.

"Dunno." He went up to my fuse box in the flat and confirmed that it was dead, kaput, lacking in amps and volts.

Back to the meter, which was still pootling round and round. He pulled the wire from the meter out of the wall as far as it would go. Live. Back up to the flat. He pulled the wire as far out of the wall as *that* wire would go. Dead.

"I don't understand this," he said. My heart sank.

"I'll have to call out some other blokes. They're at Chichester, I think." He dialed them from the van. They didn't answer. Dialed another number. Engaged. Dialed the first number again, and we went through an action replay of this for five minutes.

"I'll have to go," he said. "I've got other people to get back on electricity. I'll try ringing them again from the next place."

He drove away, his van trailing my hopes behind it like a newlywed's car trails old boots.

I went upstairs, transferred the candles to the kitchen, and put a pizza in the oven -- which, thankfully, runs on gas. Ten o'clock. I rang various friends to whinge. None of them knew how my meter could be going round when I wasn't using power; Edward de Bono could have told me, but I didn't have his number.

At half past ten the first bloke came back. "Aren't they here yet?"

"No," I said in what I consider to be an admirably patient tone of voice.

"Let's have another look." He opened up the row of five meters -- one for each flat and one for the landlord's supply to the hall and outside light -- and looked at them. I stood holding his torch. He clicked his tongue sorrowfully. "I've never seen anything like this since I started the job six months ago."

At this juncture another van arrived and out climbed two more electricity gurus. They came to join us and looked at the row of meters.

"You sure that's your meter?" said the one I came to think of as De Bono, pointing at the little spinning wheel.

"Well, it does say 'Flat C' on the outside," I pointed out.

"Only," the genius lateral-thinking philosopher went on, "that meter at the end, the key meter, that's out of money."

"I don't have a key meter. And that says 'Flat D' on the outside. That's the flat above."

"You sure those meters are labelled right?"

"Well, they do run in alphabetical order from right to left, A B C D..."

But he was right, of course.

The flats I inhabit were totally refurbished about six months ago, and I'm the first tenant of 27c since this. And whichever dolt installed the meters labelled them wrong. I have been paying for someone else's electricity for three months. This is, however, counterbalanced by the fact that they've been paying for mine.

Oh, how the electricity men laughed when they charged up the key meter and my lights came on!

Oh, how I berated the electricity board on the phone next day!

They're coming to swap my meter for an ordinary meter -- like the one I thought was mine -- on Tuesday, while I'm on holiday. I'm taking no bets as to what I shall find on my return.

Next issue I shall let you know.

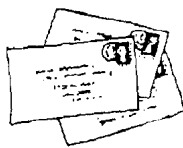
[to be continued...]

*POSTSCRIPT: Well, they put the new meter in and apologised (but didn't give me any rebate on my bill, which would have been rather more welcome than the apology). End of story. Sorry, no punchline.*

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## LETTERS



### John Marsden

As you well know, I would not wish you to be OGRE, for two reasons -- because you would be as impetuous as I am over-cautious, and thereby tread on toes, and because you are too Diplomacy purist.

If I find time I will telephone soon.

*SA Well, we'll have to agree to disagree. If I was OGRE I would intervene quicker and more directly, but on the telephone and/or face-to-face I am far more diplomatic than you are! You have a reputation as being as difficult to get on with in person as I can be in print and vice versa. I refer you to U-Bend 41 printed earlier in this issue and that is not an isolated case. If I was OGRE I*

*would be more than happy to try and re-house non-Diplomacy games, I just couldn't GM them myself. I didn't know the OGRE had to be able to GM every game he sought to re-house.*

*You end your letter "If I find time I will telephone soon." You obviously didn't have time, because the next thing I received was a circular proclaiming that you were re-housing all the games I said I couldn't GM myself and making alternate arrangements. This caused further confusion as I had already had offers from people to GM for several of the games. Your haste in going behind my back is odd given your reluctance to go behind the back of the editor responsible for the inordinate delay. As I was under the impression I was trying to sort out the U-Bend I would have thought that you could at least have talked to me about what you were planning to do. I was particularly gobsmacked that when I rang you up and told you I'd already made some arrangements, you told me in a rather patronising manner that I was "being naughty." Well I wash my hands of the whole thing,*

that's the last time I try and save orphans if that's all the thanks and respect I get. You sort it out. Good luck.

### David Oya

Thank you for Spring Offensive. Well done for attempting to sort out the U-Bend situation. I would like to continue my games. As for a suggestion for GM, you could always try the OMR boys – keen minds, firm buttocks, up for anything I'm told, though mark couldn't GM a bun fight, quite clearly. Lovely boy all the same.

*SA Nice to hear from you David. I'm not too sure about "keen minds" though. As for your games, contact John Marsden, see above.*

### Dave Tant

I don't think I had any financial credit with Sandra; I think I received U-Bend as a sort of "trade cum thank you The only games in which I **would** have been interested are the two Sopwith ones. I think the last action in those must have been around two years ago and a decent burial is the best thing for them.

As you know, I usually offer to run Sopwith games to a finish, as Sopwith Statistician, but I am quitting as of April and have found in any case that, after six months or more you can hardly ever revive interest in a neglected (sounds better than abandoned) game.

*SA Maybe John Marsden will have better luck.*

### John Colledge

Many thanks for your recent letter and the copy of Spring Offensive. It was good to hear from you again, though I was a bit surprised. I see SO is as full of gripping Dip type stuff as it used to be. I don't know how the hell you cope with all the typing. I was particularly pleased to see the articles on Stalemate Lines. This is something I have tried to get a few editors to do over the years but they were unable to take me up on the suggestion. I always felt it was a much-neglected subject.

As for the U-Bend games, you will not be surprised to hear me say I am disappointed that it is only the Diplomacy games you are interested in. I would suggest that if you want to become OGRE you will have to spread your wings a bit further than your beloved Diplomacy.

*SA I don't know why you and John Marsden (two of my greatest fans) think that an OGRE has to be able to GM the games that he re-houses. I think that the job would be well enough done if it means that zine folds are sorted out, provided that someone is found to GM any game where some of the players want to continue. I didn't think it unreasonable to say that (a) I couldn't GM most of the games and (b) I wanted to judge player enthusiasm before making further arrangements. What is wrong with that?*

I can't actually remember just how much of a sub I am due but I am sure it won't break the bank if I don't see it again. I suspect Sandra needs the pennies more than I do

and even **if** she doesn't, U-Bend was worth the extra cash anyway. Tell her to have a couple of drinks on me.

I feel I should let you know that your name may well be mentioned in dispatches in the near future. After all, I would not wish it to said that I was saying things about you behind your back! I understand some people do that sort of thing in the hobby. Personally I think it is despicable. I am afraid I was unable to contain myself when you spouted forth about not being afraid to admit you are wrong in SNOT. Well, I could have contained myself, but I chose not to. No doubt your adoring fans will wish to pillory me once more, but what the hell, the truth will out on the EM front one day.

*SA What truth? That Andy and Maddi edited a good zine, which was very reliable for a few years, won the Zine Poll, and then got less and less regular until they were no longer GMing the games or responding to letters from their subbers asking what was going on? That's the truth. Having a demanding job and one half of the editorship getting pregnant is no excuse for not even bothering to take the 10 minutes necessary to tell the hobby what was going on for months and months on end.*

Now, the burning question of the day has to be, will you accept me as a subscriber again? I certainly hope so, as I have to admit to missing SO. I know, I know. It hurts like hell to admit it, but a man's gotta do etc. I do like the yellow paper by the way. Those of us who suffer from Scytopic Sensitivity Syndrome are always pleased to see something other than black print on white paper, (or white print on a black screen, which is the main problem these days), when it comes to reading. Anyway, I enclose a cheque for £5 in the hope that after one copy of SO you will not be returning a cheque for £4.25. Well, one issue may be all you can stand of me.

*SA As you know, I signalled my intention to return the subs of non-players in Spring Offensive two issues before I actually did it. Given this advance warning, some people signed up for games to stay with the zine. With a circulation of 220 and a monthly loss of over £100 I had no option but to get rid of non-playing readers who were being subsidised but not making any contribution to the zine.. I was as good as my word, and you were one of pushing 20 people who were removed from the circulation list. It was nothing personal and I don't understand why you thought it was. Anyway, nice to have you back – my circulation is now only 120ish.*

I have to confess to more than a slight smirk when I read your bit about someone not having a sense of humour because they didn't like the way you had put something. Why, not all that long ago I do recall you doing exactly the same thing over something I said. Actually, I guess it must be a couple of years now. Anyway, I thought both you and some of your adoring readers must have had a humour bypass at the time as what I had said was quite clearly over the top and not meant to be taken seriously. Humour is in the eyes of the comic, (or something like that), I guess.

One thing does concern me. How come my name crops up no fewer than three times in the zine and I am not

even subscribing to the damned thing? Have my spies been letting me down? Tell me this was a one off and I have not been mentioned once over the past couple of years.

*SA Only three times? That must have been an exceptional issue if you were only mentioned three times. Hell, it's practically impossible to get a letter off Toby that doesn't mention you more than that.*

Before I forget, I should just point out a slight error in one of your readers' letters. One J. Tullett appears to need to have his eyesight tested. I am quite sure on the Saturday of MidCon Jim Mills was playing Russia on my board. Then again, it may have been a cheap cardboard replica. Don't tell me! The swine! All this time I thought I had played really well to end up with double the units of past winners of MasterCon, MidCon and ManorCon and they turned out to be cheap cardboard cut outs. I'll get you for this Tullett!!

If by any chance you decide to print any of this, I should point out to those of a humourless disposition, that large sections of it are not to be taken too seriously.

*SA Welcome back, John. Care to run a RR subzine?*

#### **Dave Newnham**

My trip to Zimbabwe went very well and my presence seemed to do the trick and my mum rallied and looked quite perky when I left after a couple of weeks. I thought I had it made, and that she would easily make it to May when I'm due out again. I've been back just over two weeks now and last weekend I had a call to say that she had had a relapse and was back in hospital. Nothing anybody can do - just age taking it's toll! Everybody there is doing all that can be done and I'm being kept informed so no point in going out at a moments notice again - I just have to wait!

*SA Sorry to hear that. It is difficult when you live so far away from someone who is ill. I have a close relative who is very sick indeed, but Newcastle is a long way off and it would be impossible to take the whole family up there. Hope everything works out OK.*

#### **Matthew Male**

Thanks for mentioning **Winter Retreat** in **Spring Offensive**. Please find enclosed issue 1. As you can see I still have no full lists, only a game of Intimate Dip running at the moment. I'm genuinely surprised at the slow start, and wonder what more I can do besides advertise in all the major zines. I'm getting someone to distribute flyers at MidCon since I can't be there. Any suggestions?

*SA To be honest, I'm surprised that you're surprised. Mentions in zines help to raise your profile, but they don't by and large get you subscribers and the same is true of flyers. The only way to get subscribers at an early stage is to directly approach people with a sample copy-send samples to everyone you know, addresses you can cull from zines etc. By and large, people will only subscribe to a new zine if they have actually seen what they would be getting for their money upfront. Once you*

*are established - and it takes a long time, unless you are fortunate enough to inherit a subscriber base through adopting some orphan games - then you will get some incremental growth through being recommended to others by your readership (provided they think you are good enough to recommend). If you don't approach people directly it will take you 6 months to get a gamestart (which is what happened to **The Assassin's Handbook** and we all know what happened to that).*

*As I am not currently playing in a game of Diplomacy, please put me down on your list (Pref. R/F/E/T/A/I/G). I even promise to make the effort to diplomate enthusiastically and get my orders in on time...*

#### **Jason Asker**

Hope you are having better luck than I am. The car has died twice this week (resurrected by the mechanics once for a day) and the dog has a tumour under her tongue, which is septic. Couple this with the fact that my job is as stable as the Asian currency markets and life can be rather depressing. I still haven't finished paying for Christmas either! Here's hoping I win the lottery (even if it is only £10).

*SA Oh dear. I used to hate it when my car went wrong, because you never know how much it is going to cost to put it right, only that it will be far more than you could reasonably anticipate, and you're left with the nagging feeling that it's all a rip-off anyway. I have never bought a lottery ticket on the basis that they are really disguised voluntary taxation and I think I pay enough tax already. However, I would concede that if I never buy a ticket then I have little chance of winning a £7 million jackpot!*

#### **Pete Birks**

I'm sorry that you don't like me nattering on about money, but a zine's a zine and if it's what is on my mind, I write about it. It's preferable to computer chat or stuff ripped off the Internet, isn't it? And there are quite enough articles on Diplomacy out there, thank you very much.

*SA Touché. It's just I feel as sensitive about money as any member of a four person household with one public sector salary and a £170,000 mortgage would.*

Actually, I'm still horribly poor, what with the house eating up money like there's no tomorrow. Admittedly if I sold it now I would probably get £120,000 for a £102,000 investment, so in theory I've made £18,000 in a year on it. But since I don't plan to sell it until I retire, it's all rather fictional money! Whoops, there I go again. If I had put all the money which I have put into the house in the last year into shares then I would probably be £5,000 to £6,000 better off and the money would be sitting in a PEP, instantly accessible. I still wonder if I have made the right decision.

*SA Nope, financial matters just don't turn me on, even though I'm in debt I can't seem to get myself to worry about it. I still haven't got around to claiming married man's tax relief and I've been married for over 5 years. I think I have a phobia about doing tax returns. I'm getting Geoff Challenger to sort it all out for me (if I can*

only find the bumpf he sent me last summer to fill o ut...).

RamsdenCon was fun, although needless to say I do not remember that much about it, apart from spending £24 on second-hand games, when I only really wanted one thing.

*SA I've stopped buying games as I never seem to get the opportunity to play them.*

### Allan Stagg

I don't know how you do it – producing a substantial zine at regular intervals, having a young family, jet-setting off on overseas trips, making a start with the U-Bend blockage, and managing to read and print all those really long letters!

*SA Easy. I have a 8 day turnaround.*

### Allan Gordon

I know you're long on variants (suffered one of your 'sans-Switzerland' jobbies, didn't I? - hideous!) and I hear your muttered asides regarding bad map design vs. rule changes, etc. I readily admit that I am not an aficionado of variants - 'Deluge' apart - nor even very knowledgeable on the subject, so please bear with me if the following thoughts are laughable (stupid, even).

Seems to me that the criteria for a successful variant should be something along the lines of making the basic game more flexible (and therefore less capable of stagnating through stalemate), more exciting through the injection of pace and third, as uncomplex as possible. This last, I suggest, is the most important factor of all. Most variants begin with the statement "The standard rules apply except for the following" and then there's umpty-dozen pages of impossibly complicated and cross-referenced mechanics that are an immediate turn-off for the would-be participant. Evidence Gihan's 'Postal Team Dip' - my God!, if ever there was a man who wallows in words and complications, it's the manic Bandy!

Now comes the possibly naive bit. On the basic assumption that the standard game is not bad and only needs a little tickle here and there, and avoiding over-complication, have you, or others, thought of the mega-simplistic amendment prohibiting any power overtly assisting another's units? I.e. no orders acceptable that support or convoy units other than own. I say overtly' because there could still be room for co-operation in stand-offs, etc., but they would have to be ordered as 'moving' units.... as in the case of wanting to protect an 'ally's' piece from a supported attack, the protecting player would have to order to cut the support by attacking rather than merely supporting the target.

Such a variant should be tailor-made for Sharp's beloved 'free-for-all' scenario. First gut reaction is, would such a game ever get off the ground? Dunno, 'til it's tried. Second is, what about diploming? Well, that seems to be a rapidly disappearing and unwanted art, so this factor would probably even appeal to today's lazy bastards and anyway, there would still be ample opportunity for those who want to set up a game-plan with another... they just

can't lump into bed together with their orders. And far from solving the bottleneck areas, scenario probably helps them - but maybe there are plenty of compensatory factors to off-set this.

Got to be more problems with the idea, I guess, but my brain is starting to hurt! What do you think?

*SA You raise some basic issues. Variants can generally be classified into the following four categories:*

1. Regular board, simple rule changes.
2. Regular board, complex rule changes
3. Different scenarios (often fantasy or historical) - mainly map changes.
4. Different map and complex rule changes

*I think they all have their place, you just take your choice. Personally, the sort of variant I dislike most is category 1. If you're going to go to all the trouble to play a variant, then I want it to be a substantially different game. The simple variant you propose wouldn't interest me, as 95% of moves would be the same (check out the average game report - there's rarely more than a couple of cross-player supports a season). Your variant sounds just like a half-way house between Diplomacy and the dreaded Gunboat. I would be more likely to play a game where the small change made a fundamental difference (e.g. SCs change hands after every season, adjustments after every season) - at least that would speed the game up.*

*That said, there is very little demand for 2 and 4, as interest in variants is not high at the moment. The only variant gamestart I've managed in a year was a 5-player game with simplified rules! However, I'll keep on printing variants for the sake of it - just to keep the torch burning.*

*Your comment about diploming being out of fashion is not new - I remember writing a similar article 20 years ago! I really think it just depends who you have in your game, though I do think that the email games get far more diploming, as it is so easy to communicate.*

### John Miller

I understand that John Marsden is attempting to save some of the non-Diplomacy orphans from U-Bend. I'd certainly like to continue with my Sopwith and Grand Slam games. I approached Tom Tweedy about GM'ing the Sopwith games but he's just come out of hospital after a 5 month stay there, and so is not keen to take on anything extra at present. Dave Tant is also reducing his involvement at present, and so far has been unable to find anybody to take over the Sopwith ratings - perhaps you could publicise this opportunity for some public-spirited individual?

*SA Yes. John and I have not exactly communicated 100% over this - see earlier letters.*

I wonder what you make of the current comeback attempt by the Wombles?

*SA If it means the will issue a Greatest Hits CD then brilliant - better still if the four original albums are re-*

released (some hope). I've already bought the **Remember You're A Womble** CD single.

I used to buy a lot of vinyl singles but the sudden virtual disappearance of these from shops a few years ago, combined with the rise of dance music more or less put an end to it. I wasn't sure to what extent vinyl singles were simply not manufactured any more, or whether you could order them still - or perhaps the shopkeeper kept them under the counter as a somewhat shameful thing he was just about prepared to sell to unreconstructed addicts. I hate cassette singles, and find CD singles outrageously expensive.

*SA What I particularly dislike is the habit of releasing two versions of a CD single, with different additional tracks, in order to try and persuade the fans to buy both copies and thus boost the singles sales vis a vis the charts. One recent Elvis Costello single was released in four versions!*

Recently, however, I've been becoming aware that chart music is improving slightly. I plucked up courage last week to go into a record shop and enquire about a couple of singles, but it was a chastening and humiliating experience that made me feel like I'd crawled out of Noah's ark. I wasn't surprised to hear that neither record I wanted was available on 7" vinyl, but what really shocked me was that one of them had already been deleted! The record in question was "Torn" by Natalie Imbruglia, which I knew had still been in the charts 2 weeks earlier. The assistant said that she had a new single out now, so the previous one had been deleted. He referred to it as having been "hanging around the charts for ages" as if this was a bad thing, and seemed surprised that I didn't want to buy the new single (which I had not heard) on the simple grounds that it was newer!

*SA In the seventies it was often possible to buy singles for a year or two after original release. I remember buying a 1973 Elton John single new in 1976.*

Not content with forcing record-buyers to pay over the odds through promoting overpriced CDs, wrecking the traditional way in which one enjoyed a record's rise up the charts and graceful decline afterwards by discounting records heavily in the first week of sale after stimulating interest through pre-release publicity, so that records come in near the top of the charts and then virtually disappear, the manufacturers and retailers are now limiting choice by instant deletion. You used to be able to order singles for months after they'd dropped out of the charts. And I suppose you won't even be able to buy them years later at record fairs. It's all very sad. Were you a singles buyer too, or did you just buy pop albums?

*SA A depressing story indeed. I have thousands of 7" singles – some valuable (the rarest is probably Van der Graaf Generator's **People You Were Going To**, which can fetch £200+), but the vast majority are not worth the price of the PVC sleeve which keeps them clean (such as a nearly complete run of Wombles singles, missing only the Wellington Womble solo single, **Rainmaker**, which I never did track down). I don't ever play singles anymore, but I wouldn't get sufficient money for them to*

*make it worth the effort to sell them.*

### John Wilman

Your musings on the States being five years ahead of us may well be true, but they've never had a decent postal service, and the hardware needed is cheaper over there. A web site is not a zine and never will be, though I'll visit yours when I've worked out how to "browse" without spending huge amounts of time and money wading through tedious advertising.

Email can also play tricks by making you think you've made contact when you haven't. For example, I offered to play LiMA and to take part in an email game. Not knowing if I'm in the later, I'm not sure whether to sign up for more games.

*SA Well, your email didn't turn up here. You're right that email does lure you in to a false sense of security – often you get a "bounce" if email doesn't get through, but not always (the email I sent to Pete Duxon at the weekend disappeared into the ether). Also, the scope for forging email headers, and thus pretending to be someone you are not, is vastly increased in email, although only something that the technically minded could manage. Mind you, I could manage it and I'm not that technical.*

I lie my games to be named. "Anson" is the surname of a girl I once knew and went out with a couple of times – she moved to Wales and we lost touch. "Absit Invidia" recalls the brief career of fellow cop Mark Strangward who disappeared after 6 issues of **Causus Belli**. I believe I was in "Ab Ove" as well. I had lots of fun with the name "Antimetathesis" before being eliminated in 1903. Who on earth called a game "Ardrossan"?

*SA I'm sure Steve Cox will tell us. I too like games to have names – I can remember Frodo and Odium from over 20 years ago, but I can't remember DS2 for the life of me. By the way, if you have those issues of **Causus Belli** I'd love them for the archive.*

Understatement of your virtues doesn't, I suspect, fool anyone. If you can handle a £5K overdraft, you have self-evidently got your finances under control.

*SA Since I wrote that it has become £8K. Now do you believe me?*

As for eating breakfast at home, I wouldn't dream of it if I had two young children. Three cats are bad enough, but at least you can chuck them outside (when they've had their breakfast, of course) when you want to settle down for a bit of peace, quiet and uninterrupted digestion. Of course, my breakfast normally finishes at 11.00am, which would be awkward if I had to be at work for 8.30. But I've never yet had a job that stopped me from eating breakfast if I was determined to have some.

*SA I remember working in a food warehouse for a few months, where breakfast was a mammoth fry-up – though I wimped out of the bacon with fried bread sandwiches. Great stuff. But I had a different metabolism in those days and was merely a little round rather than the oversize Teletubby I am today.*

## FAR EAST I-R

**A Diplomacy Variant by Vern Schaller, 1982**  
with modifications by Fred Davis, 1983

This variant was inspired in a number of ways by two other variants that I have come to know quite well over the years: *Colonia* by Fred Hyatt, and *Jimmu* by Michael Mills. What I enjoyed most about *Colonia* was the intricacy of the sea spaces and the islands associated with them - particularly in the Pacific area. *Jimmu* introduced to me the concept of certain sea spaces which permitted an unlimited number of fleets - a concept I found intriguing. The most interesting features of both of these variants have been embodied in my own variant - *Far East*.

1. The Rules for Diplomacy as defined in the 1971 edition of the rules will apply except as modified below.
2. Play begins with the Spring, 1991 turn. This year was chosen because Viet Nam is included as one of the Powers in this game, and this obviously dictates a modernistic setting. Each year has a Spring, Fall, and Winter Season just as in regular Diplomacy.

There are five Powers in *Far East*. The names of these Powers and their respective Home Supply Centres as well as starting units are defined as follows:

Power: Home Supply Centers and Starting Units

JAPAN (red): A Sapporo, F Tokyo, F Nagasaki

CHINA (yellow): A Peking, F Shanghai, F Canton

VIET NAM (green): A Hanoi, F Da Nang, F Saigon

INDONESIA (blue): F Sumatra, A Java, F Celebes

AUSTRALIA (white): F Brisbane, A Melbourne, F Perth

4. All Builds must be in the Home Supply Centres initially assigned to each Power. Obviously, the Home Supply Centre must still be controlled by the Power that originally owned it and it must be unoccupied.
5. There are a total of 28 Supply Centers in *Far East*. The victory criterion is possession of 15 of these Supply Centers. Home Supply Centers have been defined in Rule 3. The neutral Supply Centers are as follows: Korea, Mongolian Republic, Taiwan, Manila, Guam, Burma, Cambodia, Malaysia, Borneo, New Guinea, New Zealand, Timor & Vladivostok.

6. All sea spaces with the exception of Oceans operate the same way that sea spaces do in regular Diplomacy. The North Pacific Ocean, Mid-Pacific Ocean, South Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean have the following special rules:

- 6.1 Oceans may be occupied by an unlimited number of Fleets. No Fleet can be dislodged from an Ocean space.
- 6.2 An order for a Fleet to move to an Ocean always succeeds as long as the Fleet is in a space adjacent to the Ocean to which it was ordered. It is never necessary to support a Fleet into an Ocean space.

6.3 Fleets may freely exchange spaces if one or both of these spaces are Oceans. In other words, if you had the situation of JAPAN: F North Pacific – Mid-Pacific, AUSTRALIA: F Mid-Pacific - North Pacific, both orders would succeed as would INDONESIA: F New Guinea - South Pacific, AUSTRALIA: F South Pacific - New Guinea.

6.4 A Fleet ordered from an Ocean to a coastal land space, island, or a regular sea space is subject to the normal rules of Diplomacy regarding stand-offs and dislodgements with respect to the space to which it is ordered with the exception of the exchange provision defined in Rule 6.3

Example 1

AUSTRALIA: F (Mid-Pacific) - Guam

JAPAN: F (Guam) – Mid-Pacific, F (North Pacific) - Guam

Example 2

AUSTRALIA: F1 (Mid-Pacific) S F2 (Mid-Pacific) – Guam; F2 (Mid-Pacific) - Guam

JAPAN: F (Guam) – Mid-Pacific, F (North Pacific) - Guam

6.5 A Fleet in an Ocean Space may convoy an Army as well as issue Support orders for units in adjoining spaces or for another Fleet in the same Ocean Space to move to an adjacent space. A Support order issued by a Fleet in an Ocean Space can never be cut.

6.6 A Fleet dislodged from a coastal land space, island, or ordinary sea space adjacent to an Ocean may always retreat to that Ocean even if the dislodging Fleet came from the same Ocean Space.

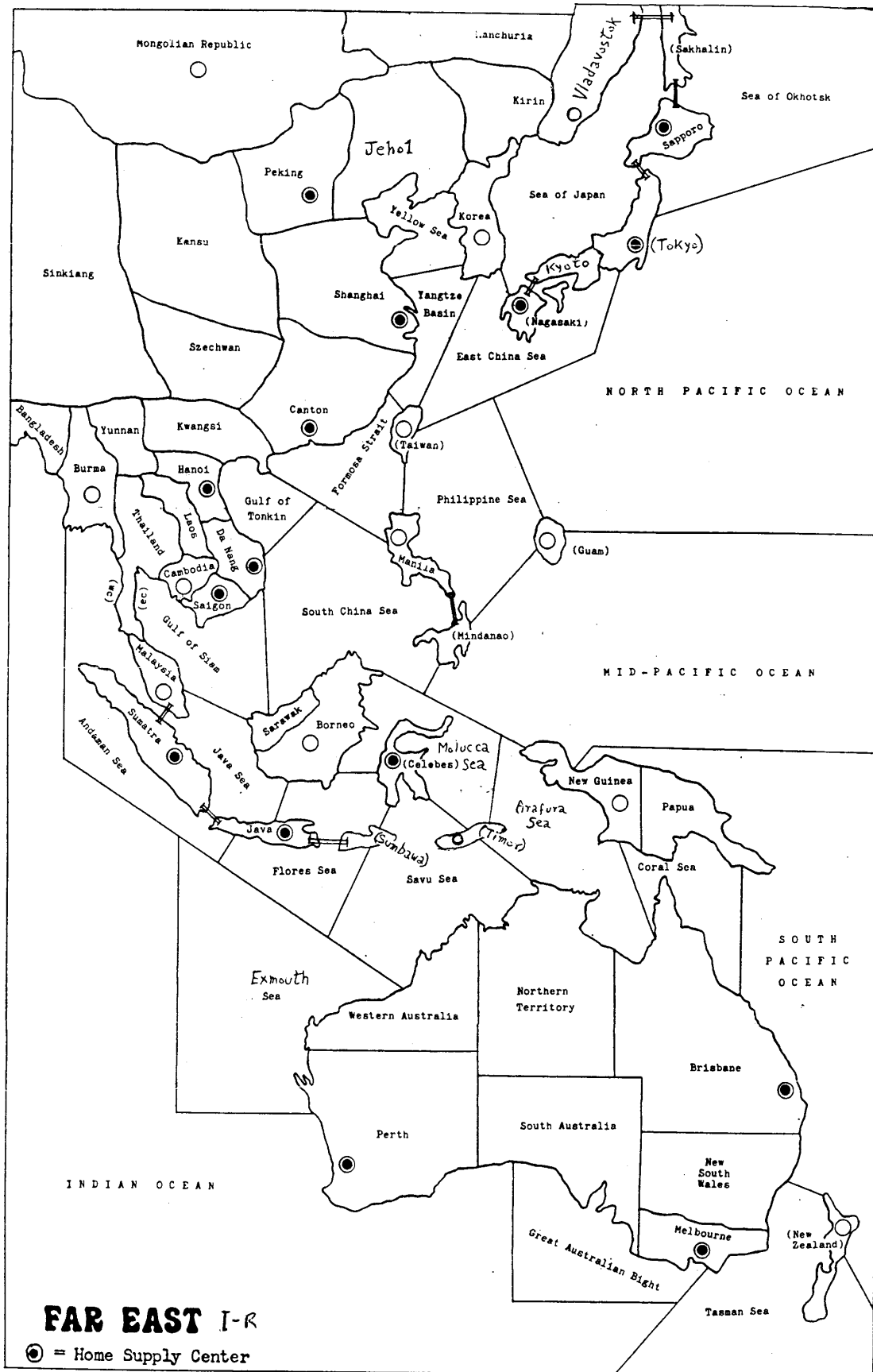
6.7 If a particular Power has multiple Fleets in the same Ocean Space, it is helpful, but not required, to differentiate the fleets when preparing orders by assigning a number to each of the Fleets such as F1, F2, etc. These numbers do not designate specific Fleets and are not a permanent feature of these Fleets.

7. There is one double-coasted land space in *Far East* and that is Thailand which has both an East Coast and a West Coast.

8. There are 8 land bridges in this game which are identified by two parallel lines connecting two land spaces such as the bridge joining Sumatra and Malaysia. Both Armies and Fleets may move freely between the two connected land spaces as if there were a contiguous border between the two land spaces. A unit on one side of the bridge may issue a Support order for a unit on the other side of the same bridge, and Retreats across a bridge are permitted.

These land bridges also act as demarcation lines between sea spaces. The bridge connecting Mindanao and Manila, for example, separates the South China Sea from the Philippine Sea. Fleets may move freely, subject to the normal rules of Diplomacy, from one sea space to another as if the bridges did not exist as bridges, but were, instead, simply borders. Exception: Flores Sea exists on both sides of the land bridge between Java and Sumbawa.





Designed by Vern Schaller, 1982

As amended by Fred Davis, 1983

## Additional Notes On Far East I-R by Fred Davis

It is presumed that the Soviet Union has disintegrated into its component parts. Of interest to this game is that the Vladivostok area has again become independent, as it did during the 1917 Revolution, and formed some sort of *Far Eastern Republic*. Mongolia, likewise, is no longer under Moscow's control. The United States and the European Powers are presumably busy with their own problems, leaving the *Far Eastern* states to themselves.

The size of "Guam" has been reduced on this map. "Guam" should be considered to be a combination of Guam, Saipan, Tinian and Rota. Perhaps the Mariana Is. got together and formed an independent State, which is why the U.S. doesn't get involved. ("Marianas" might be a better name for this space, but I didn't want to change names where it wasn't necessary).

The Japanese main island of Shikoku is shown on this map, without being named. For game purposes, it will be presumed that the ordinary space "Kyoto" includes the Shikoku area.

The areas formerly called "Inner Mongolia" and "Manchuria" no longer legally exist in modern China. The province shown here as "Jehol" is a combination of Jehol and Antung provinces in China proper, plus parts of what used to be Inner Mongolia and Manchuria. Kirin is one of the Manchurian provinces, here enlarged. The remainder of that area retains the name "Manchuria" here for easy identification. Vladivostok has been deliberately separated from Korea, for game purposes, although in fact they are adjacent.

The Kyoto and Sumbawa provinces were added because I believe that every Great Power should have some ordinary spaces for maneuvering purposes. Sakhalin could be considered to be part of Japan, too, as the southern half of this island (Only part shown here) was under Japanese control from 1906 to 1915.

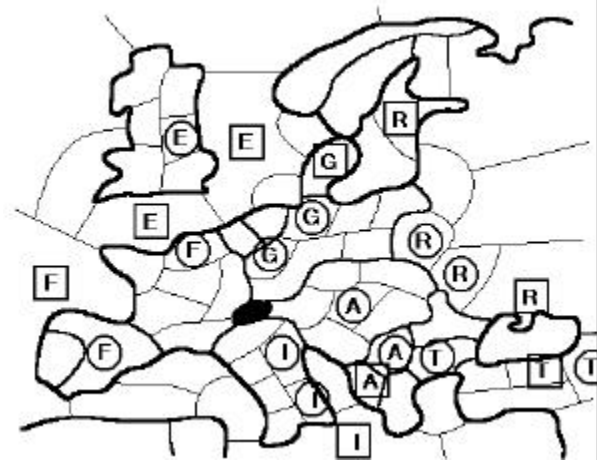
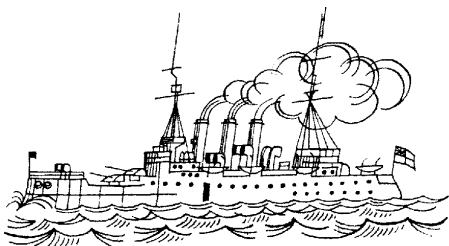
Several liberties have been taken with this map, including omission of many islands and areas like Hong Kong and Sabah (North Borneo), for game purposes.

### Spaces added in Far East I-R

Supply Centers: Timor (island), Vladivostok  
Other land provinces: Kyoto, Sumbawa (is.)  
Sea space: Molucca Sea

### Name Changes

Inner Mongolia to Jehol; Timor Sea to Exmouth Sea (this was the wrong location for Timor Sea anyway).  
Shape Changes: Kirin, Manchuria, Arafura Sea



### 1998?? EUGEN (Spring 1901)

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY (Berry Renkin)

Berry.Renken@hunze.iwg.nl

A(Vie) - Gal (FAILED); A(Bud) - Ser; F(Tri) - Alb

ENGLAND (Geoff Norwood)

geoff@gnorwood.clara.net

F(Edi) - NTH; A(Lpl) - Yor; F(Lon) - ENG

FRANCE (Stephen Koehler) sdk@prodigy.net

A(Par) - Pic; A(Mar) - Spa; F(Bre) - MAO

GERMANY (Tony Reeves) reeves@celtic.co.uk

F(Kie) - Den; A(Ber) - Kie; A(Mun) - Ruh

ITALY (Martin Milarky)

Martin.Milarky@MGSS01.scotoff.gov.uk

F(Nap) - ION; A(Rom) - Apu; A(Ven) S.GERMAN

A(Mun) - Tyr

RUSSIA (Roland Cooke)

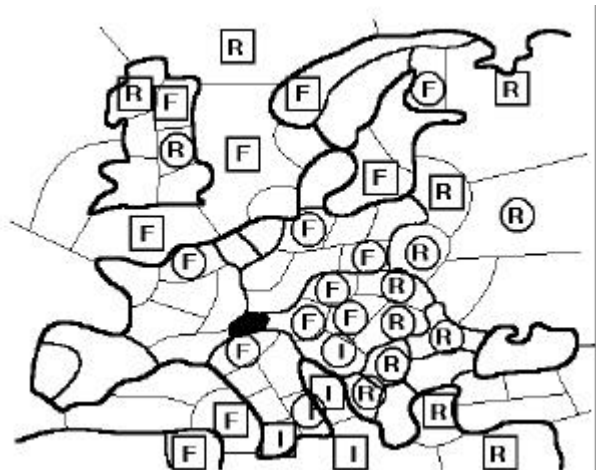
Roland\_Cooke@eucgbl24.ccmil.compuserve.com

F(StP) sc - GoB; F(Sev) - BLA (FAILED); A(Mos) - Ukr; A(War) - Gal (FAILED)

TURKEY (Nick Marshall)

nick.marshall@mailexcite.com

A(Con) - Bul; A(Smy) - Arm; F(Ank) - BLA (FAILED)



### 1995DS TRAPEZE (Spring 1911)

FRANCE (Roy Britash) A(Mar) - Pie; A(Par) - Pic; F(Bre) - ENG; A(Den) - Kie; A(Mun) - Tyr; A(Tyr) - Vie; A(Boh) s A(Tyr) - Vie; A(Gal) - War\* (FAILED, DISLODGED TO Sil); F(Naf) - Tun; F(WMS) - TYS; A(StP) - Mos\* (FAILED, DISLODGED TO Fin); F(Swe) - BAL; F(Cly) - Edi; F(NTH) s F(Cly) - Edi; F(Nwy) - NWG (FAILED)

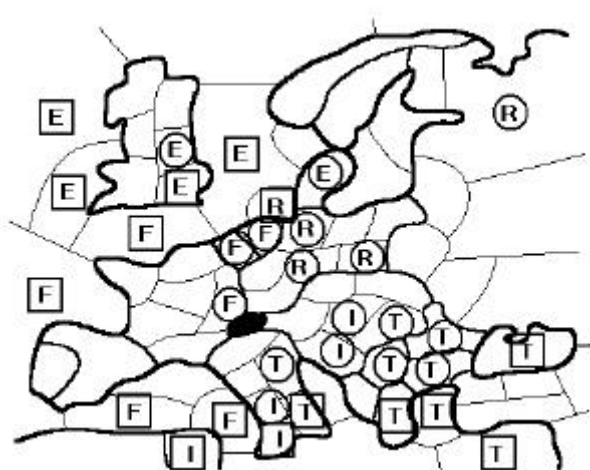
ITALY (Richard Scholefield) F(Nap) s F(Tun) - ION; F(ADS) s F(Tun) - ION; F(Tun) - ION; A(Ven) - Apu; A(Tri) - Bud (FAILED)

RUSSIA (Paul Reeves) A(Edi) s F(Lpl) - Cly\* (DISLODGED TO Yor); F(NWG) - Nwy (FAILED); F(BAR) - StP nc; A(Mos) - Ukr (FAILED); A(War) s A(Vie) - Gal; A(Bud) s A(Vie) - Gal (CUT); A(Rum) - Ukr (FAILED); A(Ser) - Tri (FAILED); A(Gre) - Alb; F(ION) s A(Gre) - Alb\* (CUT, DISLODGED TO EMS); F(AEG) s F(ION); F(Lvn) s F(BAR) - StP nc; F(Lpl) - Cly; A(Vie) - Gal

**Wilfred:** I have two players who have proposed/accepted a 3-way draw but there is still one against. Many, many congratulations to Paul on the birth of his daughter Laura and best wishes to Laura's mum.

**Press:**

**France-Russia:** Sorry for not writing for ages Paul. It got to the stage where we both knew no letter would change the moves we made. Irrespective of how the game ends, thanks a million - it has been the most enjoyable, strategically, I have ever played. We both managed a killer-convoy on the other at some stage.



**ANSCHLUSS (Spring 1907)**

ENGLAND (Roy Burnett) F(NAO) s F(Lpl) - IRI; A(Swe) - Den; F(Edi) - NTH; F(Lon) s F(Edi) - NTH; A(Yor) Stands; F(Lpl) - IRI

FRANCE (Emeric Miszti - NMR!) F(MAO) Stands ; A(Bel) Stands ; A(Hol) Stands ; A(Bur) Stands ; F(ENG) Stands ; F(WMS) Stands ; F(TYS) Stands

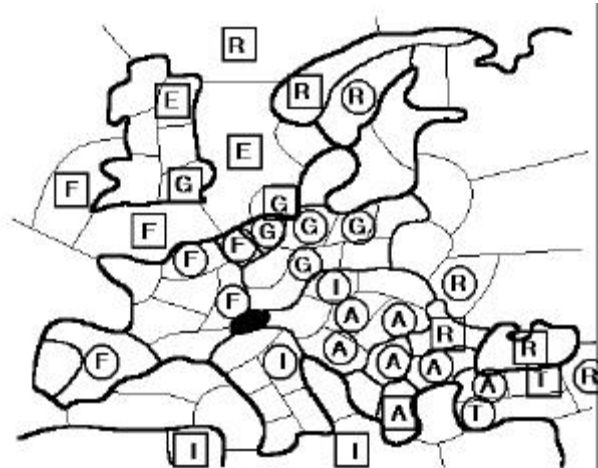
GERMANY (Ian Coleman) A(Den) Stands\* (DISLODGED - DISBANDED NRP)

ITALY (Colin Smith) F(Tun) - ION (FAILED); A(Bud)

- Tri; A(Vie) s A(Bud) - Tri; F(ION) - Nap; A(Rom) s F(ION) - Nap

RUSSIA (Pete Birks) A(Kie) s ENGLISH A(Swe) - Den; A(Mos) - StP; A(Mun) s A(Kie); A(War) - Sil; F(HEL) s ENGLISH A(Swe) - Den

TURKEY (Jeremy Tullett) F(Con) - AEG; F(Smy) - EMS; A(Tri) s A(Gal) - Bud\* (DISLODGED TO Ven); A(Gal) - Bud; A(Rum) - Bud (FAILED); F(BLA) c A(Sev) - Bul; F(Gre) - ION (FAILED); A(Ser) s A(Gal) - Bud; F(Nap) - Rom\* (FAILED, DISLODGED TO Apu); A(Sev) - Bul



**97?? ANSON (Autumn 1903)**

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY (Pete Duxon) A(Vie) s A(Tri); A(Tri) s A(Vie) (CUT); A(Ser) s F(Gre); A(Con) s A(Bul) (CUT); A(Bul) s A(Con); F(Gre) s A(Bul) (CUT)

ENGLAND (Michael Goldthorpe) A(Lon) Stands\* (DISLODGED - DISBANDED); F(Edi) s F(NWG) - NTH; F(NWG) - NTH

FRANCE (Dave Newnham) F(MAO) - IRI; F(ENG) s GERMAN F(NTH) - Lon; A(Bel) Stands; A(Bur) s A(Bel); A(Mar) - Spa; A(Pic) s A(Bur)

GERMANY (Paul Barker) F(NTH) - Lon; A(Kie) s A(Mun); A(Mun) Stands; A(Ruh) - Hol; F(Den) - HEL

ITALY (John Wilman) A(Boh) - Mun (FAILED); A(Ven) - Tri (FAILED); F(ION) - Gre (FAILED); F(WMS) - Tun

RUSSIA (Jimmy Cowie) F(BLA) s AUSTRIAN A(Con); F(Rum) s AUSTRIAN A(Bul); A(Ukr) s F(Rum); A(Sev) - Arm; A(Fin) - Swe; F(BAR) - NWG; F(Nwy) s F(BAR) - NWG

TURKEY (Allan Gordon) F(Ank) s F(AEG) - Con; A(Smy) s F(Ank); F(AEG) - Con (FAILED)

**Autumn 1903 Adjustments:**

A: Vie, Tri, Ser, +Con, Bul, Gre, Bud = 7; Gains 1. Builds A(Bud).

E: Edi, Lpl, -Lon = 2; Loses 1.

F: Bel, Spa, Par, Mar, Por, Bre = 6; No change.

G: +Lon, Kie, Mun, Hol, Den, Ber = 6; Gains 1. Builds

A(Ber).

I: Ven, Tun, Nap, Rom = 4; No change.

R: Rum, Swe, Nwy, StP, Mos, Sev, War = 7; No change.

T: Ank, Smy -Con = 2; Loses 1. Removes F(AEG)

### Press:

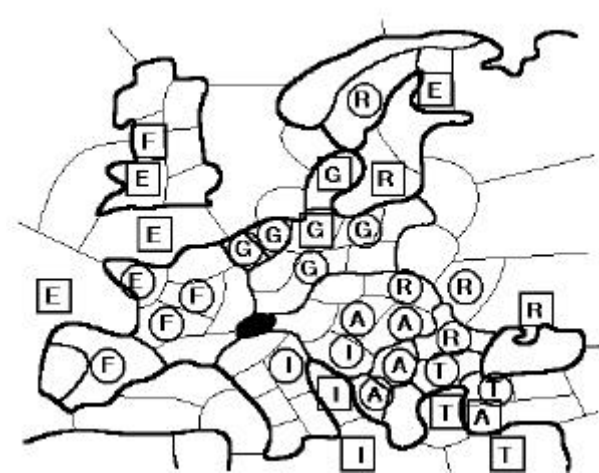
**Allan-Dave:** Sorry to hear about your mother – whatever is best for you and yours, I wish it.

**Wilfred-England:** Hope all is well with the little boy.

**El Thid:** “I thay, Wazir – I appear to have lotht one of my armth!” “To say nothing of fouling the imperial breeches, Mightiness.” “Yeth... I think... I think thith game thuckth, Wazir, and the thooner I’m in bed with the coverth over my head, the better.” “Shall I come with you, Omnipootence?” “Thetainly not! I may be dethpewate, but that’th widiculouth!”

**Cock O’Van-Isa Sheff:** Wot you got that lumpa doe in you hand for? And why youa holding my tail up like that?

**Lon-All:** The captain went down with his ship? Ah! Now I see what it means!



### **BERTHIER (Spring 1903)**

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY (Keith Loveys) F(AEG) – Con\* (FAILED, DISLODGED TO Smy); A(Ser) - Bul (FAILED); A(Alb) - Gre (FAILED); A(Bud) - Tri (FAILED); A(Vie) s A(Bud) - Tri (CUT)

ENGLAND (Roland Cooke) F(Swe) s RUSSIAN F(BAL)\* (CUT, DISLODGED TO Fin); F(Bre) - MAO; F(ENG) c A(Wal) - Bre; F(Lon) - Wal; A(Wal) - Bre

FRANCE (Jason Asker) A(Mar) - Gas; A(Bur) - Par; A(Por) - Spa; F(IRI) - Lpl

GERMANY (Alex Hankin - NMR!) A(Hol) Stands ; A(Bel) Stands ; A(Ber) Stands ; A(Mun) Stands ; F(Den) Stands ; F(Kie) Stands

ITALY (Tony Reeves) A(Ven) s A(Tyr) - Tri; F(ION) - ADS; F(TYS) - ION; A(Tyr) - Tri

RUSSIA (Nicholas Parish) F(BAL) s A(Nwy) - Swe; A(Nwy) - Swe; A(Rum) - Bud (FAILED); A(Gal) - Vie (FAILED); F(Sev) s A(Ukr) - Rum; A(Ukr) - Rum (FAILED)

TURKEY (Andy Bassett) F(EMS) s F(Con) - AEG; A(Bul) - Gre (FAILED); A(Smy) - Con; F(Con) – AEG

### Press:

**Russia(Govt)-England:** Sorry about this, but needs must. Diplomacy Select Committee - Grand High Master of DJA: We have reason to suspect that one or two of your members have been involved in conspiracies to pervert the course of justice. In particular, we suspect that they may have been behind the sudden and unexplained collapse of the Austrian Empire, the fit of madness which appears to have seized the French Emperor or the sudden and unexplained striking mute of the German Kaiser. I must demand a full list of all your members. Failure to comply could lead to three months in jail and expulsion from the hallowed pages of Spring Offensive. You have been warned.

**France-Turkey:** I’m trying to lose weight, not gain it, hence I’ve no interest in pizza.

**BJA Membership Sec-All Members:** Italy wants in - your votes gentlemen please.

**France-England:** I would like Brest back. You can either move under your own steam, or I’ll try and move you.

**Italy to all cyberdiplomats:** Sorry for all the probs with my ISP - all should now be okay.

**Media Celeb-Turkey:** Why so little faith?

### **MIDDLE EARTH II DORIA – Tuile 3001**

**ARNOR** (Padraig Timmins) A(Amon Sul)-Brandywine, A(Imladris)-Eregion, A(The Shire)-Forochel

**GONDOR** (Chris Latimer) A(Dol Amroth)-Tolfalas, A(Lamedon/Lebennin)-Anorien, A(Minas Tirith) S A(Lamedon/Lebennin)-Anorien

**MORDOR** (Mark Wightman) A(Barad-Dur)-Ash Mountains, A(Minas Morgul)-Henneth Annun, A(Udun)-Dead Marches

**RHOVANION** (Ian Coleman) A(Dol Guldur) – Gladden; A(Wilderlands) - Dol Guldur; A(Northern Wilderlands) - Mirkwood

**ROHAN** (Roland Cooke) A(Fangorn)-Lorien, A(Isengard)-Dunland, A(West Emnet)-Rauros

**Wilfred:** Many thanks to Ian Coleman for stepping into the breach. All remember that there is a SC in the Ash Mountains.

### **DEVOLUTION**

A small plug for the zine run by Tony Robbins to complete the RR and BB games in **Revolution** and **WIMM?** Available by email from Tony at 101234.1602@compuserve.com. Waiting lists are available for new games, including RR maps for Schleswig-Holstein, Mozambique and Devon & Cornwall.

**GUNBOAT STAB!**  
1995?? UFO (Spring 1909)

ENGLAND (Paul Daniels) F(MAO) s F(ENG) - Bre (CUT); F(ENG) - Bre (FAILED);

FRANCE ("Stephen Agar") ???

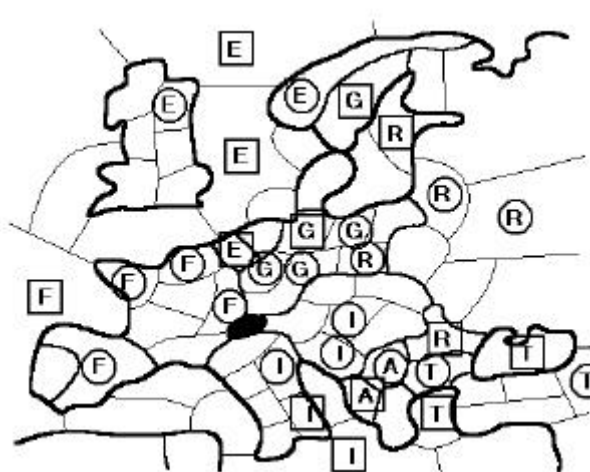
GERMANY (To Be Announced - Anarchy) ???

ITALY (Il Duce) F(WMS) - MAO (FAILED)

RUSSIA ("Neil Kendrick" - Anarchy) A(Bre) Stands;

TURKEY (Santa) ???

**Wilfred:** With Russia sliding into anarchy, it's a bit of a race between Italy and England, with the odds in favour of the former.



**98?? CORNWALLIS (Spring 1902)**

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY (Tony Elbourn - NMR!) F(Alb) Stands ; A(Vie) Stands\* (DISLODGED - DISBANDED NRO); A(Ser) Stands

ENGLAND (Anthony Coogan) A(Lpl) - Edi; A(Nwy) - StP (FAILED); F(NWG) s F(Lon) - NTH; F(Lon) - NTH; F(Bel) Stands

FRANCE (Brad Martin) A(Bur) s A(Par) - Pic; A(Spa) Stands; F(Por) - MAO; A(Bre) s A(Par) - Pic; A(Par) - Pic

GERMANY (John Miller) A(Mun) s A(Hol) - Ruh; A(Ber) - Kie (FAILED); A(Hol) - Ruh; F(Den) - Swe; F(Kie) - BAL (FAILED)

ITALY (Paul Harrison) A(Tyr) - Vie; A(Tri) s A(Tyr) - Vie; A(Ven) s A(Tri); F(Nap) - Apu; F(Tun) - ION

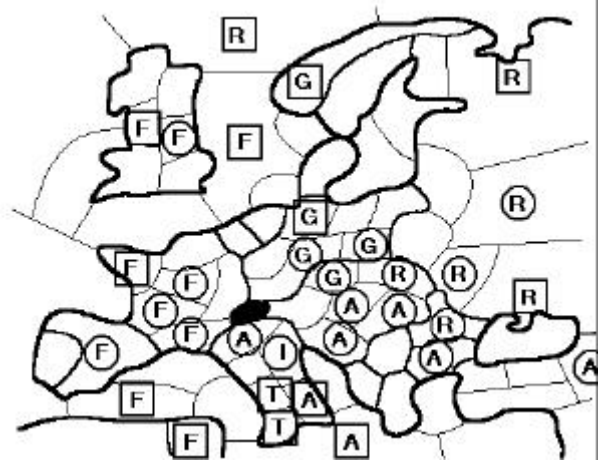
RUSSIA (George Hornby) F(Rum) Stands; F(GoB) - BAL (FAILED); A(War) - Lvn; A(Gal) - Sil; A(Mos) - StP (FAILED)

TURKEY (Peter Berlin) F(Con) - BLA; A(Ank) - Arm; A(Bul) - Ser (FAILED); F(Smy) - AEG

**Press:**

**Moscow-All:** Sorry for the silence, I've been away.

**Tsar-Peasant:** We are in St.Petersburg. Please don't say "Saint Pee", it isn't elegant.



**1995EN WIZZARD (Autumn 1910)**

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY (Richard Scholefield) A(Bul) - Rum (FAILED); A(Bud) s A(Tri) - Vie; A(Gal) - Boh\* (FAILED, DISLODGED - DISBANDED NRP); F(AEG) - ION; A(Ank) - Arm; F(ADS) - Apu; A(Pie) - Mar (FAILED); A(Tri) - Vie

FRANCE (Peter Dunnett) A(Yor) s F(IRI) - Lpl; F(IRI) - Lpl; F(NTH) - Edi (FAILED); A(Gas) - Mar (FAILED); A(Mar) - Pie (FAILED); A(Spa) s A(Gas) - Mar; F(NAf) - Tun; F(WMS) s F(NAf) - Tun

GERMANY (Steve Bibby) F(Swe) - Nwy; A(Ber) - Mun; A(Boh) s RUSSIAN A(War) - Gal; A(Pru) - Sil

ITALY (Allan Stagg) A(Tus) - Ven; F(GoL) - Mar (FAILED)

RUSSIA (Rob Walk) A(Lpl) - Edi\* (FAILED, DISLODGED - DISBANDED NRO); A(StP) - Mos; A(War) - Gal; A(Ukr) s A(Sev) - Rum; A(Sev) - Rum; A(Vie) - Bud\* (FAILED, DISLODGED - DISBANDED NRO); F(NWG) s GERMAN F(Swe) - Nwy

TURKEY (David Harris) F(Nap) s F(TYS) - Rom; F(TYS) - Rom

**Autumn 1910 Adjustments:**

A: Bul, Bud, Vie, Smy, Ank, Ser, Con, Gre, Tri - Rum = 9; Loses 1. Builds A(Tri). 1 Build centre short.

F: Lpl, +Mar, Spa, +Tun, Hol, Bre, Por, Bel, Lon, Par = 10; Gains 2. Builds F(Bre), A(Par).

G: +Nwy, Mun, Den, Ber, Kie = 5; Gains 1. Builds F(Kie).

I: Ven - Mar, -Rom = 1; Loses 2. GM removes F(GoL). R: Mos, +Rum, StP, War, Sev, Edi, Swe, -Nwy = 7; No change. Builds F(Sev), F(StP) nc.

T: Nap, +Rom, -Tun = 2; No change.

**Press:**

**Italy-Austria:** Why can you never remember what we agreed in the pub?

**Austria-All:** Wonderful game.

**Italy-The Rest:** I think the appropriate phrase is... Goodbye.

## THE BACK PAGE

### U-BEND GAMES

**EUWE** (Regular Diplomacy) Spring 1906: Stretch, Holliday. No shows = Draper & Campbell. I suggest that his game be declared a 2-way draw between Bob and Mark. Votes please, unanimity required, silence = yes.

**KASPAROV** (Regular Diplomacy) Spring 1903: Marsden, Underhay, Coulthard. This game has been complicated because last time I didn't realise that it had already been re-housed in OMR, but when I discovered that I thought it would stay there. Then Mark (apparently) put the orders he had received in with my copy of OMR, but as I wasn't expecting them at the time I didn't notice them in the envelope and threw it/them out. Rather than pass the game back again, will everyone please submit A03 orders to me, the only orders I have on file being from John Marsden. I suggest that if we have four or less active players then this game be declared a draw between them. Votes please, unanimity required, silence = yes.

**LASKER** (Woolworth II-D Diplomacy) Autumn 1903: Holliday, Dunnett, Dickinson. I suggest that his game be declared a 3-way draw between Bob, Peter and Tony. Votes please, unanimity required, silence = yes.

**QUINTEIROS** (Regular Diplomacy) Autumn 1901: Goulsbra, Parish, Deacon. No shows= Smith, Boocock, Gillham, Eaton. I suggest that his game be declared a 3-way draw between Jim, Nick and Tim. Votes please, unanimity required, silence = yes.

All other games are to be re-housed by John Marsden of 33 Weston Road, Strood, Kent, ME2 3HA to whom all enquiries should be addressed.

**U-Bend Credits:** Sandra has lost track of the credit situation. I am sending this issue out to everyone on the **U-Bend** mailing list I was given, making two issues I have paid for. In future **U-Bend** readers will only receive **Spring Offensive** if you send a fresh subscription, so I guess this is goodbye to most of you. Of course, you are all invited to join one of the waiting lists above.

### COAs

Fiona Campbell to Flat 7, 6 Glendinning Avenue, Weymouth, Dorset, DT4 7QF

Kim Head to Flat 1, 63 Oakfield Road, Croydon, CR0 2UX.

### WAITING LISTS

**Regular Diplomacy (1 wanted):** Keith Smith (REFIAGT), Allan Gordon (FEGRAIT), Douglas Massie (AEITRGF), Dave Clark (GI), Matt Kane (RTGEFIA), Matthew Male (GIEFTRA). Sorry this hasn't started yet guys, I'll find someone ASAP and send an interim gamestart out. First person to volunteer to fill this list gets a special prize...

**Regular Diplomacy with Email Addresses (4 wanted):** Dylan O'Donnell (not Italy), John Wilman, Stewart Cross. **Far East I-R (4 wanted)** Brad Martin. Rules inside.

**Maneater:** The wonderful game where the players get slowly eaten by a shark while trying to swim ashore. Rules will be published next issue – anyone care to sign up in anticipation?

**Kingmaker:** Another game I'd like to run if there's enough interest.

**Railway Rivals:** I'd be happy to have RR games back in **Spring Offensive**, if there's some kind soul out there willing to be an external GM. Is there?

**Anything Else:** Let me know what you fancy, whether you want to play or GM, and I'll see what I can do.

It is a condition of subscription to *Spring Offensive* that you consent to subscription information being maintained on a computer database and that you consent to me releasing address information to others in the Diplomacy hobby. If you object let me know. The precise amount of your existing credit is shown after your name on the address label (so retrieve the envelope from the bin now!). By way of an additional warning:

A top up would be nice...

Personally, I can't see you getting the next issue...

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DEADLINE FOR ISSUE 60

**FRIDAY 17<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1998**