

Introducing "1885," a 9-man variant

Assuming that you want to play on a map of Europe, the big problem with a 9-man variant that is anywhere near realistic is what time period to use. Some 9-man variants have merely drawn some lines on Spain and Sweden and let it go at that. Others, like Rod Walker, have invented a fantasy world inhabited by "hopeless losers" like Poland and small tough countries like Israel. I have tried to find a time period in which it still could be realistic for Spain and Sweden to be considered great powers. At first blush, it appeared that this would require a starting date of no later than 1820, shortly after the Treaty of Vienna. But an 1820 date has several drawbacks. First, the Turks still controlled vast stretches of the Balkans. Second, Germany and Italy didn't exist as such. Third, the scenario would be restricted to sailing ships, and I wanted to use steamships.

I have carefully followed the map changes in the Atlas of World History, to see when the Ottoman Empire was pushed back to its current corner of Europe. The Standard Diplomacy board is wrong, by the way. Although the game starts in 1901, the boundaries shown on the board are those of 1913. (This is why Abstraction begins in 1914). Southern Serbia and northern Greece (i.e. Macedonia) were under Turkish rule until 1913, as was Albania. I finally settled on a starting date of 1885, because in that year Bulgaria became free, and the Turks were driven out of the areas called Serbia and Split on my map. This enables us to use the same Austro-Hungarian boundaries as are shown on the Standard Diplomacy map, although legally Bosnia-Herzegovina (Split) was only occupied and not annexed to the Empire at that time. "Split" in this game is the same province as "Zara" in Abstraction. The name was changed because you can still find Split on the map, whereas Zara has been renamed "Zadar".

Psychologically, Spain was still considered a Great Power in 1885. Look at the fuss made over the visit of members of the Spanish Royal Family to the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. Many years ago, I had the opportunity to look at the First Edition of Flottes de Combat, printed in 1897. This is the French equivalent to Jane's Fighting Ships. I was particularly interested in how they rated the Spanish fleet vis-a-vis the United States, since this was just a year before the Spanish-American War. It was amazing to see the Spanish ships extolled for their virtues, and the U.S. ships downgraded, to the point where the reader would assume that the fleets were of equal strength in 1897. Well, if naval scientists thought Spain was that powerful in 1897, the belief in Spanish power would have been even stronger in 1885. So I can include Spain with good logic.

As for Sweden, what can I say? Everyone agrees that she was a Great Power in the period from, say, 1600 to 1815. It is also true that both the Swedish navy and air force were considered to be among the best of all the Minor Powers in the 1930's and 40's. I don't have much data on the pre-dreadnaught era of the 1880's and 90's, except that the Swedes built some good coast defense ships and gunboats in that era. By analogy, I have concluded that the plucky Swedes would not have been an easy pushover in 1885. Anyway, the 9th Power simply has to be Sweden for this game.

Several interesting concepts have been incorporated into "1885" in an attempt to equalize the starting positions of all the Powers. Note that Ireland has been added to compensate England for the loss of her traditional build in Norway. Basque compensates France for the loss of her Iberian builds. Morocco gives Spain an easy Tunis-type build. Egypt is a plum for Turkey to counterbalance a stronger Austria. Siberia is passable, and Persia is both passable and a Supply center. Many new land operations can develop between Russia and Turkey. The Swedish boundary has been extended across Lapland to touch Russia, allowing more interplay in that region.

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Under the Domino theory, one change on the map often requires another. While the peripheral Powers are being given these new goodies, the Central Powers are cut off, and would soon die if left unchanged. Accordingly, I've followed the suggestion made by several people and given the two Central Powers, Germany and Austria, a 4th unit each, so that they start out in a better position. With Sweden now a Great Power, Germany is totally surrounded, and probably won't get its traditional build in Denmark. Therefore, a unit in Dresden is vital. Poor Austria gets a new unit in Cluj (that's "Transylvania" in Abstraction) to make up for the loss of an automatic build in Serbia. Also, dead center in the board, Switzerland is both passable and a Supply Center, where it can be taken by France or Germany, or even Austria.

Turkey has four Supply Centers, but because of its corner position, she begins the game with only 3 units. It was found that if the Turks had an Army in Macedonia at the start, Austria was doomed. The missing Turkish unit can be reconciled with her role as "The Sick Man of Europe" in 1885. Thus, 3 Powers start off with 4 units each (including Russia, of course), and the other six, all peripheral Powers, begin with three.

Another new concept is that of permitting certain Powers to build units in certain areas outside of the homeland. This has been done to increase the flexibility of the response of these Powers to their needs. Spain is greatly strengthened by being able to build fleets in Portugal, for example, where they can threaten England. Likewise, the Swedish ability to build fleets in Norway is a powerful tool.

There are also three "Build Centers" on the board, where units may be built even though they are not Supply Centers. These are Archangel, Sicily, and the Levant. The ability of the Russians, Italians and Turks, respectively, to raise new units in these provinces makes for greater flexibility.

I am indebted to John Boyer for the concept that it is not absolutely necessary to make each Great Power have the same number of provinces for them to be equal. Of course, we've always had Turkey with only 5 provinces in the Standard game, but that was always looked upon as an exception to the rule. In Abstraction, I advanced to the point of giving Austria one more province than all of the other regular Great Powers. In "1885", I've given Sweden only 5 home provinces, while Austria has 8 and Italy 7, because these appeared to be the right number of spaces for these Powers. Thus, I've broken out of the old mold which said you must have "two provinces for every home Supply Center."

I hope that these changes have equalized the chances of the 9 Powers. I realize that Italy has gotten less out of this than anybody else, having gained only the option of Sicilian builds and the removal of the Austrian fleet from Trieste. This is why I've given Italy the option of starting out with either a Fleet or Army in Rome at the start of the game. (Italy does not have to reveal which until the first move). Hopefully, she can play the power broker between the two Mediterranean Powers on either side of her. She has a chance for both Greece and Egypt. Opinions on whether France and Italy are too weak, or other countries too strong; or other comments on the rules; and map, are solicited.

The pre-dreadnaught era was a fascinating one in naval circles and in world politics. If we ever run a section of "1885," there should be some good press releases. Again, my thanks to Rod Walker, Fred Winter, John Boyer, and everyone else who ever invented a Diplomacy variant, for giving me some inspirations.

Oh, the name? Well, everybody else has begun to name their variants for the game year in which they begin, so I decided to do the same thing.

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"1885" - A Diplomacy Variant - Created by Fred C. Davis, Jr., 1973

1. All standard rules of Diplomacy apply, except as noted below.
2. There are 45 Supply Centers. Sweden and Spain are added as Great Powers. Austria, Germany and Turkey have 4 Supply Centers. Several new neutral S.C.'s have been added: Switzerland, Basque, Ireland, Egypt, Morocco, and Persia. (See map for changes, especially the Turkish Empire borders of 1885).
3. The Great Powers will begin the game with the following new units, or units changed in type, in addition to the units and locations specified by the Standard Rules.

AUSTRIA: A Cluj, F Split (there is no province Trieste)

ENGLAND: F Liverpool (instead of A)

GERMANY: A Dresden

SPAIN: A Madrid, A Cadiz, F Valencia

SWEDEN: F Norway, A Malmo, F Stockholm

TURKEY: F Sinope (there is no Ankara) (See Rule 11 re Macedonian S.C.)

ITALY: At the option of the Italian player, the unit in Rome may be either a F or A. Player does not have to reveal nature of unit before 1st move.

4. The first move of the game is January 1885, and each subsequent move will take place during a single month. The "Build/Removal" seasons will be in March, June, September, and December (as in "Abstraction").
5. Victory Requirements:
 - a. For a single player, the Victory Criterion is 23 units on the board.
 - b. Any two players may obtain an "Alliance Victory" if they jointly have at least 30 units on the board at the end of a "Fall" move.
 - c. The game may also end if all the Powers agree to concede the game to one Power before that country has attained 23 units.
6. Special characteristics of certain provinces:
 - a. The following non-supply provinces are called "Build Centers":
 1. Archangel. Russia may build units here, if owned.
 2. Levant. Turkey may build units here, if owned.
 3. Sicily. Italy may build units here, if owned.
 - b. The following Neutral Supply Centers may be used for building units if owned by the Great Power listed:
 1. Ireland, if owned by England.
 2. Portugal, if owned by Spain.
7. Convoy by Standard Diplomacy method is allowed only if it covers the crossing of a single sea space. This convoy order will be called the "Fast Ferry."
8. All convoys involving the crossing of more than one sea space may be undertaken only by the formation of an "Army/Fleet," as in "Abstraction" or "Atlantica." (See "Abstraction" or "Atlantica II" rules for A/F convoy and combined operations rules, which are identical to those used in "1885." Convoy and Combat rules covering Army/Fleets will be sent on request to players not having them.)

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"1885" (Continued)

9. Direct Passage. Armies may move between Naples and Sicily without convoy. This does NOT prevent Fleets from moving and supporting directly between Tyrrhenian and Ionian Seas. All 4 provinces should be considered as coming together in a 4-point meet. Accordingly, attacks and supports may be made by BOTH Armies and Fleets, as between any other adjacent provinces.
10. Retreats and Removals.
 - a. Retreats are made by Just's Right-Hand Rule if a player fails to submit a retreat order. Normally, this will occur only at the conclusion of a "Spring" type move (e.g. January, April). After a "Fall" move, the player may submit a retreat order with his Build or Removal order; and the other players may make their Builds contingent on the nature of that Retreat order. Retreats take precedence over Builds.
 - b. A player may not write an "Off the Board" or "Disbanded" retreat order. Any written order for a retreat must be to an existing province. A unit will be forced off the board only if the GM finds no other move for it. An "Off the Board" move is equivalent to annihilation.
 - c. Removal of units in a Postal game will be made by the GM when a player fails to submit a removal order. There is no requirement that the GM must remove fleets before armies, or Away nits before Home units, where he finds that such a procedure would result in the gift of a Supply Center to another Power. In all such cases, the GM is required to remove the unit or units which, in his judgement, would have the least effect on the course of the game.
11. There is no Turkish unit in Macedonia at the start of the game, so Turkey starts off with only 3 units on the board. If Turkey still controls Macedonia after the February 1885 move, she may build a unit for the S.C. there at any Home S.C. in March. Turkey does not have to occupy Macedonia to do so.
12. New abbreviations on the Map:

Cro. = Croatia

Dres. = Dresden

Mal. = Malmo

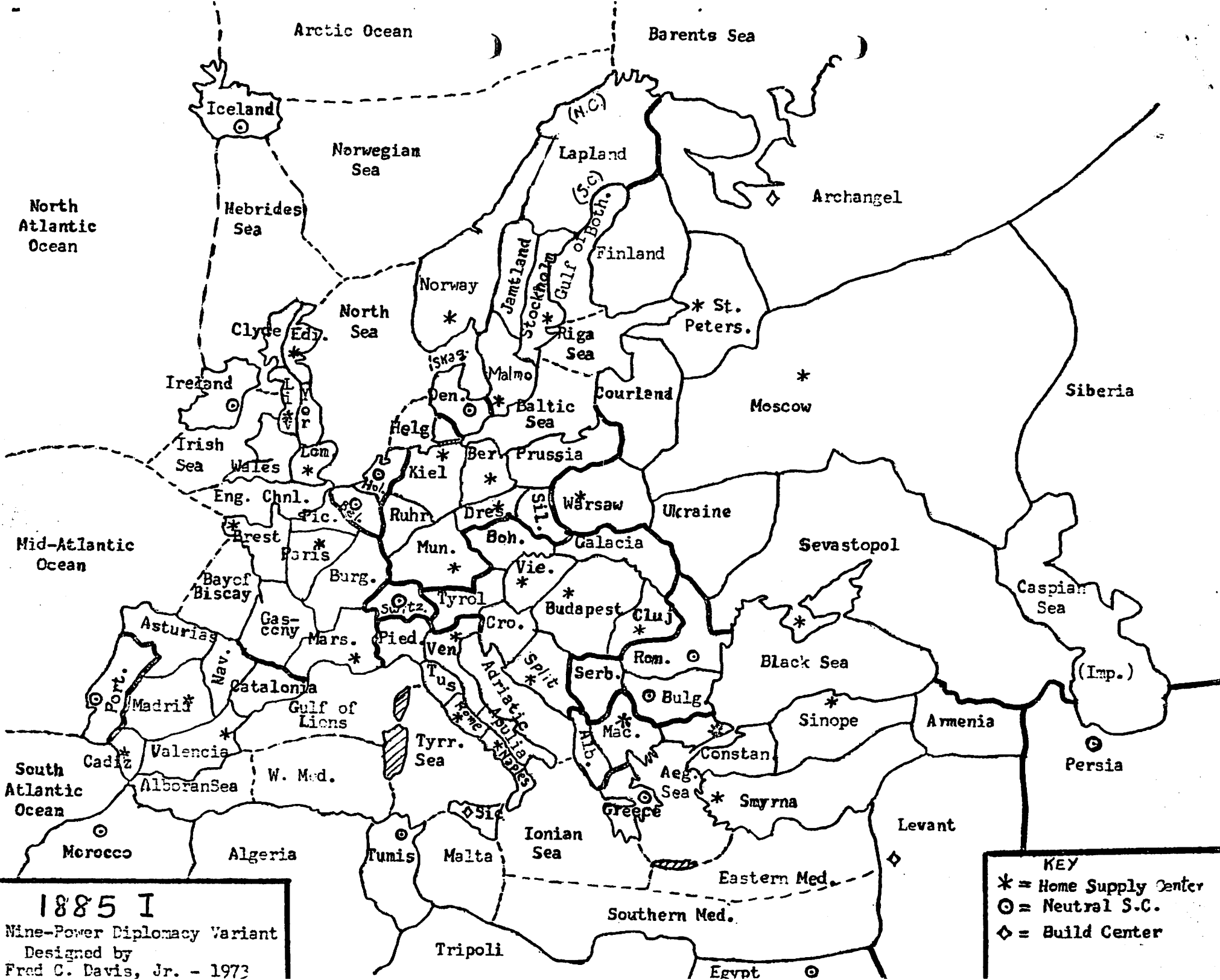
Mac. = Macedonia

Nav. = Navarre

(Note there are no two-coasted provinces. Fleets in Malmo move in coastal waters in moving from the Skaggerak to the Baltic coast.)

(Austria, Germany, and Russia start out with 4 units on the board. All other Powers begin the game with 3 units on the board.)

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KEY
 * = Home Supply Center
 ⊙ = Neutral S.C.
 ◇ = Build Center

1885 I
 Nine-Power Diplomacy Variant
 Designed by
 Fred C. Davis, Jr. - 1973

ARMY/FLEET RULES MODULE - By Fred C. Davis, Jr. 1984 Revision

I. Convoy by the Diplomacy Rulebook method is allowed only for the crossing of a single sea space.

- a. A Fleet may convoy an Army belonging to its own country or to any other Power across this single space. This one-space convoy will be called the "Fast Ferry," and the order for its use should include that term.
- b. In an unsuccessful disembarkation when both units belong to the same Power, the Army will remain aboard the Fleet, to become an Army/Fleet. If the units belong to different Powers, the Army must return to the land province from which it started, since an A/F cannot consist of units from two countries.

II. Army/Fleet Convoys:

- a. All convoys involving the crossing of more than one sea space may only be undertaken by the formation of an "Army/Fleet" to carry the Army by piggy-back. On a given move, an Army in a coastal province adjacent to a Fleet at sea may board the Fleet, which becomes an A/F. The A/F may then move to another sea space, and may then also disembark the Army into any land province adjacent to the second sea space. An A/F can only consist of two units belonging to the same country. (i.e. "A Marseilles boards F Gulf of Lions; A/F Gulf of Lions-Western Med; A disembarks Tunis.")
- b. An A/F can remain physically intact on the Board for 3 consecutive moves, excluding Build periods. Thus, an Army can be on the seas for a total of 4 consecutive A/F moves before exhausting its rations. If the Army is not successfully disembarked before the end of the 4th move, it is annihilated by starvation. e.g. An A which boards a F in Spring 1902 could stay with that F for Spring, Fall, and Spring 1903, but must be landed before the end of Fall 1903, or it will be removed from the board. Removal of the Army will not affect the existence of the Fleet.

III. Army/Fleet Combined Operations:

- a. An A/F has the same combat factor as a single Fleet. It may attack, support, and be supported. It cannot convoy another Army via the Fast Ferry, since its transports are already fully loaded. An A/F can exist only in a sea space. It cannot be ordered into a land province as an entity, but it may support some other unit into a land province. (See IV. a. for Retreats.)
- b. If an Army is ordered to board a Fleet, and the A/F is then prevented from moving to another sea space, the A/F remains intact. If the Fleet is ordered to "Hold," the A/F will also remain intact.
- c. If an Army is ordered to board a Fleet, and the Fleet is simultaneously attacked and required to defend its sea space against another Fleet, or Fleets, the Army fails to board, and remains in its previous land province. This is true even when the Fleet is successful in defending its sea space against its attacker(s). The Army will also fail to board if the Fleet is ordered to support another unit.

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Clarification: "Defend" means where the A/F was given an order to "Hold" after boarding the Army, or the A/F was forced to remain in the original sea space for any other reason. This rule does not affect the A/F convoy when the A/F moves successfully to another sea space, and another Fleet moves into the original sea space afterwards. It is assumed that the second F moved in after the A/F moved out; therefore, the first F did not have to "defend" the space.

(This is different from the Regular Diplomacy Rule, where an unsuccessful attack upon a Fleet never disrupts a convoy. The rationale here is that an A/F is a much more complex animal than an ordinary convoy. If the F has to run off and fight a naval battle at the edge of its space, it does not have time to regroup and obtain the necessary stores to form an A/F afterwards. It could, however, still run a "Fast Ferry.")

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- (Revised)
- d. If an Army's attack (disembarkation) on a land province fails, the A/F remains intact. Any order for the Fleet to move elsewhere will not take place, as the F is forced to remain in place to reboard the Army.
 - e. An Army which is landed after spending one, two or three consecutive moves with an A/F may be again picked up by the same Fleet on the next move.
 - f. A Fleet may not simultaneously land one Army and pick up another. All boardings must be made at the beginnings of turns. (X-Secs. IV. d. & e. for how attacks on a F at start of a turn prevent a disembarkation).
 - g. A Fleet which lands an Army in a land province before making its own move may then support that Army into the province for its move. Or, having landed an Army before moving, it may then move elsewhere. It may not support another unit elsewhere.
 - h. Any A/F Convoy or Disembarkation order which results in a Paradox (a movement which cannot be adjudicated due to circular reasoning) will result in a GM finding that all involved units Hold. This includes situations where two different units of equal strength attempt to occupy a space from the same sea space, as can happen when an A/F moves into a space vacated by a F, and attempts to disembark its A into the same space the F has just moved to.

IV. Retreats, Dislodgements, Annihilation, Removals

- a. A dislodged A/F must attempt to Retreat to a sea space. If the only space open for a Retreat is a land one, only the Fleet will survive, and the A is annihilated. (In a naval battle, warships would have a higher chance of survival than troop transports, tankers, etc.)
- b. If an A/F is annihilated, including by an "off-the-Board" move, both units are removed.
- c. If the loss of a Supply Center requires the removal of a unit from the Board, and the player fails to submit a removal order, the Rule of "Fleets before Armies" may be changed by the Gamesmaster in the case of A/F's, since the literal application of this rule would also result in the destruction of the Army. The GM may, instead, remove an Army which is part of an A/F.
- d. When an A/F attempts to disembark its A, with F support, and the F, instead, is dislodged from its sea space, the disembarkation order will fail, even if the A could otherwise successfully disembark in the land province to which it has been ordered. The dislodged A and F must retreat together to the same sea space. If the only available space for a Retreat is a land space, the F will retreat, and the A is annihilated.
- e. If the A/F attempts to disembark its A and have the F simultaneously move to a different space without supporting its A, and the F would lose its original sea space due to a move with support by units of other Powers, the disembarkation order will fail, even if the A could otherwise successfully disembark in the province to which it has been ordered. This is because the initial space in which the A/F was located is being occupied by an "attack," which disrupts the disembarkation; and also to be consistent with Sec. d. above. In any such case, the A will accompany the F in its ordered move, providing the F was ordered to a sea space. If the F was ordered to a land space, the GM will move the A/F to the nearest sea space in accordance with the Right-Hand Rule, if no Retreat orders are on file.
- f. However, if the A/F merely disembarks its A into a land province and then moves away without supporting the A, and the initial sea space is then occupied by another F or A/F of any nationality, which takes the space without support, the disembarkation succeeds. This is because a single unit moving without support could not have dislodged the A/F. The presumption is that there was no real "attack", and the disembarkation was completed before any other units entered the sea space.

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