

TGC (CP) vs Eqqman (Entente), 1914, OOB + RR

Game #2 Vs. TGC

Background:

This is the 5th TripleA WWI game I've started overall and a rematch vs. TGC. In the first game the CP navies in particular took a huge hit from the dice and failed to clean out the Italian, North Sea, and Canadian fleets. My overall plan was to try to keep Russia in the game at least long enough to have Americans appear in the Balkans, which happened. The Ottomans ended up ceding the Middle East early so I never lost the position of economic leader and TGC threw in the towel on round 10.

I first started playing the Milton Bradley original A&A release in high school with my buddies and have the board versions of Europe/Pacific 1940(2e), 1942(2e), and WWI here at home. I am coming back to TripleA after a roughly 10-year hiatus and currently WWI is my variant du jour. It is shocking to me how unpopular this variant appears to be so I hope that by giving a detailed blow-by-blow from my end the community at large might learn a bit more than they otherwise would from the game history. As a precursor to following along with this document, I recommend watching all of TGC's YouTube videos on the general strategy for each nation. And as a side note, since the expectation is that you are looking at the saved game file for this play session, you can see every move as it gets made, I will likely not highlight every single troop movement since my main focus is the overall strategy.

The Game Begins:

Round 1- Russia

TGC did his standard AH moves and the Italian navy failed to knock out even the AH Cruiser. My expectation is that on the following turn he may move to Constantinople to repair the BB and bring his Transport along. In the previous game, since he lost this battle and Serbia remained contested I was able to evacuate the Albanians out to Egypt, but this is impossible now and they will likely be eliminated AH-2. The stock play here will be to stack everything in Ukraine but I'll take a second to go over the options for round 1 attacks on the Ottomans.

If I hit Mesopotamia from Sevastopol and happen to win outright then the most likely outcome is I have 1i/2a remaining, to which I would then add 2i from India by sea on the UK turn. The Ottomans then have 7i/1a on the counter with 35% chance of outright victory. If this happens, I'm likely to score 2 hits. So if I include the 3 income gain I profit the equivalent of 5i/1a but lose 5i/2a so a -4 IPC loss. I actually don't mind losing money on fights when I'm the economic leader as I prefer to prevent my opponent from quietly building up stacks as much as possible. In this case, however, you will notice there is no follow-up. I've weakened a UK-1 move on Afghanistan and attacking Persia is now delayed

one round. So I wouldn't consider this move unless I was also willing to pair it with a UK-1 attack on Trans-Jordan, which I am not in this particular game since the Italian fleet has already been wiped out.

Last thing for me to consider is the Poland defense opening. This is only on the table *at all* for me because of the failed conquest of Romania. Whatever troops TGC feels are in excess in Romania on AH-2 cannot be moved into a newly attacked territory, so I only have to consider what happens based on the movement of the Galicia stack. Poland is in range by air from Berlin, so if I stack 21i/8a there the Germans will be massacred if TGC goes all-in, BUT this can be evened out if he then goes all-in from Galicia on AH-2. But if he does that he has to cover Galicia/Romania from whatever I've stacked Ukraine with, likely 10i/6a.

I don't think he would double-team Poland like that since he would have favorable odds to hurt the Ukraine stack AH-2 plus I would be forced to vacate Poland anyway as there will now be too many Germans. Attacking my 10i/6a with his 18i/4a/1f gives +6 IPC profit on average. I would then have to move Poland->Ukraine to wipe out this stack, giving me 28i/14a/1f (this includes attacking with fresh build in Moscow) on 10i/4a/1f. In this scenario I have 98% of totally crushing him. In this case I have around 19i/14a sitting in Ukraine that have to block 25i/9a/1f sitting in Poland plus maybe 16i/4a/1f in Romania or Galicia. In this case on R-3 I would probably move to Belarus as now I have to start dodging a possible double-team hitting my stack.

So right now this looks like my best play. But wait! What if TGC wargames this out and decides to weaken my move by attacking Poland G-1, knowing the troops get massacred? On average I will lose 9 units in Poland and he will be down to 1i/3a/1f. Now if I move everything from Poland into the Ukraine attack it's 19i/14a/1f, but I still have 92% odds of outright victory. Belarus will be empty so Germany can get it their next turn and Livonia will have 2i in it which may or may not get attacked by the 1i/3a Poland remnant. This still has the appearance of being a favorable outcome for me, so the big question is if he will go for the Poland double-team or not. I don't know TGC well enough to have a feel if such a move fits his style or not. But I will go for this play and let him show me if it was a bad idea or not.

BTW- something I will not consider discussing here is using the Sevastopol stack to attack Persia, with the objective of softening it up so that an outright win there is more likely UK-1.

Round -1 France

TGC has declined the Poland options but otherwise done his standard G-1 moves. Since I feel he has slightly less tolerance for killing off his men than I do (which, as the economic inferior, his men are more valuable than mine), I am predicting that he will not go for the trap of invading Ukraine although as discussed I am prepared for it if he does. My prediction then is that he leaves a covering force in Romania and stacks Galicia in AH-2.

The Entente had a spot of luck with a UK Transport surviving in SZ2. I have to use this to plan out how fast I can get the troops from Canada and the UK off to someplace useful, and where is the *most* useful place? I also have to decide if I want to use French or UK troops as the reinforcements I

need to clean the Germans out of Africa. I could activate Portugal and use those troops in Africa, however, this means the French Transports are not available to help clean out Canada. If I clean out Canada, then the onus is on the UK to send a little bit down from India, slowing the push on the Ottomans. I could also just not supply Africa for a turn or two and take the consequence of slowing down cleaning out the Germans. Given that Germany didn't take Poland, though, it feels better to press this economic advantage and keep full pressure on in Africa.

The French buy is pretty simple, mostly Infantry and maybe some Artillery to round off the last dollar or two. The French will be on defense a lot but I will need to attack once or twice so I can't get too deficient in Artillery. I will also buy Fighters but mainly to match TGC's buys. In my opinion he overbuys them as the CPs because they are an expensive unit that ceases to justify their costs once you have air superiority. If he wants to get into an arms race with me in the air, that works in my favor as the economic leader as I can afford such units more than he can. He may regret later being so heavy in air power when the lack of Infantry finally catches up with him.

At sea I have to be careful what I do since the AH fleet can come up from behind. While I predict he will move into the Black Sea, it may be wiser to shadow the French fleet given that he didn't lose the Cruiser and he could also have the Ottoman Cruiser follow in the same stack. So it may come down to a question of how much does he feel the BB needs to be repaired. I could also potentially hit the AH fleet with the French, but I feel this is unwise as the German fleet is an absolute must to clean out so the UK units in Canada and England aren't trapped forever up there. I will use the French fleet to evacuate Canada, this means that the French fleet will be tied up for quite some time so even after I manage to activate Portugal I won't be able to move those troops off that spot right away. Notice that by moving to Canada so that those troops can immediately board, I forfeit the chance to consolidate in SZ7 which would have allowed me the chance to push Germany away from England 1 turn earlier (minimal loss, since German retreat to SZ10 highly likely). In all honesty if I was going to pick out which Atlantic battle I had good luck in, I would take the North Sea, since I can take hits on the French BBs killing the German Subs and get those hits healed before they see action anywhere else.

On land, let's wargame what happens if the French go all-in on Belgium. The only reason to even consider this move is the fact having the Russian front vacuum up German soldiers means that in the first turn or two, the Germans have nothing behind their lines while the French do. The Belgians scored 2/4 hits, so I'm not facing the maximum possible German force here. On the French turn I'm 12i/4a/1f against 12i/6a, outnumbered but I do get guaranteed air superiority. On average losses he loses 7i and I lose 9i, so I'm down -6 IPC for that round. Now at this stage I could have 6i/2a in Burgundy and 7i/2a in Picardy.

Start with he goes all-in on Belgium. If he leaves 2 blockers behind in Alsace then it's 13i/9a/1f on 3i/4a/1f and he has 88% chance to wipe out the French, so we'll say that happens and he loses the 4 hits I get on average. Now we have 9i/9a/1f in Belgium, 2i Alsace facing off 13i/4a/1f on the other side. He'll have 2i/4a minimum on his follow-on wave while I'll have maybe 8i in mine. So now I'll be outnumbered *and* deficient in Artillery. It's best to cancel this plan. I'm willing to fight at a loss, but usually only if it means on the second round I come out ahead. So instead I'll leave blockers in Lorraine

and pile Picardy up. This goes against TGC's recommended French opener. His argument is that he pressures both Belgium and Alsace with this opener, which is true. So what happens if for some reason TGC leaves Alsace? If I move the French stack there I'm now at risk of the German stack moving to Picardy or hitting the much weaker reinforcements that moved into Lorraine. A more likely outcome is that TGC moves Belgium->Alsace and leaves blockers behind in Belgium. Now I'm not in a position to take advantage of a weakened Belgium because I have 8 units out of position in Burgundy. If I follow this path of going all-in Belgium and lose 2i to the blockers in Belgium, I'll have 18i/6a/1f in Belgium facing 20i/9a/1f in Alsace. Do I then leave blockers in Lorraine or move up the 6i/2a from Burgundy? Either way this doesn't set me up for an attack anywhere against the German troops since his stack is always larger than mine as my troops are getting spread out. I'd rather get my troops massed as soon as possible so I have more options. There's also a potential attack on Switzerland by the French I won't even bother to wargame out since I know already it's going to spread my forces out too thin.

Round 1-UK

Not much to say on the West Front regarding UK, as that all relies on how long it takes the French fleet to deal with the German navy. A question comes up if I want to try and hit the lone Ottoman Cruiser with the only UK one in range, but that's too much of a coin-flip for me so I decline.

In the Middle East, I could take Trans-Jordan or activate Arabia with enough reinforcements to maybe leave it contested if TGC chooses to attack O-1, however, either option requires the use of both Transports, which means a delay in clearing out Africa. Given that the German player has the best economy on the CP side and it's them in Africa, this has a higher priority for me in the initial rounds. So I will consolidate the fleet to cover CP activity (leaving the BB unavailable for Africa bombards, sadly) and use the Transports along the Indian Ocean SZs. Afghanistan gets hit with 5i/1a after I ship to Africa and Persia will get sacked UK-2. Since it will be slow getting the Canadians to Egypt, I don't want to start a big fight with the Ottomans there too early. In Africa I bounce around to try to make sure the Germans get no advantageous attacks while trying to make some of my own. For good reason TGC likes to try and clump up in areas not adjacent to the coast, so I should also look to try and blocking him getting to Rhodesia or French Equatorial Africa if I can.

Note that I'm forced to load the UK troops in Canada now to be able to move out on the French turn. This means that TGC could score quite a coup if he sent the German Cruisers in on a suicide mission and bagged all these men, but the odds calculator tells me he has a 0% chance of victory with this. If he scores a hit first on a French BB by sacrificing the AH Cruiser too, then his chances go up to 1%. So I feel pretty safe, but just to be extra careful I won't bother to pre-load the last 2 UK Infantry sitting in Canada. I can easily imagine a rookie player would take such a risk without checking the odds first.

Postscript: After finishing the move I reviewed TGC's UK opener to see how I compared. I had purchased bulk Infantry since I didn't want to spend too much on expensive units, but I overlooked the fact that the UK is very thin on Artillery in the Middle East and of course Fighters don't count for anything with no Artillery to support. With my purchase I'll have at best a 72% attack on Persia UK-2,

but if I had gone with TGC's buy of 4i/3a/1f I would have 91%, so definitely go with his build. I'll label this my first Bungle™ of the game, already happening before I finish the first turn!

Round 1-Italy

So Italy has one main goal: don't die. I have to be extremely circumspect with how I move as the Italians. With other powers on the Entente side I may allow battles that are not profitable, but I have to be extremely careful with this as Italy since if take a fight that costs me more than 5-6 Infantry, the losses cannot be replaced. With that said I will also be looking for ways to specifically boost Italy's income since as the weakest economic power in the game every IPC will help. On that score in this game, I'm behind the 8-ball since I lost the Italian Transport. I might have used the Libyans to take Spanish Morocco, but with that and Albania off the table I'm left with seeing what scraps I can pick up in Africa with the Somaliland Infantry. To that end I'll load him up on the UK Transport in order to get him down to Portuguese East Africa as walking will just take too long. This has a significant opportunity cost, however, since now I can't use that ship to get men out of India for quite a while. Speaking of ships, I do notice that the Ottomans did not leave SZ20, so this helps confirm my suspicions that the AH fleet is going to relocate to the Black Sea on turn 2.

A big question with Italy is if I should use it to blow open Switzerland or not. This first turn as mentioned is the only time the Germans are going to be stuck with what they got since nothing is behind their lines. If I go all-in on the Swiss and they do maximum damage then it's 10i/4a facing off against 11i/3a on the German side. TGC might go for this, but if he does then he hands me Belgium and I could put the whole French stack there and threaten Ruhr. The cost of this though is I lose Venice to AH forever. Even if he moved Belgium, Hannover, Kiel->Ruhr on G-2 I could still force it to be contested on G-3 so he loses the 6 IPC income. This would absolutely help Russia, but I think the net result would be that the CPs would just hold the line in the east until AH crushed Italy. Maybe if someone does TGC's French opener that leaves French stacks in Lorraine and Burgundy this attack is more viable since a push from Alsace would be more discouraged, but it's likely better to just wait and see if a time comes when Alsace just has blockers in it.

I'll depart from TGC's Italian opener by purchasing 1 Fighter as I feel every power needs to have at least 1, otherwise you can't take advantage at all of the Artillery bonus. After this it's likely just 100% Infantry for quite a while.

Round 1-USA

Conventional OOB wisdom seems to be that the US player should just attack Spain and then walk up to get to the Western Front. I think this is about the most inefficient use you can put them to since you're likely to only even get adjacent to CP troops by turn 8. Turn 8! Compare that to turn 5 if you do a Mediterranean shuck or turn 6 if you do a Belgium shuck. To quote the somewhat inarticulate Gen. Bedford Forrest, the winner is "the firstest with mostest". For me the Spain shuck is a better fit for players who are content to have giant stacks facing each other and no real fighting until one big clash at the end. I'd rather provoke fights and get pieces off the board as a game is much more manageable if your opponent doesn't have a stack of 50+ units or whatever sitting around. Especially true when I'm

the economic leader and can afford some losses. Consider also that if I just walk up to the Western front I'm essentially granting my opponent a free hand as they were also just going to send troops here anyway. It doesn't make much sense to me strategically to allow your opponent to just follow their own plans unimpeded.

All that being said, in this particular game what I'd like to do is... attack Norway! I choose this as my plan for two basic reasons: I can still count the games I've played against credible opponents on one hand, so I'd like to see something new (and I've already peeked at enough other players' games of just walking through Spain). The second reason is to see what TGC's reaction is to this. After a couple of chats with him he's expressed the view that if the CPs have fought the Russians enough that getting Moscow is an option, he will likely decline the revolution. If he declines the revolution then having 8 Americans a turn popping up in Scandinavia is going to be a big deal for him. In my last game even having 2-4 Brits a turn was a significant annoyance for the CPs. So the goal would be to pressure him to accept RR in circumstances where he normally wouldn't as soon as he sees troops pop up in Norway. If he does, then I can just immediately shift the shuck down to Picardy/Belgium and I haven't lost anything as I'll still have the +4 IPC income as I would have if I went to Spain at the outset. This is an example of a Xanatos Gambit, where all outcomes are favorable. In movie terms this would be where the villain claims that every move by the hero was actually part of the villain's plan all along.

The problem I'll have with this in this particular game, though, is that the Germans did a little too well in the North Sea so going up there will involve some risk. I'm going to have to suicide the Russian BB to try and get the last German Submarine out, so that the French get their best odds possible. I'm also moving the American fleet out just for laughs, I can move it back US-2 if I need to, and who knows, maybe TGC will go crazy and attack them to get the US into the war early.

Round 2-Russia

TGC did not take the bait anywhere. I have to force a fight somewhere, otherwise I risk having all the Russians taken off the board after RR with no loss to the CPs. And it is important I try to hit both the German and AH stacks as either one is a problem if it heads west unmolested, AND I need to try and make sure the two stacks never combine into the same space as an attack on the combined stack will just be a total waste of Russian lives, even by my standards. Well, like Alice, I try to believe three impossible things before breakfast.

So let's think through what happens if I stay in Poland and stack it so I have 31i/14a/1f. With my buy I would then have 17i sitting in Moscow. This would block the AH stack moving into Ukraine, unless he hits Poland with the German stack now to block its movement. After average dice on the German attack I'll have 16i/14a I can pull into Belarus R-3 and the Moscow stack is now maybe 23i or 24i. TGC would either have to attack one of these stacks (probably Moscow, since it's higher IPC value and smaller stack) or retreat as I would absolutely pile both of these stacks into Ukraine if that was an option he left me. Downside here is Moscow is now contested turn 4, I would prefer turn 5 (as this means Russia still likely gets a play on round 6, when US troops land somewhere). TGC doesn't like getting into disadvantageous fights (smart play when you're not the economic leader) but in this case I don't see

how he could avoid it as the only good option there is to not advance in neither Poland or Ukraine and the temptation to move into Ukraine is too strong. If he fails to push the front this turn, that also seems like a win for Russia.

I could also mirror the above situation and stack Ukraine, emptying Poland. In this case I would do slightly more damage to the AH stack than I would have to the German one, and I get the advantage that the German stack would still be 1 space farther away from Moscow than the AH would be if they advanced. So I get 1 extra turn to build up Moscow to block this stack. Plus I win either way on getting a fight. If he takes Poland and doesn't hit Ukraine to block my movement, then I hit the Germans and reduce their stack. If he does block my movement, then I reduce the AH stack. One downside here is that if I stack Ukraine, he could refuse battle and do the combined pile-up in Galicia, which I doubt he would do if I stacked Poland as explained. But this could still be helpful as the stacks aren't advancing.

A full all-in on Galicia should also be discussed as I am sure this is going to be very tempting for inexperienced players. Hey, it's right next to Vienna, right? Despite being right next to a CP capital the actual danger for Vienna at this point is zero. The situation is identical to being stacked in Poland, Germany can just pin down the troops in Galicia while AH runs right up to Moscow. Keep in mind, too, some of the quirks (good ones, IMHO) with the WWI rules. You're only forced to fight the first turn you move in, after that you can refuse battle all you like and act as movement blockers.

So with all that discussed, I will pick the stack Ukraine option to get the benefits already outlined. With that said, I'll quickly move on to the naval situation. It's really a big deal that the German sub is there in the North Sea as this changes the odds a lot if I attack, especially if I attack into a minefield. I'm not going to get into a review of all the possible odds combinations but basically, if he's sitting in a home minefield the odds are very bad for the French to beat the Germans solo. I will have to do a 1-2 punch or even 1-2-3 if I attack with the French, US, and Russian BB. Plus the AH navy still has to be covered in the Mediterranean. I really, really, don't want to have to buy ships, but it's 47% win for him if he attacks the French fleet, but only 16% if I pull that sub out. If I still want to shuck to Norway I need 2 different protection fleets if the Germans are not killed. I can combine the Russian and US fleets but as stated it's 47% win for him, and no reason not to go for it if a fat stack of US Transports is the prize. So I am going to suicide the Russian BB this turn on the hopes I get the 2/3 chance to take out the Submarine and I'm going to have to work on the assumption that the UK may need to buy a Cruiser to help clean out the Germans or defend the shuck.

Round 2- France

TGC moved as expected into Alsace. This is one of those times where it can be advisable to not leave a blocker behind, since there is no reason for me not to push into Belgium, blockers or no. So if the enemy is highly likely to move into a space where your blockers are doomed for sure, it's probably not worth having your men left there as they won't be the speed bump you might think they are. Now I will throw out an exception since any advice you ever get always depends on the state of the board. In my last game with TGC, I used a single American infantry to take an empty Bulgaria that was in Ottoman hands. This was despite knowing that a large AH *and* Ottoman stack were in Romania, so there was no reason for TGC not to move one of these stacks in there. I sacrificed the Infantry because my expectation was that TGC would use the AH stack to immediately reclaim the territory, which he did. This meant that Bulgaria was now permanently off the Ottoman's side of the income ledger, so this was worth it since my goal was crippling the Ottomans, not being a road block.

So on the Western Front there's no reason not to just move all-in on the empty Belgium. TGC will be aware that if he moves into Lorraine with his stack I will attack it and block his Ruhr troops with a Picardy->Belgium move. I'm curious what his plan is for the next few stages. There is no reason for me not to stack Belgium this round, meaning I will attack Ruhr for sure F-3 whether he stacked it or not. The only thing blocking going hard on Ruhr in F-3 will be if he hits Lorraine with his whole stack. However, if he does that, I could ignore this stack and *still* hit Ruhr. He really doesn't want me camped on a 6 IPC territory getting it's full income while he's only opened himself up to a pair of 2 IPC French territories. Since he went very light on supplying the Western Front I could even camp and hold Ruhr for a bit with less than my full stack. I plan for the Portuguese to end up in Egypt, but if he sparked a crisis by making the Lorraine move I would probably send them to France instead. So my prediction is a stack in Ruhr G-3, but I see nothing unfavorable in the other outcomes. He could do something crazy like hit the Swiss to try and make an early knockout blow on Italy, but that move has severe consequences for Germany so it seems like it would be out of character for him. Note also that his G-1 Fighter buy went to Russia, so it feels doubtful he would do anything aggressive in this area when I'm guaranteed air superiority on my response.

After I move all-in Belgium I need to drop the Canadians off in Africa. I would prefer to drop them off directly in Egypt but I need these ships to get the Portuguese out F-3. Notice that in the North Sea he only moved the BB out to get repaired. There's no hurry to move the Cruisers out this turn since I can't really hit them until F-3, so he has a chance to take advantage in case I get sloppy if they stay there. Not much else to say here, just need to move up the French fleet to counter the Germans, and I bought another Fighter to try and keep TGC in an arms race.

Round 2-UK

Because of my poor purchase last round I only have 35% to clean out Persia this turn, so I'm behind there if I skip this attack, which I probably should. Most Canadians are going to unload in Tunisia and walk to Egypt while the rest will activate Portugal.

In Africa TGC recommends bringing down two units from Egypt and two from India. I only brought down the two from India. I figured I didn't need them to kill the German troops, but it turns out I do need them to help restrict the German's moves so I can actually kill them off. Notice that I could pile everything into Angola at a loss, but he'll have an out to move to South West Africa on the next turn, so it doesn't seem worth taking a loss there right now. In the future I will likely make it more standard to send down the 4 extra units rather than the 2 I went with.

All I can do this turn is slowly constrict the Germans in Africa and hope I get some decent dice in the Middle East. I'm curious why TGC left the AH Transport by itself, maybe it's bait to get me to separate the UK Cruisers from the BB. My whole buy goes into India for the second time.

Round 2-Italy/US

The Ottomans risked sending their Cruiser over to Italy but lost it on a mine, I'm fairly certain this was done to sabotage my Transport activities in round 3. It will not be surprising then if the AH fleet also pays me a visit, but since the Ottomans didn't make it perhaps TGC might cancel this play.

I like getting the Italians a little piece of the Africa money, but without a Transport of their own, this is much harder to do. I'm going to need both UK Transports to shuck troops to Egypt so the ride to Portuguese East Africa is the best I'm going to be able to do this game. I'll keep my fingers crossed that TGC will leave me an opening to get Kamerun or South West Africa with Italy, but I won't hold my breath on that.

Still tempting to hit Switzerland this turn, but I'll pass rather than tempt fate vs. the Alsace German stack. Aside from moving troops up to the front, not much will be happening here this turn. I will pass again on buying anything with the US. I don't see much point in it, since it's not exactly a mystery I have to buy a bunch of Transports... or will I? Maybe I won't... or will I? The CPs are just going to be dying from the suspense. Some more random movements of the US fleet just to taunt TGC.

Round 3-Russia

No surprises from AH. You'll notice that by braving the mines I'm blocked from the Entente doing anything directly in Egypt by sea this turn and the blocker in Albania prevents me from picking it up with the UK men in Portugal if I attack and win at sea on the UK turn.

As outlined previously my basic plan is to now attack Poland, but it would behoove me to crunch some numbers again. I'm buying 7i/1f in anticipation of losing my existing Fighter in the air battle for Poland. I will leave the Sevastopol men as blockers but empty out Ukraine, so at the start of the next Russian turn there would be 17i/1f in Moscow vs. 33i/8a/1f in Galicia. On that turn I could buy 6i/1a so when he attacks Moscow on round 5 it's 33i/8a/1f (assuming the current Romania blockers don't come) on 23i/1a/1f. He'll have a 2% chance of outright victory, but on average I'll be left with 6i/1a against 21i/8a/1f. At this stage I just refuse battle and pile up whatever I can in Moscow until he captures it, but I at least get to play round 6 with Russia alive. That analysis assumed that I didn't toss any blockers out to forestall RR, so that issue is going to mess with these numbers a bit. Things are now a bit harder for

me since I messed up getting Persia on UK-2. Because of that, though, Mesopotamia is a bit thin on troops than it otherwise would be. If I go all-in on Persia, with average dice I'll end up with 15i/4a/1f left facing 6i that can only be reinforced by 3i. So I will have some small amount of UK troops to send north to act as Russian blockers but I'll go into that more on the UK turn.

Alright, so now Poland. Leaving out the man in Belarus that I counted as part of the Moscow defense, it's 38i/14a/1f on 31i/9a/1f, so with average dice and some rounding down on both sides I get left with 22i/14a facing 6i/9a (can't say who, if anybody, has a Fighter left). So, on the whole, this is a good deal for me. On my next turn, I can retreat out if needed to head for a soon-to-be-contested Moscow. I won't crunch the numbers on what happens if TGC decides to attack Poland with AH since I'll odds-on have enough survivors there after he hits it to still keep Poland contested, and this will block his forward stack movement deeper into Russia by another turn, so I'll take that as an acceptable outcome for me.

I should mention that I am sorely tempted to move enough men into Romania to at least leave it contested for sure on the AH turn, so that's 3 Infantry minimum. Sending enough men to conquer it outright is too much of a drain, the 2-Infantry blocker is pretty ideal for blocking off areas as it forces the opponent to move a very large stack in if they *really* want the territory. If I did contest it, he could easily just ignore it for a turn. Maybe if the UK was already sitting in Persia I would send the Sevastopol troops over with an extra Infantry backup since I can later cover that with UK troops, but I'll pass for now (side note, I did make such a move against TGC in our previous game, but he only had 1 Infantry in Romania though).

So my official move is hit Poland and shift the Moscow troops to Belarus so I have more potential options next round. My prediction for the AH response is the stack move into Ukraine. And just a quick recap on my overall philosophy, I'm just going where the average dice take me. If I get bad dice, then of course my game can go south very quickly. But if I lose after getting more bad rolls than I can recover from, I'd rather that happen sooner than later. I totally respect the alternate view of always waiting until things are overwhelmingly on your side before blowing the dust off your dice.

Round 3-France

Updating the Russia situation, I had 78% odds to clean out the German air (this includes both sides being eliminated) but didn't get it. So this immediately pushes up the potential damage from the German defense, however, with some rounding, both the Russians and Germans scored 1 hit below average. Germany moved their reinforcements into Poland and on their attack underperformed by 4 hits while Russia underperformed by 1. At this point I think the odds of AH making a minimal move into Ukraine and moving into Poland to clean out the Russian Artillery is highly probable.

In the West TGC decided to stay in Alsace, which is probably the only move that would keep me out of Ruhr this turn, since I value hitting his army more than raiding that territory, and if I go there he'll be at a slight advantage on the counter. The only question is if I should hit both Alsace *and* Ruhr (like, just to contest it) but that doesn't seem favorable enough. I'll sock Alsace knowing that I'm guaranteed air superiority for this attack. On average dice I net a 1 Infantry profit. I'm going to have to rely on dice

now to cover the Entente fleets, but *only* because I insist on hitting Norway in this game even though it's not favorable for it. In normal circumstances I could just park the French fleet in SZ9 and dare him to hit me in the minefields, but for my plan I need to clean him out. The AH fleet off Italy already stalls my landing troops in Egypt this turn. So I've got a major attack on land to hit Alsace with everything and a major attack at sea off Kiel where I could really use some luck. And since Germany is still buying Fighters, I feel obligated to do so as well.

Round 3-UK

So the French lost hard in the North Sea and effectively did no damage, plus the Germans performed above average in Alsace. From my viewpoint the game is pretty much now over and I lose unless TGC gets shellacked by the dice someplace or makes a critical error. I can drag it out for quite a while though as players can "not lose" for some time. The biggest collapse in my strategy is I have no way too keep CP troops tied down in an otherwise dead Russia via a northern shuck.

The biggest problem is that the men in the UK are going to be trapped for some time when I really need them on the Continent. And there's no combination of ships I can buy with the UK in one turn that won't give me better than coin-flip odds on offense or defense if I want to try and take the German fleet out again. My best option feels like buying warships for the US and doing the Spain shuck that I really despise. So the UK buy is going all-in on India this round, too.

Aside from that I need to slam Persia and send a little more down to Africa to help block the moves of the German mini-stack. I will also do a risky hit on Togoland since I'm annoyed at what happened at sea. Never a good idea to make decisions when you're emotional, ha!

BTW- at this stage, there are 12i/6a Ottoman troops in Trans-Jordan facing off a combined Entente stack of 8i/3a in Egypt. There are 9i/3a Entente troops that can hit Egypt next turn so I'm not sure if TGC will risk trying to damage these troops or not. I don't expect it, but he could. That play would be risky since I have a lot of pressure on Mesopotamia right now.

Sniff I just wanted to invade Norway, was that so wrong? *Sniff*

Round 3-Italy/US

Since the Germans are now too busy to oppose such a move, and I have Entente pieces in North Africa that can now land in Italy if needed to help shore it up, I'll make the Switzerland attack to boost the Italian income as much as I can, plus start walking the poor Somaliland Infantry around to see whatever scraps of German empire they can get in Africa. The Ottomans did an excellent job of dead-zoning the Middle East. I wasn't sure if TGC might risk a hit on Egypt even though I could reinforce it, since he had an 11% shot at taking it there, but I don't think such a play fits his style. Be that as it may it's a mistake to assume your opponent will *never* do anything, so always try to be sure you think through the consequences of some of the moves that seem more controversial. You never know if they actually figured out an Alesia, Austerlitz, or Inchon. I was on the fence to even bother leaving a blocker in Venice or not, since I will move into there with the Italian stack regardless of the CP troops that may

be present, so why risk losing a man for nothing, but who knows, maybe there's a tiny chance he would move a German in there if I left it empty.

The French disaster means I'm now forced to buy warships this turn as the US just in order to at least match the German fleet. As discussed I don't have enough Entente navy to cover 2 stacks of Transports. If he stays in the North Sea I can park the Americans in SZ8 and block him going around to reach into the Atlantic, so it will not surprise me if he therefore does not stay in the North Sea. My initial attack on Spain will be a 10x size force, the minimum I think you need to be sure to knock it out on 2 turns so I have to get 5x Transports this turn as well.

Round 4-Russia

AH moved in to Poland to clean out the Russian Artillery as expected. I am surprised he didn't spare the single Infantry to move into Ukraine, but I suspect he did that to make sure it gets added to the German income. The question now is do I stack any border territory *at all*. AH has 11% chance to eliminate my whole stack on one round if he hits it, which goes up to around 80% depending on how much damage Germany does if he decides to sacrifice what he has left over there. Livonia is a nice place to make such a stack since it's farther away from key areas of the board if he goes hard there, however, that means I can't attack Ukraine with these men if I need to on my next turn. I do know that Russia is guaranteed a play on round 5. If I turtle now and let him walk into everything I *may* be able to block RR on round 6 by tossing everything into a single battle since he'll only have 3 Moscow-bordering territories. I'll also move the Sevastopol blockers to Tatarstan since I plan to move the UK troops there to take their place, at least for 1 round. Given that the French underperformed just enough in Alsace, he now has enough to have a nonzero chance of totally wiping out that stack, which defeats my whole plan since now I can't outmatch him in reinforcements. This also includes the fact that the massive French defeat means there was no 1-turn buy I could have made for the UK that included Transports and warships that had decent enough odds of surviving a German attack. My plans asked for average dice, I didn't get them in enough critical spots so my plan is a failure. I'm actually ready to throw in the towel right now, but I will at least play out to the end of the Italian turn to see if I get any dice swings my way that would keep this game viable (or more specifically, viable in my eyes).

Round 4-France

Avoiding combat and redirecting the troops bound for Egypt to Italy instead. TGC bought his first tank, and unfortunately France alone doesn't have the income to keep up with Germany in both Tanks and Fighters, so I'll have to alternate buys on those. He was generous enough to leave Alsace contested so I can return the favor and avoid having to leave blockers in Lorraine this turn.

Round 4-UK

Continue to squeeze the Germans in Africa, so the stack in the south can now no longer decline combat. Major stack moved out of Middle East to Sevastopol so I at least have options next turn, although having those units stay in Russia is unlikely. It's a big debate on if I should put a little money aside every turn to build up a fund to make a large naval drop, but I will instead pressure the Ottomans

and let the US deal with the German navy. If I take Spain and only shuck 4-6 units to Europe a turn I could have some money left over to go on the attack at sea. Having to cover 2 spots is a huge issue as I can't just assume TGC will or won't take a chance.

Round 4-Italy/US

Not much to say about the Italian turn. I'm obligated to retake Venice, and for some reason when I ran my calculations previously, I didn't account for the two extra Germans that could be moved in to help defend it, so that drops the profit I make from this attack a little bit below what I might have accepted. No help for it now, though, as it's not exactly something I can back out of. Note that I won't bother sending in my 1 Fighter just to likely get killed. African French troops are now in Italy so I can use them to reinforce Venice or cover Switzerland as needed. Italy is at least guaranteed to pick up Kamerun next turn.

The USA just invades Spain. If TGC allows it, I will have to use the US ships to try and chase him back into the North Sea. I may even need to buy a Submarine to try and force him to keep the Transport covered.

As a matter of interest, I'll review some of the options of what you can do if you're in the "Pro-Spain" camp. The best force you can hit them with exactly on round 4 is a mix of 10 units, which means you have to buy 5x Transports plus two additional land units no later than round 3. Assuming the defending Artillery in Spain always hits and you have the BB along to bombard, using 6i/4a gives 5% chance of outright win, but if you go for a Fighter buy then 6i/3a/1f gives 6% chance, so I don't see much reason not to try this.

Now here's an interesting quirk. Before A&A 1914 ever released and we were getting sneak peeks at the rules, I was wondering "why wouldn't the USA just buy nothing but Battleships until at war? Even if you send men off on suicide landings the BB hits should still make it worth it to reduce a stack." Presumably the answer to this question is the pre-attack hits that defending Artillery get- *if* they are present, though. So the US has enough money to stage an attack of 6i/3a/1f, but it also has exactly enough money on round 3 to buy 3 BBs and still ship over the starting 6i/2a. An attack of 6i/2a plus 4 BBs turns out to have a 12% chance of an outright win- double what you get from sticking with your starting navy! These extra BBs are still useful post-Spain if you envision needing to invade or re-invade places in the Med or wherever throughout the game, or you need to pack a punch if CP navies still need to be cleaned out as they do in this game. If I had run these numbers earlier I might have gone with this buy in this situation here. I won't claim the 4 BB buy should be a standard US move, but it may be a better option than it appears on first blush in some situations.

Even though it won't happen here in this game, I'll lay out my schedule for a potential Norway shuck in case a reader wants to attempt to try it in a different game. One of the issues with planning this out is that you naturally want to bring in as many of the starting men as you can, and there isn't much choice about that anyway when you want to hit one of the 4 IPC neutrals. So the follow-on waves are necessarily smaller since you have to split your income between buying Transports and ground units. In the listings below, I'll list 4 numbers followed by the buy for that turn. The first is the number of

Transports moving from the USA to Ireland. Next are the ones moving from Ireland to Norway. Following that comes the movement from Norway back to Ireland, and last is the final leg of Ireland to the USA. Note again that these buys don't cover dealing with any CP naval threat. This also assumes that Norway goes down turn 5 and the income from it is collected that turn. If it isn't, enough is saved from the previous turn to cover it.

Turn 3: have \$60, buy 5x Transport, 1a/1f for \$39

Turn 4: 5, 0, 0, 0, buy 3x Transport and 6x Infantry for \$36

Turn 5: 3, 5, 0, 0, buy 2x Transport and 4x Infantry for \$27

Turn 6: 2, 3, 5, 0, buy 2x Transport and 3x Infantry for \$24

Turn 7: 2, 2, 3, 5, buy 8x Infantry since Transports are back from Norway

Turn 8: 4, 2, 2, 3 (+1 that stayed behind), buy 8x Infantry

Turn 9: 4, 4, 2, 2, buy 6x Infantry 1x Transport

Turn 10: 3, 4, 4, 2, buy 6x Infantry 1x Transport

Turn 11: 3, 3, 4, 4, buy 8x Infantry

At this stage you have a couple of options. Slowly continue to build up the fleet until you have the 16x Transports required to do a constant 8x Infantry shuck, or, take the times when only 3x Transports depart as an opportunity to work in more expensive units into the mix. I would recommend the latter as players with only Infantry at their disposal have far less options for what they can do.

Round 5-Russia

The CPs are split between Livonia and Ukraine. My main worry here is finding a way to reduce AH units. Doing this on the Ukraine stack would be suicidal unless I was going to maybe follow this up with the UK, but if I do that I forfeit my ability to reduce the Ottomans, and I have to trade Russia for the Ottomans.

If I move on Livonia AH will have 78% chance to win immediately in Moscow with what I can move in there to defend it. *If* I get that 22% chance, I could move in maybe an extra 10 units that survived Livonia *if* the Germans don't try to attack these survivors on their turn, which they might not, since they would be disadvantaged.

I could also turtle in place and offer RR. From TGC's comments he would be more likely than not to refuse it, but I'm sure he wouldn't rule it out completely as an option. If RR happens now, on the German turn, 15 IPC comes off the Entente income giving 101 (Entente) against 96 (CPs). If I adjust this based on the likely minimal shifts in income (Entente, +Spain, +Africa, CPs, -Africa, reclaim Alsace) this is 108 against 97, so I can increase my position by very roughly 3.5 Infantry per turn. If I correct for the ships, the CPs have an 18-Infantry advantage over me, and if I correct for the UK units trapped in Britain

then it's a 33-Infantry advantage! Now look at all the units that are currently within 2 spaces of Venice on the Entente v AH sides only. Entente has 25i/8a/1f facing 25i/6a/2t/3f and AH has more than twice the economy of Italy and no longer needs to send units to Russia. AH has another 24i/6a/1f that will be at the Italian border in 3 turns, so the Entente loses Venice completely on turn 8 as no significant force of French or Americans can possibly reach that space before then. At this stage I will be forced to be walking 100% of the American forces from Spain over to Italy to prop it up, but Italy and America's combined income will be roughly the same as AH's, so I don't see how Italy isn't crushed in this scenario as France will be too busy to help. The only real move to block this is to sacrifice the UK position in the Middle East by using the Sevastopol troops, which will only tie up AH for 2 rounds tops, which doesn't seem worth it. "Penny-wise and pound-foolish", as the saying goes.

So in my opponent's place I would certainly take RR if that was an option. If he rejects it, I doubt he would attack Moscow with the Germans. In this case Moscow could probably hold out until turn 8 quite easily after he goes all-in with AH. This would be an unwise play in my book since getting greedy for those 6 Moscow IPCs trades away the CPs' biggest advantage, time, plus it allows me to reduce the AH stack in Russia.

Note that I can also stack Belarus since the buy for Moscow can hold out against a German attack (7% German win with the troops pulled out of Tatarstan, but 38% if I don't). Then he can take Moscow with a near certainty turn 6 with AH and just camp there, or, hit the pile in Belarus to stop the Russians from making mischief which will likely then also set the fall of Moscow to turn 8 or later. I'm extremely tempted to play chicken and see if he goes for RR now and not do the stack on Belarus. With the Belarus move he could decide to sacrifice all the Germans and pin down the Russian stack to allow AH to take Moscow turn 6 and then pull back to finish off the Russian stack turn 7. So, quick review: turtle, risk of RR which to me offers CPs fastest victory. Attack Livonia, 78% chance to lose Moscow turn 6. Attack Belarus, 100% chance to lose Moscow turn 6 unless my opponent doesn't want to risk the Germans. So it seems like the Livonia attack is perhaps my best move since it's the only one that doesn't rely on my opponent doing something in particular as a response. But, I've seen that TGC doesn't seem to like sending men into a losing battle even when it gives him a tactical advantage. So *maybe* he'll use AH and not Germany to pin the Russians. The least risky move seems to be Livonia but I'll do Belarus just to see if there are indeed cases where TGC will let his men be used as a sacrifice.

Round 5-France/UK

At this stage it should be obvious the CPs are ahead in every metric by the end of turn 6. France cannot hold back Germany solo and neither can Italy/US hold back AH. UK can meddle in Russia only at the cost of Ottoman expansion. The German fleet is right where it needs to be to interfere with US assistance, so there's an argument to be made that maybe I should have foregone planning a round 4 attack and just did a mass Cruiser buy to chase down these German ships. If I had the ability to get the UK troops off Britain *now* I might consider that this could be turned around, but as it is, it will be far too late before I can do anything useful with them. The reasonable play here is to pull the French back to Lorraine and forfeit Belgium. I'm on the fence as to the best use of the troops in Piedmont, move to Switzerland with the whole stack, or leave blockers and so to Venice? He is highly unlikely to hit Venice

next AH turn as it is, so I could be safe moving that stack up. Instead I will “burn the house down” and just attack everywhere with both France and UK to see if I get any miracle dice rolls. As it is I’m already taking this game as a loss so no reason not to.

[Post Rolling]

Fighting in the Middle East went ok, but I didn’t so well enough in France to make it worth continuing. A safer route would have been to gamble in the Middle East only and hold the line in France as discussed. Either way, the Entente naval disasters and my mistakes on the UK1 turn are too much for me. Thank you for reading these notes, and I hoped you learned something, even if it’s what not to do!