

Grand Campaign – Der Weltkrieg – Centenary Game

GT160: 23 – 26 June 1916 (6 June)

General Situation

A secret meeting in the Foreign Ministry in St Petersburg on 25 June heralded a potentially decisive diplomatic development. In the presence of the French and British Ambassadors and Military Representatives, a delegation of Ministers, Diplomats and Military Representatives from Romania signed the Protocols of St Petersburg. These agreed that Romania would within 21 days sign a Treaty with the Allied Powers and declared a further intention (to be confirmed in the Treaty) to declare war on Germany and Austria Hungary on or before 21 July 1916.

Romania had been very impressed by the results of the Brusilov Offensive and had rushed to offer its aid. The delay was now related only to the slow process of getting the Romanian Army mobilised which unfortunately would not be a secret.

The Eastern Front

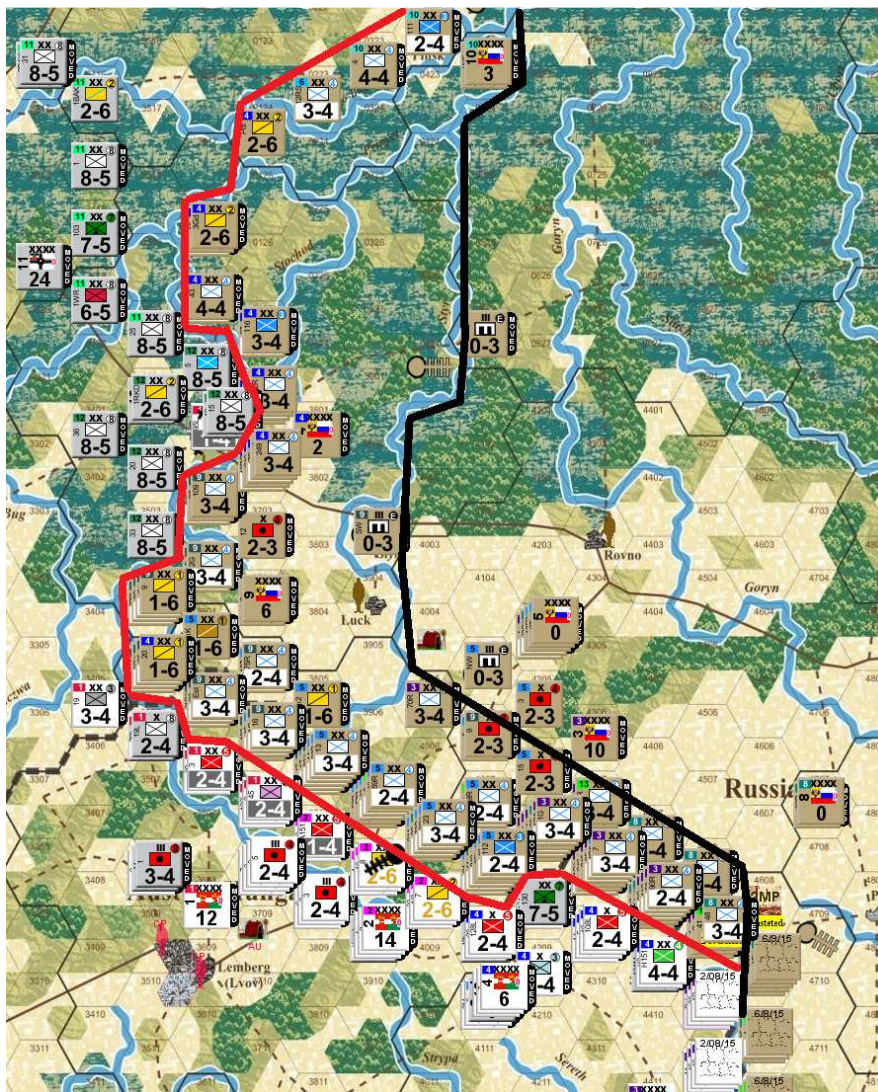


Figure 1: Russian advances as a result of the Brusilov Offensive, 7 - 26 June 1916.

By about 25 June, the Russian advance against the front in Volhynia was about 100 kilometres at its maximum and over a 200 kilometre front they had advanced everywhere nearly 40 kilometres.

The Russians had come up against stronger German defences around Kowel where they had stopped but the situation of the Austrian front was very bad and in retrospect it is generally agreed this attack had shaken the Hapsburg regime to its very foundations. Everywhere the Russian Armies began crossing the Empire's frontier on 25 – 26 June and the events of 1914 were brought to mind, especially in Lemberg where the inhabitants were put in a panic by rumours, which were correct, that the Russians were in Brody (5-5.3907).

The situation for the Central Powers' in the East was also deteriorating further north. There the Germans had been retiring once again back on their railheads and additional Russian advances were expected.

The Balkans

The prospect of Romanian entry into the war meant that the conflict would expand into a large new region. The Russians had nothing guarding their southern frontier. A regiment of engineers had been sent down to the vicinity of Vulcanesti (6-6.2507) in order to survey the crossings of the Danube and Prut. They discovered the existing railway ended in a building site that had been half swallowed by a swamp.



Figure 2: The Russian - Romanian border in southern Bessarabia, 23 - 26 June 1916.

At the other end of the Balkans there was fighting on 24 June as the French 34th Division was forced to defend some crossings of the Pcjina River near Kumanova (7-6.1307). Most of these affairs were small skirmishes but the Austrian 8th Division made a more determined attack than the Bulgarians and they briefly captured a bridge at Tabanovtse (7-6.1307) before being driven back by a French counterattack.



Figure 3: Central Powers attacks between Kumanova and Tabanovste, 23 - 24 June 1916.

The Near East

Supported by a strong river flotilla, Maude's command was on 24 June about 60 kilometres upstream from Kut and little more than 100 kilometres from Baghdad. There had been no sightings of the enemy but even so this modest advance was starting to strain the logistics of the British Imperial Expeditionary Force.

In the Caucasus, Yudenitch had taken over direct command of the IV Caucasus Corps after becoming exasperated at the passive opposition of its former commander.¹ This had delayed a Russian offensive but it would not prevent it so Yudenitch insisted.

The Western Front

Allenby finally admitted to the additional casualties suffered in the recent attack on Hamelincourt (5-3.1009). His reputation was then at a nadir. The whole British Army was paused in its offensive operations and Haig and his subordinates struggled to identify realistic objectives which the resources of their command could attain. The Germans and the French kept quiet too.

¹ Player Note: *The rules do not explain if and how Corps HQ can be removed from the map except by elimination. This is unofficial but I consider Army HQ should be able to reabsorb the Corps HQ that they can create as if it were a supply transfer operation.*

The Italian Front

The slow recovery of the Italians after 4th Isonzo continued. The Hapsburg watchers on the wall of mountains which encircled the Italian front remained patient.

DM Summary – June 1916

Nation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Food Deficit	Month	Total [SM%]	Morale
Germany	9	4	20	16	3	-		12	64	1296	Good
Austria-Hungary	-	-	22	-	7	1		1	31	550	Shaken
Ottoman	-	-	-	-	-	-		-	-	76	Good
Bulgaria	-	-	1	1	-	-		-	2	23	Good
Central Powers	9	4	43	19	11	1		13	98	1948	
France	14	-	4	8	4	1		-	31	768	Good
Great Britain	-	11	12	-	14	-		-	37	326	Good
Russia	1	-	*14	5**	3	-		-	23	786	Shaken *Pinsk and **Luck recaptured
Italy	-	-	-	-	-	-		-	-	99	Good
Belgium	-	-	-	-	-	-		NA	-	(105)	NA
Serbia	-	-	(2)	(2)	-	-		NA	(2)	(39)	NA
Entente	15	11	30	13	18	1		-	91	1965	

Player Notes

CP:

- East: The Brusilov Offensive continues to apply pressure and has forced me to fall back an additional 40km into AH territory. Even his limited attacks enjoyed impressive results causing me 7 hits to 3 against. It leaves AH 1 hit short of Shaken Morale. I am at a point where it suits me to actually be at that level. One more hit against AH and I could have started to move German divisions into the open territory to the south where they can manoeuvre and attack. Further north, the Germans continue to withdraw. Russian northern armies are weak and have been reliant on the GTL to protect them, so I can weaken my own northern armies to reinforce the south; which I started to do last turn already in anticipation of providing relief to AH. Russia is running out of supply and – for a reason I cannot fathom less they fear they may need to support the Romanian flank should they join the TE in July – have most of what is left stockpiled to the south on the Romanian frontier. It would not suit him to attack me here as I am protected by river and trenches. I can only surmise it is forward planning to encourage Romanian entry.*

- *Balkans: I opt to make an AH led attack on the forward French division here. I will cause only 1 hit and likely take 2 in return, but it will ensure that AH starts the next turn at Shaken Morale; which, as I have stated, bizarrely is what Germany is hoping for.*
- *West: This front was carnage again with a British attack which resulted in 11 hits to only 3 against Germany. His British are slowly trying to attrition me but such outcomes I can deal with. As a result, I do little more than reinforce the 13th Army with supply to support this length of the front.*
- *Caucasus: The expected central attack did not materialise even though every preparation was made for it. This enables me to slightly reinforce the threatened sector and also to move reserves into a more central location.*
- *Mesopotamia: Quiet.*
- *Palestine: Quiet.*
- *Italy: Quiet.*

AP: Having reached the point where Austria is at Shaken Morale (took 160 turns with an average of about 3.44 DM per turn), I relax slightly.

Brusilov is running short of supply but he has done enough to get across the Austrian frontier. That is a bad blow to AH in itself because two more CP food resources will stop producing now. The CP is very sensitive to invasions of their own territory and with imminent Romanian entry (5 July), this will hurt the CP more than anything.

I am getting a bit concerned for the state of the CP. They need some kind of strategic reserve very quickly now to punish the Russians for what they have done and preferably bring them to a state of Economic Collapse before or at least soon after the Austrians. They will also need to have the offensive force to deal with Romania which will otherwise eat the CP's food. They also need to bear in mind the Austrian Rail Network is not the best particularly in Eastern Transylvania.

I must not feel too concerned for the CP. Here is how much DM I need to inflict or avoid suffering to get a result. It is always worth checking this sort of thing from time to time.

Type of Victory	CP DM (Morale)	AP DM (Morale)	
Central Powers Decisive Victory	-	-	Not possible after 1914
Central Powers Substantial Victory 1916		France 432 or Britain 1124	
Central Powers Marginal Victory	Germany < 1254		Only possible in 1919
Entente Marginal Victory 1916	Germany 754 or AH 150		
Entente Substantial Victory	Germany 1604 Or AH 450	France < 682 or Britain < 1224	Only possible in 1919
Entente Decisive Victory 1916	Germany 754 Or AH 150	France < 282 Or Britain < 974	

These figures are more Morale or how much DM there is left to play with. There are different figures for games (as this one might) which will end in 1917 – 18. A 1916 victory is probably unlikely now but not impossible. For the Entente I could win if I could in the remainder of this year (ignoring Britain) inflict 150 DM on Austria or 754 DM on Germany without suffering 432 DM on France first. It would be a decisive victory if France's DM rose by less than 282.

These figures define the acceptable loss ratios between different powers. In June 1916 so far the ratio of German versus French losses is 64:31 that is better than it needs to be for me. On that basis I can consider recent actions to have been successful in improving my longer term prospects.