

ARDA

12 June 1980

M.N. RECAT ISSUE #1

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RECATORIZATION OF THE MILLER NUMBERS

As I'm sure you all know, the Miller Numbers were designed by Don Miller for variant games, just as the Boardman Numbers are for regular games. The form of these numbers is identical, except that the MNs have a lower-case suffix denoting the type of variant.

For several years, off and on, there has been expressed grumbling and dissatisfaction with the MN designators. I personally have no difficulty with them the way they are, and I have now and then expressed the sentiment that they ought to be left alone. However, a lot of people would rather change them and I would never say they are wrong in wanting to do so. The current Miller Number Custodian, Greg Costikyan, wants them changed, and he's the Boss.

During this same period, recat schemes have cropped up. Conrad von Metzke, Fred Davis, and others proposed one system a number of years ago...but that was tied with an internecine variant hobby feud which was going on at the same time, and so came to nothing. Robert Sacks has also proposed a scheme but nobody got excited over that, either. I believe other ideas for new MN designators have been proposed. All of these started from the premise that the designator should be in some way descriptive of the game. The form was pretty much the same also: one or two letters followed by one or two numbers.

Not too long ago, Greg Costikyan suggested a scheme of his own. This, too, was descriptive of the game...very descriptive. In order to gain this advantage, the system frequently led to long strings of alphameric characters and symbols. My reaction to Greg was negative...doubly so, since Greg would like to see NAVB and the MNC use the same designator system. (Part of my objection was based on my personal and idiosyncratic desire that any designator I use would have to be typed entirely without using the shift key.) I would guess that the reactions of others were also negative...in any event, Greg apparently abandoned that proposal.

Meanwhile, I had designed the NAVB Catalogue Numbers. These are also descriptive of the games. My intent was to use them exclusively for the purposes of this Bank. My desire was to create a system which would help people order variants without ever actually having seen them...hence the very important (to me) numerical designator at the end for the number of players needed. It was also my intent to assign NAVBNs only to games in my current "active" catalogue...that is, only to games for which I was prepared to provide copies.

I knew that somebody would suggest using these numbers for the new MN designators. I did not want to involve myself in the frequently bitter arguments which have occurred on this subject previously, so part of my intent was to design a system which seemed to me unsuitable for the MN's purposes. Sure enough, the suggestions came up anyway...but among those suggesting we use the NAVBNs for MN designators was Greg himself. I demurred; I was even a little hostile. I told Greg I had no interest in becoming involved in the Recat tangle, that I would make no changes or adjustments in my system, and so on. He persisted, anyway. He would use my numbers as designators, dropping only the "number-of-players" indicator at the end. That seemed reasonable...and undeniably there is an advantage to both of us using the same numbering system. People who see a variant postal game and like it will know enough of the NAVBN to order it.

So the issue of what system to use for Recat is settled. There remains only the practical issue of meshing the NAVBNs with the MNCs...which means, primarily, insuring that there is an equivalent NAVBN for every MN designator. This in turn means a reversal of my previous policy of assigning NAVBNs only to games in my active catalogue.

Now we come to the problems. First problem: When Greg took over the MNC position from Robert Sacks, he inherited the somewhat involuted structure Robert had given the custodianship. He also inherited Robert himself, who became "Associate MNC" for various things, including "Projects". That means Recat. When Greg stated he wanted to use the NAVBNs, Robert immediately wanted to assemble a committee to consider the matter. I replied that I would have nothing to do with any committee. Robert then recommended that the entire matter be deferred until he could get his committee. Greg, however, at the same time, directed that we would go forward with Recat using the NAVBNs as a basis. Robert then replied that he had a lot to do and would be too busy to get with the program until his vacation in mid-July, at which time he would conduct a thorough study of the matter. My response was to wonder, what's to study? Perhaps some decisions will have to be made, such as whether to go all the way back to renumber all historical variant games. In any event, I have suggested to Greg that he ought to define very closely what Robert's duties are, and further suggested that his primary duty ought to be to provide me with the information I will require to provide NAVBNs for every extant MN designator.

In the meantime, I will carry the progress of Recat, primarily from my end of the project, in ARDA. I caution against using any of the designators I assign, since Greg has not officially adopted them yet. I have suggested to him that the official change-over date ought to be 1 January 1981, although

presumably games begun before that date could use either form of the MN they wished. Thus, for instance, the Dual Space Dip. game in BUSHWACKER would be 1980Aje, as it is now, or could be 1980Acd04 (or 1980Acd05 if it's using the "Gibraltar Rule"...which is it using, Fred?).

Anyway, I am going to need a lot of help in this matter, whether it comes from Robert (as it properly should) or from others. I have already written Greg (with copies to Fred Davis, Lew Pulsipher, and Mark Berch) requesting copies of all issues of LORD OF HOSTS I don't have (I have: 8. 9, 10, 79.2, and 80.1). I will also need copies of (preferably) or thorough information about (if that's all I can get) a number of variant games which have MN designators but no NAVBNs and no copies in my files.

In addition to continuing to make requests of Greg and his deputy, I will be using ARDA to publicize my needs in this matter. I will also keep you all informed of my progress. I do not intend to wait for whatever it is Robert plans to do...he has said nothing on this project which was not (a) negative, (b) dilatory, or (c) vague. Therefore:

RECAT
Phase 1

I still have a pretty complete run of Don Miller's 'zines, and of course he was the first MNC. My intent will be, ultimately, to provide a NAVBN (or more) for every extant MN designator. These currently run at least as high as jh (Holocaust), and there are many, many gaps in my list and in my records. Don's lists run as high as ce (Scotice Scripti II), and he provides detailed information through about ao or so. Beyond that...well, you'll see. What follows is a complete listing of MN designators from a to co. I have managed to determine NAVBNs for most of them. There are also notes where appropriate.

There will be 3 columns. First, the MN designator. Second, the NAVBN, not including the "number-of-players" indicator (which Greg won't be using). If there is an asterisk (*) in front of the NAVBN, that only indicates this is a number I have specially assigned for purposes of Recat only; the * is not part of the Number. Third, the name of the game, plus notes if appropriate.

- a rto2 Team Game, 3 x 3 (no Turkey)
- b *cc04 Superdip.
- c *rf01 5-Man Dip. (1961 Rules) [add new subcategory under R. f: Fewer than
7 players per the Rulebook]
- d *rf02 6-Man Dip. (1961 Rules)
- e tw01 Middle-Earth Dip. II
- f rb02 Anonymity I/II [Probably includes both games.]
- g re01 Economic Dip. I
- h rt01 Team Game, 3 x 3 (no Italy)
- i uu06 Mythomacy II
- j *rt03 Team Game, 3 x 3 with Wild Card Player I (Italy)
- k ts03 Mordor Versus the World I
- l rsl6 Twin Earths Dip. I
- m ts04 Mordor Versus the World II
- n rs05 Chaos I
- o cn02 9-Man Dip. I
- p rs01 Anarchy I
- q *cc05 Morglay
- r np01 Indianomacy II
- s pe03 Game of the Clans

t ta01 Middle-Earth Dip. IV
 u *rt04 Team Game, 3 x 3 with Wild Card Player II (England)
 v *rf03 Napoleonic Dip. (I) (Calhamer 5-Man Dip. (1977 Rulebook))
 w *cn06 Cline 9-Man Dip. I
 x cn03 9-Man Dip. III
 y rn04 Micro-Dip.
 z *rx06 2-Man Dip. I (no Turkey)
 aa *qh06 Imperialism VII
 ab ar04 Princeps
 ac *qpl6 Imperialism VIII
 ad *ec02 Open Door
 ae *rx07 World War I Dip. I
 af -- Parlement [not a Diplomacy variant; see discussion below]
 ag re02 Economic Dip. II
 ah ct01 Team Game, 3 x 3 with Wild Card Player III (Germany)
 ai rb11 Lebling Variant
 aj *ts08 Mordor Versus the World III
 ak *re04 Economic Dip. III
 al *rm19 Simulation Dippy I
 am qh01 Imperialism VII-R
 an *hb05 Europe 1650
 ao *pw01 Italy 1500 [add new subcategory under P. w: Italy.]
 ap *cb10 3 x 3 Dip. with 2 Wild Card Players (no Russia) [4 players]
 aq *ag05 Imperialism IX
 ar *rt05 Team Game, 3 x 3 with Wild Card Player IV (Russia)
 as *rx08 2-Man Dip. II (no England)
 at gp06 Imperialism VIII-R [also Imperialism VIII-RR]
 au cn01 Omnibus Dip.
 av rv03 Hyperspace Dip. II
 aw sa01 Foundation Game I
 ax *cb09 Simulation Dippy II [Apparently there are no actual rules for this.]
 ay rv08 Anarchy III
 az *ug08 Space War
 ba Xeno [also (mis-)spelled Zeno; no information on this one.]
 bb rn05 Multiplicity
 bc Cryptodip. [no info on this McCallum game.]
 bd *ac06 Imperialism XI
 be mb01 Imperialism X
 bf *rt05 [Same game as AR, above.] [Misdésignated Team 3x3 V.]
 bg re05 Supereconomic Dip. [New #; I have recovered the rules for this.]
 bh Brave New World [See note on Peery games below.]
 bi pn01 Hundred Years' War
 bj [Griffin-]Peeriland Caper [See note on Peery games below.]
 bk rd01 Kriegspiel Dip. I
 bl *cb11 3-Man Dip. (3x3x3 on 9-Man board)
 bm rml4 Blitzkrieg Dip.
 bn *gf06 Das Dippenspiel
 bo Peerijavo Caper [See note on Peery games below.]
 bp Godawful Game [See note on Peery games below.]
 bq *tb17 Key's Rule Dip.
 br Hyperspace Dip. II½ [See note on Tretick games, below.]
 bs Hyperspace Dip. III [See note on Tretick games, below.]
 bt *ge02 Hypereconomic Dip. I
 bu xm01 Youngstown Variant II
 bv -- Parlement, Revised [not a Diplomacy variant; see discussion below]

bw Hyperspace Dip. V [see note on Tretick games, below.]
 bx Diplomatic Monopoly [see note on Peery games below.]
 by Der Turnerschnitzel (2001 A.D.) [see note on Peery games below.]
 bz hc03 Verrat
 ca cb04 Variation C
 cb ls01 Continent
 cc cd01 Aberration I
 cd ca01 Aberration III
 ce ts05 Mordor Versus the World IV
 cf rn01 Air-Sea Dip.
 cg nu01 All-American Dip. below]
 ch -- Parlement, Midlands Variant [not a Diplomacy variant; see discussion]
 ci hn03 Napoleonic Dip.(II) [by McDuffie; new designation...I have
 recovered rules and map.]
 cj cc01 Aberration IV
 ck *pi03 Scotice Scripti II
 cl *ts09 Mordor Versus the World IV½
 cm ge01 Hypereconomic Dip. II
 cn ag01 Imperialism IX-R
 co *cd10 Abstraction I.

So far so good.

Notes:

1. PARLEMENT. Designed by Charles Wells, this game is not really a Diplomacy variant. It has simultaneous action, in common with Diplomacy, but that's all. Instead of a diplomatic/war game, it is designed to be a simulation of parliamentary government in a multiparty environment. Because the game appeared in a Dippy 'zine, it got a Miller Number. I would be interested in contrary (or supporting) opinions...if you send any, please send a carbon to Greg. If Greg wants a designator for each of the 3 Parlement games, I'll provide one.

2. PEERY GAMES. My old files of Larry Peery's 'zines are up with Scott Marley, but there's no guarantee that copies of these games are with them. On the other hand, I'm in touch with Larry, who presumably still has complete files of his own stuff. If you have anything on these, let me know.

3. TRETICK GAMES. Whether any copies of the rules for Buddy's modifications of Don Miller's Hyperspace game are extant is debateable. If I hear nothing more about these, I'll assign them some numbers in the rv series and let it go at that.

Future Problems:

1. Colonia &c. In a number of instances, Miller Numbers have been called upon to do double duty. As examples:

ff seems to stand for both 1885 I and II.

fh is being used for Colonia III, IV, V, and perhaps other versions.

go is used for Near Utter Chaos and Utter Chaos, and also apparently for yet another game, about which I know almost nothing, Dudder Chaos.

gv seems to relate to U.S. Diplomacy II and III (and also a IIR?).

id is being used for what seem to be different versions of Madman and Blind Madman, games about which I have no information at this point.

Under most circumstances, I have tried not to combine different versions of

the same game in this fashion, almost always assigning different numbers to the various similar games. I plan to continue this practice. But this means that if the BNC uses the NAVBNs as MN designators, he will have to distinguish as to which game is actually being run. If renumbering is to be done, as I imagine it will, then all of the Colonia games will have to be gone over to determine which designators they actually need. In line with that, I'm not sure, and need to know: Is "Gunboat Colonia" a particular kind or is it just Colonia V under another name?

2. Multi-Games. Heretofore I have given one NAVBN to a single package which combines several related games (usually referred to as "scenarios") in one. Three obvious examples are Lew Pulsipher's "War of the Ring", my "2001", and the commercial game "Machiavelli". Only the last is being played postally at the moment, insofar as I am aware.

My question is: should we assign separate designators to each of the subgames? Neither the MNC nor the NAVB follows this practice at present, so if you saw one of the new MNs, presumably you would not be able to tell which of the subgames was being played.

Secondly, should each subgame receive a complete new NAVBN to be used as a MN designator, or would an additional suffix be used (-a, -b, -c, and so on) to indicate subgames? My personal preference would be, if you distinguished subgames at all, to do so with such suffixes. And I would prefer to see the subgames so distinguished. But I would like to hear some opinions, particularly Greg's, on the matter.

3. Information. I am going to need a lot of help and information in order to complete my part of the Recat Project. The back issues of LORD OF HOSTS should allow me to complete my listing of that all the MN designators stand for. In particular I'm missing a lot of the late ones: hi, hj, hq, hv, ii-in, ip-iu, ig, and anything from ji on.

I also need copies of games, preferably. I'll be happy to xerox your copy and return it, or pay your xeroxing costs, or whatever. If I can't get a copy, detailed info on the game would be my secondary choice. I need info on the Peery and Tretick games in the B series above. And, from early games, I'd like information or copies on:

Great European War	La Revolution	30 Years' War (<u>not</u> Newman's game)
Atomic Warfare	Van Nuys Variant	Nuclear Holocaust
Bourse	Four Empires	Gemignani
Fistel Variant	Interstellar Dip. IV	Trader I
Balance of Power	Coup d'Etat	Home Sweet Home
2010 or Europe 2010	Danelaw II	Intimate Anarchy
Fred Winter's 9-man Dip.	Democratic Dip.	Hymalini 9-Man
Staples Variant	Future War	Trader II
U.S. Dip. I	Lima IIB	Stab I
11-Man Dippy	Tadek Dip.	Re-Discover
1721 II	1648	There Are Aliens...
Lord of the Rings Dip. II	Deadly Dirty	Ecliptic
Tunnels & Troggs	Hyperec. III	Rather Silly
Lima IV & V	Geophysical	Madman (all sorts)
Treachery	Bruxellisme III	Fog of War
	Air II	

Help, help. Please?

Now. If you will turn the page, you will get a treat: a repro of a game which has not seen the light of day for a decade. I had planned to end the issue here, but what follows is a hell of a lot more fun than the preceding.

THANGORODRIM
and
NAPOLEONIC DIPLOMACY II

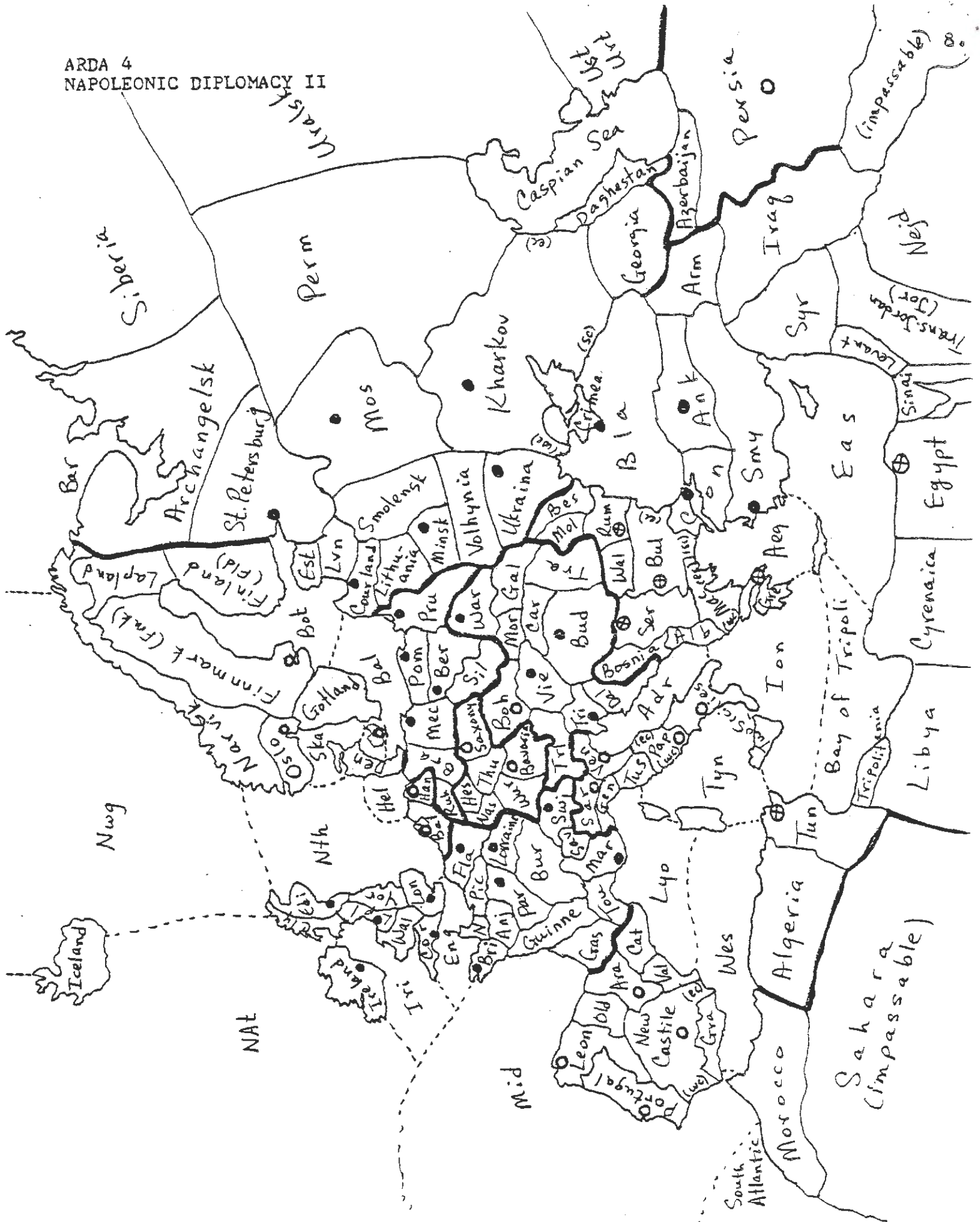
It turns out a complete set of THANGORODRIM is in my files. This was and I.F.W. 'zine put out by Bill McDuffie during 1969-1970 and consisted of 11 issues, all within "Volume I": 0, 00, and 1-9. In the course of these issues, Bill printed or reprinted a number of variants: Middle-Earth Dip. IV, Mordor Versus the World II, Indianomacy II, Game of the Clans, Third Age I, Napoleonic Diplomacy II, Barbaria, and the map for Napoleonic Diplomacy III (which he called "II").

"Napoleonic Diplomacy" is the name long and traditionally applied to the 5-man game specified in the 1966 Rulebook, which omits Germany and Italy. Many people felt that this was merely a title of convenience (which it was) and that the game did not really reflect the Napoleonic period. Gary Gygax with Bill's assistance set out to design a variant which did reflect that period. The results appeared in THANG 3, and I am reprinting them here... although I am doing some editing in order to squeeze four pages of rules there into less than three here. Historical purists will no doubt complain about such things as putting Warsaw where Krakow ought to be, Berlin where Posen ought to be, Brandenburg where Hanover ought to be, and like that. Please note that the space called "Granada" here had no name in the original. I am also puzzled by Bohemia: the map clearly shows a supply center and the rules clearly state that Bohemia is in Austria. But no unit starts there. I can only assume it is a neutral center within Austria. A few seasons of this game ran in another McDuffie 'zine, TALLEYRAND, and perhaps some of these problems were cleared up there; but I have no copies of those issues.

Rules

- I. All Rules of Diplomacy apply except where they conflict with the special rules below.
- II. The following provinces will support a Double Army (DA) or Double Fleet (DF): DA - Berlin, Vienna; DF - London, Liverpool, Brittany.
- III. Paris will support a Triple Army (TA).
- IV. A province that supports a DA, DF, or TA will not do so when held by any nation other than the one to which it originally belonged. If the original owner recaptures the province, it will once again support the double or triple unit.
- V. Extra force units (DA, DF, TA) may be supplied from single supply centers, but they may only be built in the provinces listed above and only if previously eliminated. (No more than 1 TA, 2 DAs, and 3DFs may be on the board at any time.)
- VI. Provinces that begin the game with any kind of fleet can only support a fleet. If its fleet is removed it may not build an army.
- VII. At the start of the game, Spring 1801, the capital of each Power is: England, London; Prussia, Berlin; Russia, Moscow; Turkey, Constantinople; Austria-Hungary, Vienna; France, Paris. If the capital is captured by any player all of that country's units immediately go into a state of civil disorder until such time as they are eliminated or the player holding the capital releases it.
- VIII. A capital can be moved to any province within the natural boundaries of the nation, but the province must contain a supply center. A written order to do so is required. This will be revealed to all players. Transfer of capital may be done in Spring, Fall, or build seasons.
- IX. All neutral supply centers have a defense equal to one army (which cannot move, attack, or support but which can be supported), except that it will not resist a unit from a nation to which it is "Pro-".

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NAPOLEONIC DIPLOMACY II



X. The following provinces are "Pro-": FRENCH: Bavaria, Warsaw, Batavia, Saxony, Sardinia, Venice. ENGLISH: Portugal, Hanover, Two Sicilies. AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN: Serbia.

XI. A supply center that normally belongs to a power must be garrisoned at all times by any other power that captures it. Without a garrison of either an Army or a Fleet the supply center automatically reverts to the power to which it normally belonged. Exceptions: Warsaw (pro-French) need not be garrisoned by the French and Serbia (pro-Austrian) need not be garrisoned by the Austrians.

XII. Armies may move two provinces within the boundaries of their own own countries in one turn. However, they may not support twice, nor move once and then support. [Rewritten to clarify:] The double move stops if the army is stood off during the first half of its move; if it is dislodged, it retreats at the end of the full turn. Armies moving twice in one turn may be supported only in the second half of the move. Exception: Russian Armies move only one province at a time, even within Russia. The double move must be completed within the owner's boundaries (see map) and may not end outside them.

XIII. Fleets cannot stand off armies, but each counts as a force of 1 (or 2 if a DF) against neutral coastal supply centers. A fleet must retreat if attacked by an army unless supported by armies equal to or greater than the force of the attacker.

XIV. Fleets do not convoy. An A/F must be formed either by moving a Fleet to a coastal province containing an Army, or vice versa, or by moving both to a coastal province at the same time. On the following turn the A/F may move just as if it were a normal Fleet. DAs and TAs may not be part of an A/F.

XV. An A/F attacks and defends with the strength of a F (or DF, if it is one) in bodies of water, or with the strength of an Army otherwise. If it is dislodged and cannot (or does not) retreat, both units are disbanded. [I assume the A/F breaks up by moving to a coastal province and then one or both of the units moves away in the next season.]

XVI. A Fleet may move through two bodies of water per turn; it may not end this double move by entering a province, nor may it begin the double move by leaving a province. See Rule XII for other limitations. [Presumably, however, Russian Fleets have the double move.]

XVII. To win, one Power must have possession of 30 supply centers and occupy all the supply centers of 3 other powers. [Home centers, presumably.]

THE SETUP.

AUSTRIA: DA Vie, A Tri, A Bud, A War*. ENGLAND: DF Lon, DF Lpl, F Edi, A Ire, A Cor. FRANCE: TA Par, A Fla, A Lor, A Swi, DF Bri, F Mar. PRUSSIA: DA Ber, A Mec, A Pom, A Pru. RUSSIA: A Mos, A Min, A Ukr, A Cou, A Kha, F StP, F Cri. TURKEY: A Con, A Smy, F Ank, A Bul*, A Ser*, A Rum*, A Gre*, A Egy*, A/F Tun**.

Notes: * Garrison must be kept at all times or the province becomes neutral and automatically receives a defense of one army.

**Represents pirates. The GM will move this unit according to the throw of dice: 2, Alg; 3, Bay; 4, Tri; 5, Wes; 6, Tun; 7, Tun; 8, Tyn; 9, Ion; 10, Bay; 11, Alg; 12, Tri. At any time the unit cannot move as called for, it returns to Tunis. Turkey may not move this unit. If Turkey attacks the center and gains it, the A/F is disbanded and Turkey may build one unit; however, the A/F reappears the first turn Tunis is ungarrisoned.

ALLIANCES: Turkey and Russia may not ally at any time, nor may either receive the support of the other. The same is true of England and France.

France-Spain (Optional)

- I) Spain is "allied" to France so long as no French unit moves nor attempts to move into a Spanish province.
- II) Spain becomes "hostile" to France the turn any French unit moves into Spain unless a unit of some other country has already invaded Spain. In any event, Spain becomes hostile to France as of Spring 1808.
- III) So long as Spain is "allied" to France all Spanish supply centers have a defense factor of one Army, although the unit at Leon is a Fleet.
- IV) When Spain becomes "hostile" to France, its supply centers become Pro-English (see Rule IX).
- V) So long as Spain is a French ally, France may order the Spanish Fleet at Leon just as if it were a French unit. However, it may not be used to form an A/F. When Spain becomes "hostile", the Leon Fleet moves back to Leon automatically by the shortest route and remains neutral, in civil disorder, until attacked and dislodged. [I assume if Leon is occupied before the Leon Fleet returns, it is disbanded.]

MAP KEY: Standard first-three-letters abbreviations would be used in the game. Names which are identical with the regular game are normally so indicated. Other abbreviations are indicated below:

Ara	Aragon	Gen	Genoa	Pom	Pomerania
Bat	Batavia	Gra	Granada	Pru	East Prussia
Bes	Bessarabia	Han	Hanover	Sar	Sardinia
Bra	Brandenburg	Hes	Hesse	Sav	Savoy
Bri	Brittany	Mac	Macedonia	Swi	Switzerland
Car	Carpathians	Mec	Mecklenburg	Thu	Thuringia
Cat	Catalonia	Mol	Moldavia	Tou	Toulouse
Cor	Cornwall	Mor	Moravia	Tra	Transylvania
Dal	Dalmatia	Nas	Nassau	Val	Valencia
Est	Estonia	N	Normandy (Nmd)	Wal	Wallachia
Fla	Flanders	Old	Old Castile	Wur	Wurttemberg
		Pap	Papal States		

[Some notes and observations: First of all, the game looks unplayable, in the sense that I don't believe anyone can win it with the garrison-in-other-home-centers rule. That's going to tie down too many units. Since many areas within national boundaries were strongly disaffected, I would suggest applying the rule only two two home centers in each nation, as follows: AUSTRIA, Vie/Tri; ENGLAND, Lon/Lpl; FRANCE, Lor/Par; PRUSSIA, Ber/Pru; RUSSIA, Mos/StP; TURKEY, Con/Ank.

[The rules are incorrect in stating that Moscow was the capital in 1801; St.Petersburg was.

[I don't know what to do with Bohemia. Given Austria's position in this game, I'd turn it into a home center with an army at the start. If the players don't like that solution, then it should be an undefended neutral center which becomes an Austrian home center once captured by Austria.

[As to the A/F movement: These combined units differ in some respects from Fred Davis' later A/F rules; however, if questions arise as to movement of these, I'd use Fred's A/F rules for resolving them.

[Extra-dark borders on the map indicate the national boundaries (see Rule XII). In the event of confusion, note that PRUSSIA extends all the way from Ruh to Pru; TURKEY goes from Alg to Ira and Nej, and north to Bes and Bos.

[Any additional info, such as copies of TALLEYRAND, will be gratefully received. Next issue, we plan to reproduce Barbaria from THANG 5.]

NEWS

1. I joined the Tolkien Society of America some months ago. I do a bit of Tolkien-type poetry now and then and have an as-yet unpublished essay on the poetry of Middle-Earth in general and the aerlinn in particular. I felt the TSA would be a good outlet for this material. Whilst I was at it, however, I decided to draw up an article about Middle-Earth Diplomacy games and sent that out also. This article includes a listing of the games I have copies of and an offer to GM a section of one of them through the TSA's monthly publication. It's too early for me to have had any reply to these, but I'm pretty sure they'll be published sooner or later. I'll let you know if our hobby succeeds in impinging on theirs. At the time of the article's sending, I hadn't the foggiest notion there was a Downfall...II. From what little I now know of it, it would actually appear to be the most suitable for that crowd. It's the most gimmicky. I would like to get a complete set of maps/rules for this, along with rulings and changes which took place while the one postal section was running. From what I can see, it looks like a very interesting and enjoyable game for really dedicated M.E. devotés. Robert, do you still have copies of all this stuff? I could sure use them!

2. Have you noticed we've run into overtime?

3. Lew Pulsipher informs me that he may be reviving his annual variant design competition in DIPLOMACY WORLD. If this comes about, it's some of the best news I've heard in a long time. This competition is presently the only set of awards in the variant hobby which carries in itself any general hobby recognition and prestige.

4. Speaking of awards: You probably know that Robert Sacks' Diplomacy Variant Commission does annual awards. These have been in abeyance for a while and now a panel is considering awards for 1978 and 1979 jointly. The panel consists of Robert, Greg Costikyan, Fred Hyatt, Roger Oliver (!), Ray Heuer (!!), and myself.

I have been unhappy with some details of how the thing is proceeding, but in general Robert seems to be doing an OK job. However, in the past these awards (as with the DVC itself) have not been held in any great esteem. It's easy to see why when you look at the personnel involved. Greg and Fred are fine. Robert's reputation as a flake is probably only partially deserved, and at least in this instance he seems to be doing a creditable job. And then of course there's me...the reason variant games almost got called deviant games. Well, if you can put up with that, you can put up with almost anything. Almost. How about, however, Oliver, whose connection with the variant hobby is best described as "tenuous"? The same might be said of Ray Heuer these days, not to mention that he is not noted for maturity and disinterestedness of judgement. Truly outstanding is the conspicuous absence of such names as Fred Davis, Lew Pulsipher, Konrad Baumeister, Tony Watson, Steve McLendon, and others who are rational adults and know variants. Why has this panel no Canadians, such as John Leeder? Now, I'm sure some of them were asked (but I'll bet Lew wasn't), and turned down the invitation. Considering whom I'd have to associate with, I almost did that myself.

I am therefore going to recommend a complete restructuring of this thing from the ground up, with an eye for the 1980 Awards Panel. The only thing which will make these awards both valid and respected will be a blue-ribbon group handing them out. Otherwise they are an exercise in futility. If this restructuring can be done within DVC, fine. If not, there are plenty of other groups which can sponsor a set of awards of this type. [I would like to add here that I am not necessarily stating that the awards from

this panel will be in any way invalid. It's too early to tell. However, it's hard to sell the validity of awards when some of the people involved in making them are far, far from being the best qualified individuals for the job.]

5. A slim possibility exists that as early as 1981 there may be a major commercial publication of Diplomacy variants in this country. If & when I can say more, I will.

PROMOTING VARIANTS

Variants are not now the big thing in the hobby they once were. It's hard to tell why, especially as variants get such excellent coverage in DW. It might be easier to delude ourselves into thinking, as Robert Sacks claims to think, that DW isn't part of the hobby. Sure, and the American Kennel Review has nothing to do with dog breeding.

Anyway, we need to find a way to promote variants and get more people interested in them and playing them. I believe there are several facets to this problem.

1. The information gap. Despite coverage in DW, we just are not reaching people. What can we do about this?
2. Offering more and better games. Many of the best variants aren't being played or offered anywhere in the hobby today.
3. Variants as a spectator sport. All Dip p̄ayers know Diplomacy, so they can follow a game in progress (unless the notation, as it sometimes is, is so arcane even the players have a hard time following it). But unless they have the map, at least, it's hard to understand anything about what's going on in a variant.

I had hoped we'd find some solutions to this through some of the major 'zines. I offered to GGM a game in DW, with maps, but Jerry feels it would overbalance the 'zine in a field that's not endowed with that large a following. It's hard to argue with that. I offered the same thing to C&F, but as you know, Don (alas) is going out of business in a few issues. His mimeo 'zine would not be as good for maps, however.

I haven't approached yet, but will, John Michalski, whose photo-repro and large circulation would make an ideal medium. Coverage through the Tolkien crowd might also help, but only for one class of variants.

Another possibility is the commercial publication of a collection of the best variants. This one we would do through the hobby, possibly under the aegis of NADF or the DW Editor. Perhaps if there were a few very good variants which were fairly standard offerings throughout the hobby, we would start getting a larger response.

Similarly, a commercially printed quarterly on variants, which would be articles and demo games, might have a market. I don't believe I would be able to fit this into my schedule, but perhaps someone else could.

I would like your ideas and suggestions on all this. What can we do to make the variant hobby more popular? Perhaps we can initiate discussions not only in ARDA but in other variant 'zines on the subject and come up with some practical, effective proposals.

THIS IS THE END. THE WHOLE COST OF THIS ISSUE WOULD SEEM TO BE ABOUT 90¢.