BROBDINGNAG

Game 1966AQ   Spring 1901

SERBIA, BULGARIA, DENMARK OVERRUN. MAJOR WAR LOOMS

The Moves:

ENGLAND: Fleet Edinburgh - Norwegian Sea. Fleet London - North Sea. Army
(Long)   Liverpool - Edinburgh.

FRANCE: Fleet Brest - Mid-Atlantic Ocean. Army Marseilles - Gascony.
(Thompson)   Army Paris - Burgundy.

GERMANY: Fleet Kiel - Denmark. Army Berlin - Munich. Army Munich - Ruhr.
(Nelson)

ITALY: Army Venice stands. Army Rome - Apulia. Fleet Naples - Ionian
(Goldman)   Sea.

AUSTRIA: Army Vienna-Budapest. Army Budapest - Serbia. Fleet Trieste -
(Duncan)   Albania.

RUSSIA: Army Warsaw - Galicia. Army Moscow - Ukraine. Fleet St. Peters-
(Reinsel)   burg - Gulf of Bothnia. Fleet Sevastopol -
                          Black Sea.

TURKEY: Army Constantinople - Bulgaria. Fleet Ankara - Constantinople.
(Greene)   Army Smyrna - Ankara.

All moves succeed. Deadline for moves for Fall 1901 is Saturday, 17
September 1966. As previously indicated, I expect to be away from
Ralston for about 10 days. I should return sometime during the week-
end of the 17th-18th. Publication of BROB #44 will likely be delayed
by two or three days.

PRESS RELEASES.

Constantinople. 22 March. The Grand Vizier, the Duke of Greenewich, in
the name of the Sultan Abdul Osman, today ordered the mobilization of
Turkish armed forces. General Bewilderment took command of the 1st
Smyrna Army. General Collapse took command of the 2nd Constantinople
Army. Admiral Pazooza took command of the 1st Ankara Armoured Coast
Defence Fleet.
    Meanwhile, the Duke dispatched the famed 9 "Black Riders" towards
Sofia.
    The Duke of Greenewich was formerly head of the "Englishmen for Irish
Independence". As happens to all great Englishmen, he was kicked out of the
country. The Duke gained asylum in Turkey, where eventually he became
Grand Vizier to the Sultan. He is best known in Turkey for his popular
"Send Armenians to Russia" Policy.

Constantinople, May 5. General Collapse managed to overrun Bulgaria
in a lightning 5 week campaign. The Bulgarians lost 3 officers and 123
men killed and 21,000 civilians who died.

   At apress conference in the Defence Ministry today new war inventions
were revealed. Admiral Pazooza announced that a new "Superbattleship"
will soon be completed. And the Defence Research Laboratories spoke of a
new gas, yet to be used.

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Second new BROB game.   1900.

Players should note that, effective the 21st of September, Richard
Shagrin's address will be:

> Room 356, Haggett Hall,
> University of Washington,
> Seattle, Wash.   98105.

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Jack Greene, 670 Darrell Road, Hillsborough, California, would like
to contact other Diplomacy players in the Bay area, with a view to
joinging, or forming, a Diplomacy club. If you have Diplomacy friends
there, please pass this information on. You listening, Steve?

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RATING SYSTEMS

When Charles Reinsel first announced his rating system (Graustark #57)
he inadvertently gave me a score of -1 instead of 1. When I apply the
system that John Boardman says he uses to the three games of mine which
have so far been completed, 1963B, 1964B, and 1965A, I find a score
of some fifty-odd; John assigns me 25 points in Graustark #100. Dis-
gusted with this obvious conspiracy on the part of the rating makers,
I have decided to publish my own rating system.

    Its basis is to treat every game as a series of 21 individual
matches: every player in the game plays against every other player. If,
in any game, A outlasts B, A wins and gets a score of 1, B getting -1,
with a zero award to each in case of a draw. If C and D both survive until
the end of a game, their match is decided on the basis of which had the
greater force on the board at the end, again scored plus 1 for the
winner of the match and -1 for the loser.

    In other words all seven players of each game are ranked from
1 to 7, survivors in order of strength at the end of the game, then
those eliminated in order of length of survival. The player loses a
point for every name that appears above his, and gains one for every
name that appears below his. In considering those eliminated I have
not considered it worth while to distinguish between a Spring elimination
and a Fall elimination in the same year. In other words, two players
removed from a game in the same playing year are counted as having
drawn.

    Considering the eight individual games so far completed, 1963A,
1963B, 1964A, 1964B, 1964C, 1965A, 1965I, 1965L, we arrive at the
following rating list:

12 John Smythe	-1 Bill Christian
9 John Koning	-2 Charles Brannan
	Ron Daniels
6 John Boardman	Jack Harness
Bruce Pelz	Earl Thompson
Charles Wells	
	-3 John McCallum
5 Frank Clark	James Thomas
Derek Nelson	
	-4 Dave McDaniel
4 Eric Blake	Roland Tzudiker
James Goldman	
Robert Lake	-5 Tom Bulmer
Dian Pelz	Stuart Keshner
	Anders Swenson
3 James MacKenzie	
	-8 Dick Scultz
1 John Davey	
Ken Davidson	-11 Paul Harley
0 Len Bailes	-12 Fred Lerner
Conrad von Metzke	

The omission of teams games from consideration is a necessity in this system, which regards a game as a series of individual matches between each pair of players in the game. In my view, of course, team games should be left out of all individual rating systems, as the spirit of such games is completely different from that of the regular game of Diplomacy.

There was no similar theoretical compulsion for leaving out the move-a-week, over-the-board games. They have a similar back-ground to postal Diplomacy and could easily have been included, if desired. They were omitted for two reasons. 1. There is very little over-lap between the players in them and those in postal play. Using them would have meant bringing in a lot of names which the average postal player will not encounter again. 2. We don't know how many such games there may be: there may be dozens of lodges, clubs, recreational groups, playing move-a-week or similar type games which we know nothing about. To include any such then means running the risk of having an incomplete roster. So it ncludes only individual, postal games, run in a magazines.

The vexed question of what to do about drop-outs and replacement players. What is done here is simply to assign the rating for a given country in a game to the last player to move for the country. There is certainly an anomaly here. Two players are eliminated from a game; later, one of the survivors drops out and is replaced; the replacement gets credit for beating the two players who had, in fact, left the game before he entered it. However, we must reckon with a sad fact of human nature: players rarely abandon play in games in which they have a winning, or even a promising, position; they frequently leave games when the country concerned has passed its peak of expansion. Since the replacement must accept the losses of the country he takes over, it seems only fair that he also get the benefit of any previous gains made by it. In other words,

When a player abandons play in a game he abandons, at the same time,
any credits due him for that game.

The system can also be used for ranking countries. Using
the same set of games as before, with the omission of game 1965A, a
five-man game, gives the following scores for countries:

Turkey	10
France	3
Germany	3
Russia	2
England	0
Italy	-8
Austria	-10

This confirms previous attempts to rank the countries, (see EROB #37),
in placing Turkey at the top and Italy near the bottom of the list.
This is, however, the first listing which does find evidence for the
very common dislike of playing Austria.   with

I think that this rating manages to avoid the defects / which
the Reinsel system and the Boardman system have been charged. Charles
Wells has stated that Reinsel's rating system contains an arbitrary
element. That is certainly true, although I must say that I think
Reinsel's scale of values, 7 points for a win, and 1 point for survival,
is about right. This system makes no such value judgment. Of a pair
of players in a game it asks merely, Which achieved the more? And does
this for all possible pairs.

Several people have made the point that Boardman's system
awards a player for mere activity. A player who enters many games, gains
points, even though he may do poorly in all of them. That is not true of
this system: entering dozens of games will not help, unless the
player does better than average in them. If he does worse than the
average of the players in the games he enters it is just a case of the
more games the more losses.

Boardman's system does have one advantage, though one that
is not realized as it is at present operated. Reinsel's system, being
based on wins and survivals, cannot be used before the end of a game.
Which means that a new player can not hope to see his name listed
for about a year and a half. Boardman's system does not have that
defect, at least not inherently. He simply adds the supply centres a
player holds each playing year, and there seems no reason why this
could not be done on a current basis, i.e. after each year of play is
completed.

The system here proposed falls between the two extremes.
If there is an elimination in a game, the player forced out could
be given his lumps immediately, and the survivors given their
corresponding gains. However, on the average, there are between 4 and
5 survivors. This means that only about a third of the information
included in the final score for a game becomes available during the
game, the remaining two thirds suddenly appearing on conclusion of
play. In the circumstances the additional book-keeping involved didn't
seem worth while and only completed games have been included in the
listing given above. With Boardman's system, on the other hand, less
than 10% of the information is added with the final year of play, and
it might be worth while to publish the thing on a "year" to "year", rather
than a game to game basis.

The comparison here has been, throughout, with the Reinsel and the Boardman rating systems. Those are the only two systems which have been kept up to date with a revision published at intervals as more games are completed. New comers might be interested to learn that there have been a host of other systems proposed. There have been, in addition to the main two, the Smythe system (Graustark #62), the Clark system (also Graustark #62), the Koning system (sTab #1, in many ways the best of the lot), and the second Clark system (BROB #37).

And need I add that it is with sorrow that I note, that the system here proposed, my brain-child, treats me, personally, far worse than do the Reinsel and Boardman systems. "Ah, sharper than a serpent's tooth......"

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(Lest any literal minded reader take in earnest my first paragraph about the conspiracy of Reinsel and Boardman to do me down, let me say that Reinsel corrected his error on his first revision. And I have no doubt that Boardman is now engaged in checking his arithmetic. The trouble is that physicists, like mathematicians, can't add.)

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SEALED BAG

CHARLES WELLS, 3678 Lindholm Road, Cleveland, Ohio. 44120.:
It seems to me that more complicated systems of units and movements could be introduced for the postal game to great benefit. I have some fairly detailed ideas about units and so forth, but the basic notion that I have come up with is a new way to resolve battles when multiple units in one province are allowed. It works like this: Suppose France has m divisions in Burgundy, ordered to hold, and Germany orders n divisions Ruhr-Burgundy. Then in the first phase of moves resolution, the German armies enter Burgundy. In the second stage the battle is resolved as follows, assuming no other units entered or left the province: if m is greater than 2n, the German units are repelled, the French lose ¼n of their units and the Germans lose as many as the French lost. If n is greater than 2m the Germans succeed, losing ¼n of their units, and the French lose the same number, and must order the rest to retreat. ((+(¼ in that last sentence means one quarter. The type face of this machine, and the key-symbols do not agree.)+))If neither has twice as many as the other, the province, here Burgundy, REMAINS in CONTENTION for the move, both countries' units remain there, the one with the larger number losing one quarter of its units and the other the same number, and if it had been a supply center it would not belong to either side.
((+(Charles' letter then continues in considerable detail about other cases of resolution of moves, when each force attacks the other, and so on. ✳ He then continues: +))
I think this system of resolution has possibilites. It makes the player think about each separate frontier between provinces. I have lots of ideas about how to tell allies from enemies, about convoys, special units (for example, mechanized infantry, which cost two units but have only one unit of firepower, but which can go across two provinces at once), and so on. Are you interested? Would

you like to play some two-man games to see how it works out?

((+(Well, Charles, as you know, I would indeed like to try
the thing out and we can go ahead with the first trial whenever you are
ready. For the benefit of other readers I should mention that Charles'
letter, of which I have only quoted a few excerpts above, was followed
by another considerably more detailed letter. The latter shows that
the game is now almost off the drawing board though, no doubt, some
difficulties may crop up when play actually begins. I understand that
the full rules of the game will be published in a forth-coming issue
of Lonely Mountain. It seems to me that the game may have some of the
tactical interest of the more usual type of war-game, while retaining
the grand-strategy and alliance feature, which is so strong an
appeal in the usual game of Diplomacy. Those interested in getting
in at the beginning of this new game, should write Charles and order
a copy of the issue of Lonely Mountain which is to contain the rules.
--jamcc)+))

SEAN DONOHUE, 1020 Stoddert Ave., Waldorf, Md. 20601. : To give you
my opinion on the rule, I would allow it. ((+(This refers
to the item on "The Coastal Crawl" in #41. Of the half dozen people
who have so far commented on it, only two were in favour of allowing
the move. Since one of them was Allan Calhamer, the inventor of the
game, you are in good company, Sean)+))

CONRAD F. von METZKE, P. O. Box 307, Jamul, Calif. 92035.: Oh yeah...
on your rule enquiry in the last EROB (#41) I am
a purist. The intent of the rulebook is clearly to make "space" syn-
onymous with "province", and as such your suggested move is invalid.
((+(Which indicates how very,very cautious we ought to be when
attributing intent to an author. Presumably the best judge of what
was intended by any statement, is the author of it. Yet Calhamer, the
author of the rulebook, stated in EROB #42, that he would prefer
an interpretation which is the opposite of yours. --jamcc)+))

And DAVE LEBLING, 3 Rollins Courst, Rockville, Md., 20852, writes
to say that his game in Glockoria was full but that two of his
expected players have dropped out. So he is looking for additional
players. This would appear to be an opportunity to get into a game
which will get under way almost immediately. The fee is, I think,
$2.50.

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EROBDINGNAG is a journal of postal Diplomacy, currently carrying
Game 1966AQ and another not yet numbered. It is edited and published
by J. A. McCallum, Ralston, Alberta, Canada. It sells for 10 cents
a copy, and subscriptions can be entered for any number of issues at
the same rate. A subscription to run from now until the end of any
designated game, costs $2.00.