

# B R O B D I N G N A G

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 Brobdingnag #50      1966AV (W '02)    1966AQ (S '03)      12 December 1966  
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Game 1966AV

Winter 1902

BRITISH FOURTH FLEET SAILS FROM PORTSMOUTH  
 NEW SHIPBUILDING PROGRAM ANNOUNCED FOR MERSEY-SIDE  
 HUNGARIAN VOLUNTEERS FORM NEW ARMY      ITALIAN RECRUITS PARADE IN ROME  
 FRENCH RE-ESTABLISH GOVERNMENT IN LYON  
 KAISER APPEALS TO GERMANS AND ALLIES

The builds:

AUSTRIA (Munroe): Army Budapest.

ENGLAND (Wells): Fleet Liverpool. Fleet London.

ITALY (Francis): Army Rome.

Press releases:

Berlin, 31 Dec. "Truly is the Dark Isles of the Wells yclept "Perfidious Albion". Surely will the Fall of 1902 be known as the season of infamy. Fear not, vengeance shall be mine", said the Kaiser in a New Year's Eve speech at the Tiergarten. "A battle rivaled only by the legendary War of the Ring will result from English treachery. Already German forces are massing to relieve the unfortunate residents of Holland -- Death to the English! It is not too late, still to re-establish peace--England must admit its error and recant, or be scuttled. WE CALL UPON OUR FRIENDS AND ALLIES (we do have some? Let's see...there's... and then maybe not, but we can depend on...hmmm) We call upon all loyal Germans to rise and in the fullness of time destroy the oath-breakers."

Lyon, 12 Feb. (UP). This provincial French city and centre of the silk industry, is the scene of unaccustomed activity as the French government settles in. On the evacuation of Paris, just prior to the German occupation, Lyon was chosen as the temporary capital as it is in a region in the firm control of l'Armee du Nord, the most reliable of the remaining French armies. Bordeaux, the traditional seat of refugee French governments, was at one time proposed; in fact some ministries went there on their initial flight from Paris. However, it was decided against on the ground that it was too open to attack from British naval units. The decision would seem to have been a wise one as the Royal Marine Brigade now occupies Nantes and is pressing steadily southward. Though there is no lack of cynics that the real reason for choosing Lyon was its /to say fortunate proximity to Geneva--many prominent French parliamentarians are known to maintain accounts in Swiss banks.

The Italian seizure of Spain has by no means yet been fully consolidated. Their navy does fully control the whole of the Mediterranean littoral. Italy is also in full control of the roads and railways from Barcelona, Valencia, and Alicante, leading to Madrid. However, Madrid is about the northwestern limit of their penetration. It is believed that Alpine troops will be brought in to complete the subjugation of Spain. Until that is done, however, France will be able to maintain a tenuous line of communication, through Burgos and Valladolid, to its troops in Portugal.

Game 1966A9

Spring 1903

ITALY LEADS FORCES AT DURRES  
ATTEMPT TO SECURE WHOLE ADRIATIC COAST FORESEEN  
STALEMATE IN WEST: TRENCHES RUSSIANS RE-OCCUPY PETERSBURG  
PARALLEL RHINE FROM LIPS TO SEA BRITISH NAVY RE-TAKES NORWAY  
**TURKS OVER-RUN GREECE**  
DETENTE IN NORTH ?

The moves:

RUSSIA (Reinsel): Army Livonia supports army Moscow to St. Petersburg.  
Army Moscow to St. Petersburg. Army Bohemia supports  
army Vienna. Army Vienna supports army Rumania to Galicia. Army  
Rumania to Galicia. Fleet Black Sea to Rumania. Fleet Norway to Sweden.

FRANCE (Thompson): Fleet English Channel to North Sea. Army Burgundy  
to Ruhr. Army Belgium supports army Burgundy to Ruhr.  
Army Paris to Burgundy. Army Gascony supports army Paris to Burgundy.  
Army Picardy supports army Paris to Burgundy.

GERMANY (Nelson): Army Munich supports army Ruhr. Army Ruhr supports  
army Holland. Fleet Kiel supports Fleet Denmark.  
Army Holland stands. Fleet Denmark stands.

AUSTRIA (Duncan): Fleet Greece to Bulgaria. Army Serbia to Rumania.  
Army Budapest to Galicia. Army Trieste to Vienna.

ENGLAND (Long): Fleet Skagerrak to North Sea. Fleet North Sea to  
Norwegian Sea. Fleet St. Petersburg to Norway. Army  
Finland supports fleet St. Petersburg to Norway.

TURKEY (Greene): Army Bulgaria to Greece. Fleet Aegean Sea supports  
army Bulgaria to Greece. Army Constantinople to Bulgaria.  
Fleet Eastern Mediterranean Sea supports fleet Aegean Sea.

ITALY (Goldman): Army Tunis to Albania. Fleet Ionian Sea convoys  
army Tunisia to Albania. Fleet Naples supports fleet  
Ionian Sea. Army Tyrolia to Trieste.

Underlined moves do not succeed. The Austrian fleet in Greece is  
slodged and, having no available retreat open, is removed from  
play. Deadline for moves for Fall 1903 is Friday, 30 Dec. 1966.

Press Releases:

Medirne, 10 Jan.: Sultan Abdul Osman spoke from his spring retreat to  
a gathering of news reporters, "Peace with the Italian Empire is  
forseen, war may be avoided. Allah, however, has willed that war must  
be with the French Republic. The Ottoman Empire does hereby declare  
war upon The Republic of France for its assault upon Germany." French  
business establishments were immediately seized.  
Somewhere in Bulgaria, 11 Jan.: General Confusion took command of  
the 1st army. General Bewilderment has been appointed by the Duke  
of Greenwich to journey to Berlin via Moscow for talks. Upon completion

# ALAN HUFF WINS GAME 1966D

BROBDINGNAG would like to congratulate Alan Huff on his recent win of game 1966D, announced in the latest issue of Barad-dur, #34. The winner, who has played mostly in the Baltimore 'zines, has had some rough luck in his previous games so that it is an especial pleasure to congratulate him on this win. The game itself, Barad-dur's game #GB-1966-E, is the shortest 7-man individual game so far played in postal Diplomacy. This is made evident by the fact that it is a 1966 game; in contrast one 1964 game is still in progress, and only 3 of the 20-odd 1965 games have so far been finished. The game was also notable in that not a single player had to be replaced during the course of it. One could wish that this latter feature didn't call for special comment. As a result of Alan Huff's win a new edition of BROB's completed game rating list is called for. It is given below.

## BROB Finished Game Rating List - #2

|     |                     |     |                    |
|-----|---------------------|-----|--------------------|
| +12 | John Smythe (W)     | - 4 | Margaret Gemignani |
|     |                     |     | Dave McDaniel      |
| + 6 | Alan Huff (W)       |     | Roland Tzudiker    |
|     | John Koning         |     |                    |
|     | Bruce Pelz (W)      |     |                    |
|     | Charles Wells (W)   | - 5 | Tom Bulmer         |
|     |                     |     | Stuart Keshner     |
| + 5 | Frank Clark         |     |                    |
|     | Derek Nelson (W)    | - 6 | Bernie Kling       |
|     |                     |     |                    |
| + 4 | Erio Blake          | - 7 | Charles Brannen    |
|     | John Boardman (W)   |     |                    |
|     | James Goldman       | - 8 | Richard Schultz    |
|     | Robert Lake         |     |                    |
|     | Dian Pelz           | -11 | Paul Harley        |
| + 3 | Conrad von Metzke   | -12 | Fred Lerner.       |
|     |                     |     |                    |
| + 2 | James MacKenzie (W) |     |                    |
|     | Don Liller          |     |                    |
| + 1 | Bill Christian      |     |                    |
|     | Ken Davidson        |     |                    |
|     | Anders Swenson      |     |                    |
|     |                     |     |                    |
| 0   | Len Dailes          |     |                    |
|     | John Davey          |     |                    |
|     | Mark Ovings         |     |                    |
|     | Jock Root           |     |                    |
| - 1 | Jack Harness        |     |                    |
|     | John McCallum       |     |                    |
|     |                     |     |                    |
| - 2 | Ron Daniels         |     |                    |
|     | James Dygert        |     |                    |
|     | Jim Sanders         |     |                    |
|     | Earl Thompson       |     |                    |

This rating list is based on completed individual games, 1963A, 1963B, 1964A, 1964B, 1964C, 1965A, 1965I, 1965L, and 1966D. (W) after a name indicates a game winner.

The corresponding country list is:

|         |     |
|---------|-----|
| Turkey  | +14 |
| England | + 6 |
| France  | + 3 |
| Russia  | 0   |
| Germany | - 1 |
| Austria | - 8 |
| Italy   | -14 |

Although most of the differences from the previous edition of the rating list, published in BROB #43,

are due, of course, to the inclusion of the newly completed game. Detailed comparison will show, however, that there are some other minor changes. They are due to a different system of assigning scores for countries which have had replacement players. The system has already been used in the last two revisions of the BROB Current Game Rating List.

The BROB rating system, described in BROB #43, works fine when all players in a game remain in it from 1901 until they are either forced out or the game ends. As with most rating lists, the trouble begins when one or more countries are re-assigned in mid-game. There is then no way in which the score of a re-assigned country can be divided between the two (or more) players who commanded its forces for part of the game.

How to assign such points is, in the nature of things, an arbitrary decision. Up until now most rating schemes have given the final player for the country the points earned by it. Charles Wells has recently pointed out (Lonely Mountain #24) that there is something to be said for assigning all points in a rating system to the original players for the countries concerned. There is indeed, but adoption of that rule means that there is no inducement, as far as rating points are concerned, for a replacement player to do as well as he can with his country.

The BROB rating system has the characteristic that the net contribution of any game to the total score is zero. Therefore the average rating score of all players listed is also zero. In order to dissuade players from abandoning games, and in order to encourage replacement players to do their best, BROB has, since Current Game List #2, adopted the following idea. A country in a game which ends up with a positive score, has that score assigned to the player who made the last move for the country. A country, which ends up with a negative score, has the score charged to the initial player for the country.

There is no doubt that there are individual cases where this system is unfair. I know of a case of a player who did not resign but wished to continue playing in a game but who was replaced by whim of the gamesmaster. In such a case one would like to assign all the negative points to the gamesmaster himself. Also see a letter from John Honing, elsewhere in this issue. However, these are exceptional cases and hard cases make bad law. We all know how most transfers take place. Some player finds he is not doing too well in a certain game and decides to leave it. Often he doesn't even bother to resign, so that the gamesmaster can appoint a replacement while there is still some slight hope for the country, he just quits. In the rating system here used, the losses of all abandoned countries go to the deserting player, as they should. And if the replacement is able to do anything with the cause that he takes over, he gains any profits made, as he should.

I am well aware that there are anomalies where the system is unfair. Taken over the whole postal Diplomacy field, though, it is, I think, fairer than assigning all profits and losses to the final player.

Not to be swindled by the system is quite easy: Don't sign up for games that you don't intend to play out, and play out all games that you sign up for. If a player must resign on account of some unforeseen emergency, then, in order not to hurt his score he should pick as replacement a player who can be relied on to do his best for the duration of play. And if he must ask the gamesmaster to make a replacement for him, then the earlier he so informs the gamesmaster, so that the latter can offer a going concern, rather than a bankrupt one, the less damage

his rating is likely to receive.

Huff's win, together with the normal attrition of the last three weeks or so, call for a new edition of the PROB Current Game Rating List. It is given below.

PROBING Current Game Rating List, #4.

|     |  |     |   |
|-----|--|-----|---|
| +22 | John Smythe (W)  | 0   | Len Atkins<br>Len Bailes<br>Jack Chalker<br>John Davey<br>Ronald Wilson   |
| +20 | John Moning<br>John McCallum.  |     |   |
| +16 | Charles Wells (W)  |     |   |
| +12 | Don Miller   | - 1 | James Dygert<br>Allan Huff (W)  |
| +10 | Frank Clark  | - 2 | Freddie Banks<br>Ron Daniels<br>Jim Sanders<br>Dennis Smith   |
| + 8 | Derek Nelson (W)<br>Jerry Pournelle<br>Charles Reinsel   |     |   |
| + 7 | James MacKenzie (W)<br>Mark Owings   | 3   | Dan Brannen<br>James Latimer<br>John Mazon<br>Conrad von Metzke   |
| + 6 | Terry Kueh,<br>Bruce Pelz (W)  | 4   | Ron Bounds<br>Margaret Gemignani<br>Alexis Gilliland<br>Jack Harness<br>Dave McDaniel<br>Ron Parks<br>Bill Schreffler |
| + 4 | Eric Blake<br>John Boardman (W)<br>Rick Brooks<br>James Goldman<br>Bob Lake<br>Banks Hebane<br>Geo. Parks<br>Diane Pelz  | 5   | Tom Bulmer<br>Stuart Keshner<br>Steven Patt   |
| + 3 | Harold Peck<br>Robert Ward   | 6   | Sidney Get<br>Thomas Gorman<br>Bernie Kling<br>Don Recklies<br>John Sandoval<br>Al Scott                              |
| + 2 | Edwin Baker<br>Ken Davidson<br>Gregory Holenear<br>Anders Swenson<br>Earl Thompson   |     |   |
| + 1 | John Austin<br>Bill Christian<br>Robert Cline<br>Jay Maldeman<br>Wayne Hoheisel<br>David Lebling<br>Kim Pattee<br>Hank Reinhardt<br>Reinstein/Berman<br>Jock Root<br>Robert Whelan | 9   | Barry Gold  |
|     |  | 10  | Joel Sattel<br>Richard Schultz  |
|     |  | -11 | Jerald Jacks  |
|     |  | -12 | Stephen Barr<br>Fred Lerner<br>Roland Tzudiker  |
|     |  | -18 | Phil Castora<br>Paul Marley   |

In addition to the completed games listed on page 3, this listing includes partial results from games in progress, 1964D(1915), 1965B(1910), 1965C(1910), D(1909), E(1910), F(1909), G(1907), H(1908), I(1907), 1965Q(1910), R(1909), S(1911), T(1910), U(1907), V(1906), W(1906), 1966A(1906), B(1905), C(1905), E(1905), K(1903), L(1907).

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Game 1966AQ      Press Releases, (continued from page 2).

of these talks with the Czar and Kaiser, he will seek a command in the German army.

Athens, 15 May. A tremendous naval battle took place just south-east of here, a battle which lasted several days. The Greek press is comparing it with the battle of Salamis, fought in the same waters, over two dozen centuries ago. However, the outcome was different as this time it appears that the east was victorious. Admiral Pazooza's Turkish fleet entered the Piraeus today, battered, but asserting that they had driven most of the Austrian fleet ashore.

Paris, 20 May. A terse-communicé issued by the Foreign Office today stated: France triumphed over temptation and will not seize the home-land of England. Nor will France betray her alliance with Italy.

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BRANNAN'S RULE

In #8 of Wild 'n Woolly, Dan Brannan added #13 to his house rules. It read, "A. A convoy move does not cut support against the fleet in the body of water through which the army is convoyed last. B. When one of the fleets in the convoy chain is dislodged, the attempted convoy does not cut support at all." The letters A and B do not appear in the original; they have been added here for greater convenience in discussing the two clauses. The latest edition of the Wild 'n Woolly house rules retains this rule with trivial change in the wording of the first sentence. See W'nW #65.

Brannan's Rule Situation A.

The wording of the first sentence of Brannan's Rule has appeared obscure to many, and those who have adopted Brannan's Rule for their own 'zines have usually re-phrased that part of it. What it means is that, for purposes of cutting support, a convoyed army is regarded as coming from the position of the (last) convoying fleet, rather than from the province of origin.

The rulebook states, "If a unit ordered to support in a given province is attacked from a different province the unit disregards its order to support, 'turns to face its attacker', and defends its own position." What does "from" mean in this sentence? Does it mean "ultimately or originally from", or does it mean "directly or immediately from"? If Turkey, say, convoys an army from Constantinople, through the Aegean and Ionian Seas, to Apulia, is that army to be regarded as coming from Constantinople, its province of origin, or as from the Ionian Sea, the position from which it hits the battle area? If the army actually makes a landing it makes no difference. But if a hostile force, already in

Apulia, is ordered to support some action or other, the question of whether that support is cut or not, will depend, sometimes, on which definition of "from" is adopted.

The same confusion arises in everyday life, of course. "Where do these oranges come from?" might require the answer, "The A. & P.", or "Florida", depending on the tenor of the previous conversation. Unfortunately we have no previous conversation to guide us here. Nor is it surprising that the word "ultimately", or "immediately", whichever is correct, was omitted from the rulebook. In the very great majority of attacks the two places are precisely the same; it is only in the case of the relatively rare convoyed attack that there is a difference.

The omission cannot, unfortunately, be made good by extension from the usual cases. Boardman, in the case of his Dilemma, as we saw in the last issue, was able to deduce what the rulebook seemed to say, "By Omission", as he said. No such logical extension, analytical continuation, or what you will, is possible here. Insert "ultimately" in the quoted section of the rulebook and we get a perfectly consistent rule, which, moreover, corresponds with the standard game in cases where there is no convoy, such as an attack on Munich from Bohemia. Insert "immediately" and one again gets a self-consistent rule, which also corresponds with what we are used to in simple cases. So we do not have the usual clash between "realist" and "legalist". The most rigid of legalists can adopt either interpretation without offence to his principles as far as situation A is concerned. By the same token, he has no logical grounds for objecting to some one else adopting the opposite interpretation.

In the circumstances every gamesmaster must decide for himself what "from" means. The choice is arbitrary and depends largely on one's view of the game as a whole.

#### Brannan's Rule Situation B.

In contrast, a logical deduction can be made from the current rulebook in the case of the second sentence. The rulebook states: "If the ((convoying)) fleet is dislodged on the move, the army may not move." Since it may not move, presumably it can have no effect at all at its point of destination. So that, in some respects, the second sentence of Brannan's Rule merely re-inforces what the rulebook already says.

Most of the early discussion of Brannan's rule, applied to the second sentence only, perhaps because it was the more clearly phrased. See, for example, Calhmer's statement, "I am also inclined to favour 'Brannan's Rule'. With 'Brannan's Rule', however, there is a paradox . . . ." (EROB #31). The paradox to which Mr. Calhmer referred only arises if the second sentence of Brannan's Rule is adopted alone; it does not arise if both parts of the rule are accepted. So, seemingly, he was speaking about the second part alone, as did many others at that time. The pendulum now seems to have swung the other way, and it is the A part which receives most attention. For example, in his article on rule ambiguities in stab #22, John Foning discusses the A part only, and ignores the B part.

While it would be possible for a gamesmaster to adopt one or

other of the clauses, and not the other, this has, as far as I am aware, not happened. Every 'zine which has accepted the rule has accepted both clauses; and those which have rejected it have rejected both clauses.

PROBINGING games will be run in conformity with Brannan's Rule, both clauses.

Lest anyone get too excited about Brannan's Rule it should be pointed out that a Brannan's Rule situation is a rare event. Brannan announced his rule two years ago, as a result of an incident in an over-the-board game in which he played. Since that time, as far as I know, only one Brannan's Rule situation has arisen in postal play.

That Brannan's Rule situations should be rare is to be expected of course. A convoy move is always extravagant of force: it ties up a minimum of two forces, more if there is a chain of convoying fleets, or if the fleets themselves require support. It will, consequently, rarely be used if the object is merely to cut support, since that object can as readily be achieved by an attack by the (last) convoying fleet alone. Though rare it can, and has, occurred. There should be a rule to cover the situation.

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SEALED BAG

CHARLES WELLS 3578 Lindholm Road, Cleveland, Ohio, 44102: I commented on Boardman's Dilemma at least twice in Lonely Mountain, on the first pages of #22 and #24. I think I did earlier, too. ((+(Quite correct. I'll have to pay more attention to my homework. Last issue I had to apologize to Reinsel for overlooking his ruling on the Coastal Crawl. And now I must apologize to you for not noting your remarks on Boardman's Dilemma.-jamcc)+))

CHARLES REINSEL, 120 8th Ave., Clarion, Penna. 16214: Re the Graustark #45 question, ((Boardman's Dilemma)), does the English army Sweden still support the English fleet into Norway? Yes. But we will go along with Calhamer's ruling here.

((+(That the support should still be good, was also my own opinion. See part of a letter of mine, quoted in Armageddonia. It is also the way Charles Wells rules, as indicated in the two references which he mentions, above. Boardman himself would rule that way today, judging by his remarks in Graustark #112, concerning his axiomatic or a priori philosophy of the rules. But Calhamer, the inventor of the game, thinks otherwise. See his letter below. -jamcc)+))

ALLAN B. CALHAMER, 201 West 21st St., New York City, NY, 10011: I agree with your view that a fleet in Gascony can support a fleet standing in Spain (south coast), or moving into Spain (south coast). Nevertheless the fleet in Spain (south coast) cannot support the fleet in Gascony.

Let us see if I can review and clarify something of the Honing's Rule - Boardman's Dilemma situation. Suppose we have:

RUSSIA: Army Silesia to Berlin.

GERMANY: Army Berlin to Silesia. Army Munich supports army Berlin



to Silesia. Army Kiel to Berlin.

Here the rules indicate that the army moves from Berlin to Silesia, routing the Russian army in Silesia, which nevertheless prevents the move from Kiel to Berlin. Nevertheless, Koning's Rule, my original intention, and the sample game in the rulebook indicate that the move Kiel to Berlin should take place.

Koning's Rule is still involved if we add to the above orders the following:

RUSSIA: Army Prussia supports army Silesia to Berlin.

GERMANY: Fleet Baltic supports army Kiel to Berlin.

Adding one support on each side does not escape or substantially alter the problem.

Now ~~if~~ we simply reverse the roles of the Russian pieces, thus changing the Russian orders to:

RUSSIA: Army Prussia to Berlin. Army Silesia supports Prussia to Berlin,

we have Boardman's Dilemma, is this a stand-off in Berlin, or does Germany enter?

The problem now seems to be brought into higher relief with your example, which is arrived at from the above by deleting the German fleet in the Baltic. Now literal interpretation calls for Germany to lose Berlin; while "realism" calls for a stand-off.

Note that if the German attack came from another direction in all the above cases - that is, if Germany had no piece in Berlin, and if a German army had been ordered from Bohemia to Silesia, with the support of the German army in Munich, then the Russian attack from Silesia against Berlin would have affected the Berlin situation in every case above in which that attack appears; whereas the support delivered by the Russian army in Silesia would not affect the Berlin situation in any case above in which it appears. But where the attack on Silesia is frontal, the rules indicate that either attack or support from Silesia should affect the battle for Berlin; while Koning's Rule, etc., say that the attack should not affect the Berlin battle, and perhaps imply that the support should not either.

Indeed, if one accepts Koning's Rule, but returns to literalism in Boardman's Dilemma, one has the situation in which a support is more robust than an attack.

Thus it appears that the realist needs an additional rule, which could cover both cases, and would vitiate both the attack and the support. Certain of my objections to new rules are known: the likelihood of more latent ambiguities and the possibility of a latent contradiction. There is also the hurdle to beginners presented by a very long list of rules.

I do not believe that such a rule would deleteriously affect the tone of the game. A battle on the Diplomacy board is usually between a strong side and a weak side. It is desired that the weak side generally be compelled to resort to delay and diplomacy to survive; that is, I do not wish purely tactical upsets, such as occur frequently in chess, for example, because I wish to drive the players into negotiation. Now it is obvious that the potential for delay could be so great that the game would not move, or so little that the weak side would not really have a chance to negotiate before it got obliterated. The realist position on the present issues favors the strong side. Thus one must consult his joints and ask whether it feels like the weak side survives too long or is wiped out too quickly. My feeling on this matter is that the game could tolerate this additional "strong side" rule.

Gamesmasters seem to be reaching this conclusion apropos of Moning's Rule, where the ambiguity between rules and sample game gives them an entering wedge. I am of the opinion that, for the sake of both consistency and "realism", they could treat the ambiguity there as extending in principle to Boardman's Dilemma, too.

((+The parallel which you indicate exists between the Moning's Rule situation and Boardman's Dilemma is undoubtedly close. I think that anyone strongly committed to Moning's Rule would say also that the support of any dislodged unit is automatically cut. Had this discussion occurred a year ago, when the tide of opinion was running strongly in favour of Moning's Rule, that parallel would, most likely, have carried the day. At that time John Smythe, the most notable opponent of Moning's Rule, had ceased publishing; most other gamesmasters had either committed themselves to the Rule, or were using it anyhow, without official declaration.

The tide is now swinging the other way. Boardman has declared against Moning's Rule. Charles Wells has become luke-warm in support of it. And so it goes. I hope to explain in a forthcoming issue why I have become disenchanted with the Rule. In the circumstances, to link Boardman's Dilemma with Moning's Rule is more likely to further weaken support of the Rule than to persuade many to adopt your solution of the Dilemma.

I was particularly interested in your remarks in the last paragraphs of your letter. I think most experienced players are aware of the fine balance in Diplomacy, as the game is now. As you say, it is, if anything, slightly over-weighted on the side of defence. That was typical of the period of history in which the game is set, when the machine gun ruled the battlefield and offensive counters, such as the tank, had not yet been much developed. The game would probably be improved by a slight change toward greater fluidity. As you say, Moning's Rule is a move in that direction, and so is a decision in Boardman's Dilemma which allows the force to be cut. So, for that matter, is the Coastal Crawl. Their adoption would tend to decrease the chance of stalemated positions. It would be easy, of course, to go too far in that direction, in which case the game would degenerate into a mere race to see who can slaughter the most of his neighbours the soonest. My feeling is increasingly, though, that if we are to have Moning's Rule and your solution of Boardman's Dilemma, then the place for these rules is in the rulebook, and not a gamesmaster's fiat. -jamcc)+

JOHN MORING, 318 South Belle Vista, Youngstown, Ohio, 44500.: PROB #49  
is just in today, and there are a number of things in it  
I want to comment on. I just noticed that on your rating system revision  
(#3) you do not list James Thomas. Thomas was the YUDC player who  
took over Italy from me in 1964B (Fredonia). Looking at Fredonia #28  
I see that at the conclusion of the game the surviving countries  
ranked as follows:

- (1) Austria--17
- (2) France -- 7
- (3) England & Germany -- 4 each
- (4) Turkey & Italy -- 1 each

Thomas should then get a -3 or somesuch. Have you confused him with  
another Jim and thus penalized someone unduly? Or was he just omitted  
in the shuffle?

Also, on the retreats question: One possible workable way to  
incorporate Calhamer's system for working out multi-possibility retreats  
involving 2 or more countries would be to have each player, when  
submitting his retreat, list all possible retreats in the order pre-  
ferred. Thus if Russia had to retreat from Warsaw, with possibilities  
of Prussia, Silesia, and Galicia, and if Germany had to retreat from  
Berlin with possibilities of Prussia and Silesia, the Russian player  
might list: (1) Silesia, (2) Prussia, (3) Galicia, and the German  
player: (1) Prussia, (2) Silesia. This would put the German army in  
Prussia and the Russian army in Silesia. If, however, the German  
player listed (1) Silesia, (2) Prussia, then the Russian army would  
end up in Galicia, and the German army would be annihilated. This  
procedure would require only the usual delay for retreats, though it  
would make nearly impossible the submitting of conditional moves  
by concerned players...so it would require a full retreat move.

((+ (With regard to the rating list question, please see the comment  
on page 4 of this issue. The omission of Thomas' name is not an over-  
sight, but is intentional and, I am afraid, you are the person who  
has to bear the -3 point loss. In this instance I realize that such  
an assignment of points is grossly unfair. I won't dig out my Fredonia  
file to verify matters but, as I remember it, the sequence of events  
went like this:

In the first two years of play as Italy you picked up two supply  
centres. Italy was then in a position to pursue 3 strategies: (1)  
Continue its alliance with Austria, and help in carving up Turkey.  
It would have netted one or two slices of that bird. As I was Turkey  
in that game I am thankful that he didn't do this. (2) Italy could  
have fallen upon his ally Austria. As the latter was fully engaged in  
the east and had, in addition, to keep units watching his German frontier  
since he had earlier invaded that country, Italy had a greater than  
normal chance against Austria. (3) France, at about that time, attacked  
his former ally, England, leaving the back door to France exposed.  
In other words you handed over a viable country with excellent  
prospects. Thomas adopted none of them. He dithered about and, mostly,  
sent in no moves at all. Obviously, in that game, whatever Italy achieved  
should be credited to you, and any losses it made should be debited to  
Thomas.

However, you will realize that this is not the usual sequence of events. Usually it is the resigning or, even worse, the defaulting, player who destroys a country's chances and leaves the replacement to try and pick up what pieces he can. My system of assigning points on countries which change hands in mid-game is based on what is usual. The moral would seem to be to play out all games oneself or to be very careful to choose a reliable replacement.

Lest you bring a gun with you on your trip west next summer to demand personal satisfaction for those lost 5 points, let me point out that the other two rating systems treat you just as badly in their own ways. Under Boardman's system Italy would have earned about 30 centre-year points in that game. You would get 10 of them and Thomas the remainder, in spite of the fact that you made all the gains and he allowed all the losses. Under Weinsel's system you net -1, and Thomas +1. Seemingly, one can't win.

Your suggestion about the alternative retreats is an excellent one. If anyone wants to use Calhamer's multi-retreat system, they will have to incorporate this feature to make it usable at all in postal play. - jamcc+))

ROLAND TZUDILER, 310 Garrison Street, Denver, Colorado, 80226.: I had not intended to write so soon but I just read the latest issue of PROB. Your "Current Game Rating List" fascinates me. What in Hell is a -12? I know I am not a great player, but...even I think I am better than ((name deleted)). Just one more question, what makes Smythe so excellent? I look forward to playing against him. Everyone has the same respect, even awe, for him. Why???

((+ (For the Rating list see explanation on page 4, and the reply to Moning's letter, above. The four games you abandoned when called up by the Air Force last year have cost you dear. The next time it happens be sure to choose good, reliable replacement players.

As for Smythe, he has certainly earned that respect you mention. By the time you read this, or shortly afterwards, he will have won 3 postal games. No one else has won more than one. He is a player who always makes the best of any opportunities offered. If you mean, How does he do it?, then all I can say is, I only wish I knew. - If you are serious in your wish to play in a game with him, better write Moning, whose address is given above. He is the gamesmaster most likely to be able to arrange it. -jamcc+))

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Mr. Calhamer's letter arrived as this issue was about to be run off. Including it, and the rest of the letter column, resulted in further delay in publication, and at a time when all mail services are clogged and slow. As a result, deadlines in both games are set back to Tuesday, 3 January 1967. PROBINGING would like to take this opportunity to wish all its players, subscribers, and exchanges, a happy holiday season, and the very best of good fortune for the New Year.

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PROBINGING is a journal of postal Diplomacy, recording games 1966AQ and 1966AV. It is published and edited by John A. McCallum, Dalston, Alberta, Canada. It sells for 10 cents a copy.