

BRITISH NAVAL STRATEGY IN WAR & PEACE

Or How to Insure That French Tadpoles Never Grow to be Big Bad Froggies

By Bill Parsons

This article is a response to Mr. Kenneth G. Waido's essay on Pro-French naval strategy in the Grand Campaign scenario of Avalon Hill's game *WAR & PEACE*. The purpose of this article is to describe and analyze several of the strategic alternatives available to the British player early in the game as Britain struggles to regain and retain mastery of the seas. In addition, the article will critically examine many of assertions and proposals made by Mr. Waido in his article.

Besides this brief introduction, the discussion is divided into three parts. The first will present a few general tips on overall British strategy. The next will discuss in detail the various options open to the British player in the opening turns of the game. This part of the discussion will largely follow the framework described in Mr. Waido's article. Lastly, we will deal with tactics and strategy for later turns as British seapower grows and matures.

Before proceeding further, two important points must be made. First, like Mr. Waido, I will assume that the game is between only two players. This is an important and brutal assumption because, as we shall see, one major problem afflicting the British player (and highlighted by Mr. Waido) disappears in a game with three or more contestants. Second, the reader should be warned that there are not one, but two different editions of naval rules to the Grand Campaign game. On reading Mr. Waido's article I got the impression that he was working from the first edition rules. Since the second edition makes Mr. Waido's French naval strategy unrealistic and untenable, I will proceed, unless otherwise noted, on the assumption that our two hypothetical players are using the first edition.

Basic British Naval Strategy

For the British player the war at sea centers around transports. Admittedly this statement seems to be somewhat counter-intuitive. When people think about naval warfare in the Napoleonic era, they normally do not consider transports. A quick glance at the mapboard and victory conditions confirms the importance of transport capacity, however. Britain, quite obviously, is an island. And to win the British must control the most production cities at the end of the game. As coincidence would have it, all but two of the non-British production cities reside on the Continent. The other two, Copenhagen and Stockholm, are for all intents and purposes islands. Thus, to win the British must put as many troops in supply as possible on the Continent. The only way to do this it with transports. Moreover, the most devastating way for the British to lose is to be successfully invaded. That maneuver requires transports too, of course.

So the first and most important rule to remember is this: Always seek to maximize the number of transports you have, while minimizing the number of transports everyone else has. For "everyone else" read France, Spain, Sweden, Denmark, and Russia. The Portuguese you can trust—at least most of the time.

Besides being crucial, transports are also scarce. There are only eleven in the entire game and only nine at the start. The British have three (including Portugal's) and can build two more; the Frogs (i.e., the French) have two; and the Spanish, Danes, Swedes, and Russians each have one. This means that the British have at most only five transports and a maximum lift capacity of ten infantry strength points. (If using second edition rules the lift capacity is reduced to one infantry or cavalry strength point per transport for a maximum total of five.)

The British just do not have enough transports for invasion and supply purposes, particularly if they are forced to fight the Americans. In that case they lose two transports as well as two naval units and four infantry. The odds are they will never see these units again—at least not anytime soon after their dispatch.

This leads to a second rule: there is no such thing as a "neutral" transport. In the British view, transports are either under British control or they are targets ripe for destruction or capture (preferably capture). The two most obvious targets are the Danish and Swedish transports at Copenhagen and Stockholm, respectively. As soon as possible the British should invade Copenhagen. They should blockade the port with a combat fleet (or two if they can be spared) and try to land enough troops to take the city on the turn of the invasion. This will insure that the opposing player does not have enough time to destroy his fleet before capture. Under no circumstances should the British allow the Frogs and Spanish, or even the Russians, to get to Denmark first. The British should attack Sweden only after Denmark has been secured.

There are three reasons for following this strategy. First, the acquisition of Denmark and Sweden will give the British four extra transports and combat units as well as associated infantry and cavalry. Second, this acquisition will *deny* these forces to the enemy. Third, it will give the Bulldog two extra production cities that are extremely difficult to attack, especially if England is holding on to the extra naval units. The beauty of this strategy is that for every fleet the British capture, they enjoy even more flexibility to make additional invasions and conquests, whereas it becomes increasingly more difficult for the French to do the same.

Needless-to-say, if and when the Russians are forced to go neutral, the British player should also try to acquire their fleet. Unfortunately, this will force the Russians to go Pro-French; but, what the hell, they were probably going to do that anyway. At least this way the British get a crack at their fleet before the Frogs get to use them.

In addition to being critical and scarce, transports are fun to use. Throughout the course of the game the British player should be able to derive a great deal of amusement and satisfaction from the employment of his transports and their associated impediments. Typically, transports are used to carry troops and supply points from one friendly hex to another. They can also be used by the British to transfer production points to allies. Since these

production points can then be used to build new units during the Reinforcement Phase, this is an important way for Britain to aid her ailing allies on the Continent. This rule is particularly important because it enables Britain to help her allies rebuild any naval losses they have suffered. Normally, without aid, most allied players are hard pressed to build new army units and rebuild naval fleets. Consequently, the naval forces are often ignored.

In any event, it is always a sound strategy to lend as many production points as possible to nations actively fighting the Frogs. After all, more nations fighting against France for longer periods of time means less fighting for the British. And less fighting for the British means that Britain will be better disposed to sweep onto the Continent during the later stages of the game and pick up production cities after everyone has been bled white. This leads to a third rule: whenever possible fight the Frogs by proxy, even if it means diverting your transports to lend production points to your allies. Other uses for transports include, of course, launching amphibious invasions and raids. But by far the most amusing and potentially useful transport operations involve "supinely menacing" the Frogs and engaging in "cutting-out expeditions". The British player supinely menaces the French by loading up his transports with troops, and then doing nothing with them. But—and this is the important part—he makes much ado about nothing. He happily hums to himself, chuckles knowingly, winks at other players (if any), and points and stare conspicuously at hexes in and around France. With any kind of luck the French player will be irritated to the point of distraction. And who knows? He might take you seriously enough to divert badly needed troops to defend against your fictitious invasion. This in turn will probably aid your allies and thus indirectly aid you. A fourth rule then is this: while in port always keep your transports fully loaded with troops and ready to roll.

Of all the naval operations open to the British player, the cutting-out expedition can be the most effective against enemy naval units. The objective is to seize selected ports in order to steal or destroy the enemy fleets within. In this type of operation the British player blockades the French fleet with his own and then, in the Naval Phase, transports as many troops as he can to a hex adjacent to the port. In the Combat Phase the port is immediately assaulted. If the assault is successful and the defending garrison is eliminated, one or more strength points should be detached to advance after combat into the port. (Remember: on the turn of invasion all disembarked units are considered to be in supply.) At this point the port will fall into British hands and the blockaded French units will be immediately captured intact. This means that even if the Frogs succeed in retaking their port in the following turn they will be unable to recapture their fleet unless they also successfully bring in naval units to blockade the port.

There is not a great deal the French can do the defeat this strategy, especially if they are at war with a major power. They have two options. They can

try to move their fleet out of the port before it is assaulted or deter British attack by placing large garrisons in every port. The problem with the first alternative is that the French can only change bases or run a blockade in the Naval Phase. Since the attack occurs in the British Naval Phase they cannot run away. Of course, they could try to intercept the British attack force at sea, provided a blockade is not already in place, but this tactic will work only if they manage to intercept and defeat the incoming force. The probability of this result is fairly low.

The problem with garrisoning is that at the start of the game the French have fleets in five ports. To properly garrison this many ports requires a great deal of manpower. For example, since the allies start with four transports which can carry a total of eight strength points, the Frogs will have to defend each port with at least four strength points. Overall this amounts to a bare minimum of 20 strength points.

It is amazing how many French players neglect to properly defend their naval bases. Also, as the game draws on many players will actually draw from their garrisons to bolster their armies. Finally, if the British accumulate enough transports, by either construction or capture, then no French port will be safe because the cost of continuously defending it will become so high that most players will balk at expending the necessary resources. It goes without saying that these problems apply to the Spanish player as well.

It must be emphasized that cutting-out expeditions are potentially the best way to destroy the French fleet. The Royal Naval working in conjunction with the British army can do more damage to the French navy while it is in port than by bringing about a major naval engagement such as Trafalgar. This paradoxical result depends upon the naval combat rules. The rules allow for only two consecutive rounds of successful combat. They also limit losses in any one round to one fleet captured or sunk. This means that the best the British can do is capture two units. Significantly, there are no limitations to the number of naval units that can be captured or sunk in port. This leads to a fifth rule: *never* pass up an opportunity to cut-out enemy fleets, even if it means delaying or foregoing other operations.

By this point the reader is probably tired of reading about transports and is wondering what he should do with his combat units. In a word, **BLOCKADE!** A blockade, particularly if instituted early in the game, accomplishes three objectives. First, it keeps the French navy fragmented and ripe for cutting-out. This in turn frustrates any French invasion intentions. Second, it allows transports to sail unescorted. (Fleets cannot intercept when under blockade.) Third, it forces the Frogs to attack British fleets at unfavorable odds whenever they want to regain the initiative. Blockades should be maintained at all costs. For example, there is little point in lifting a blockade in order to "draw out" the French navy for the "big showdown". As we have seen, it is impossible to reenact Trafalgar.

This does *not* mean, however, that the British should avoid combat. Far from it. They should always attack at odds of 2 to 3 or better. The British player should also consider attacking at 1 to 2 odds if he can afford the potential loss, feels lucky, or desperately needs to stop a particular force.

One other point needs to be emphasized. The British should always build new units and rebuild old ones as quickly as possible. They have the capability to build two new transports and three additional combat units. This represents a "cushion" against the Anglo-American War and other unnatural disasters. For this reason alone the British should give absolute economic and strategic priority to naval construction. Fortunately, British resources are such that she can build all of her naval

units and still strengthen the army and lend production points. There is, therefore, no excuse for delaying or neglecting naval construction.

The First Turn

The opening turn of the game is extremely important for naval commanders. The results of September 1805 will largely determine the course of the war at sea for a large part of the rest of the game. The opening placement has Britain blockading all of the Spanish forces and most of the French navy, with the exception of three combat units and a transport in the Mediterranean at Toulon. Opposing the unblockaded units the British player has one fleet with Nelson "somewhere in the Med", two allied units in reserve at their home ports, and another British fleet guarding Gibraltar. See *Table 1* for summary of all naval deployments.

The French, in effect, have been given one "free" opportunity to defeat the Royal Navy and break the blockade. If they are successful, it could take months, if not years, to clean up the mess. On the other hand, if the British foil the French attempt and establish a blockade on the first turn, the initiative will pass to Britain and probably remain there for the rest of the game.

Therefore, during the first turn the British should do whatever it takes to complete the blockade. Secondary priorities should include attempting to sink or capture enemy fleets and avoiding casualties.

Given this analysis, how should the British set up and respond? Mr. Waigo suggests placing Nelson and his fleet at Cartagena and refraining from trying to intercept the Toulon force as it moves out of port. Both of these suggestions are to some extent misleading and ill-advised.

In fact, the British have two options in response to the opening French move. The first option is to attempt to intercept the French fleet in the Med, while the second option is, of course, to sit tight. Mr. Waigo calls the first alternative "foolish", but I like to think of it as "high-risk". Under the high-risk option the British player should place Nelson and his fleet "at sea". This will add one to the die-roll on the Pursuit Table. The additional pip on the die-roll, plus one for the presence of Nelson, will give an overall 67% chance of success for interception. (Incidentally, the +1 benefit for Nelson is a second edition rule.) These are the best odds for interception in the game.

If the interception attempt by Nelson fails, the rest of the units in the Med should sit tight. Let the French player finish his move. Even if the Frogs

move into the Atlantic or North Sea zones, the British should still refrain from further interception attempts. In particular, do not try an interception with the Portuguese fleet—it would be suicide.

However, if Nelson is successful, the British are in business. Next they should have the naval units based at Gibraltar and off Cartagena attempt interception. At this point a rule dispute arises. Mr. Waigo cautions against using the Gibraltar fleet because this uncovers the port and allows the Spanish to attack and seize it during the Pro-French Combat Phase.

Mr. Waigo is absolutely correct—if it is assumed the Gib fleet cannot return to its base in the Pro-French Naval Phase *after* a successful interception and combat round. The rules are unfortunately silent on this point. That being the case, I think the British player has three options during the Pro-French Naval Phase after a successful intercept action: he can (1) return the fleet to its original port, (2) follow the defeated enemy force back to its port and blockade it, or (3) remain at sea as Mr. Waigo suggests. Of course, if the fleet is defeated after a successful interception it must automatically return to Gibraltar.

In any event, assuming the Gibraltar fleet can return to base, it should make the interception attempt before the fleet from Cartagena; for if it is successful, there is little need to use the other fleet. The Gib fleet along with Nelson and his fleet gives the British player a 2 to 3 combat ratio and a 67% chance of success, with zero probability of taking a casualty. The addition of the Cartagena fleet is not worth the better odds (1 to 1 with 83% chance of success) because it removes the blockade from Cartagena. But, if the Gibraltar intercept attempt fails, the Cartagena fleet must be used despite this problem.

Now the probability of each fleet intercepting is 33%. Taken together this means that there is a 67% chance that at least one of the units will join Nelson. These are not "foolish" odds. Moreover, even if neither unit successfully intercepts, all is not lost. While it is true that Nelson will then be forced to fight at 1 to 2 odds, he will still retain the two pip advantage on the die roll. This gives the British a 50% chance of forcing the three French Toulon units to retreat, a 33% probability that Nelson will be forced to retreat, and a 17% chance that he will be destroyed. In short, even under "worst case" conditions Nelson has an 83% chance coming through unscathed.

A statistical summary of the high-risk strategy for Nelson fighting alone (A) and with another unit

Table 1
Initial Naval Deployments and Garrisons

City	Nation	Naval	Army	Leader	Blockade
St. Petersburg	Russia	1F, 1T	5I, 1C	1 "0" L	
Stockholm	Sweden	1F, 1T	6I, 2C	1 "0" L	
Copenhagen	Denmark	1F, 1T	3I		
Amsterdam	France	1F	3I, 3I(H)	1 "0" L	Britain 1F
London	Britain		6I, 1I(K), 2C	1 "0" L	
Boulogne	France	1T	3I		
Brest	France	3F	4I	1 "0" L	Britain 3F
Plymouth	Britain	2T			
Rochefort	France	2F	4I		Britain 2F
Corunna	Spain	2F, 1T	4I	Blake	Britain 2F
Lisbon	Portugal	1F, 1T	4I, 1C	1 "0" L	
Cadiz	Spain	1F	4I		Britain 1F
Gibraltar	Britain	1F	1I		
Cartagena	Spain	1F	4I	LaRomana	Britain 1F
Toulon	France	3F, 1T	6I		
Anywhere in Med	Britain	1F		Nelson	

F = Combat Fleet
T = Transport
I = Infantry
C = Cavalry
L = Leader

(B) is given in Table 2. It is assumed that Nelson has already intercepted the French fleet.

The advantages of the high-risk option are obvious. The most likely result, one that will happen 50% of the time, is that the Frogs will be forced to retreat. There is in addition a small probability that the British will sink a French unit. Significantly, the probability of this happening is almost twice that of the British losing a ship. Overall the British have a 61% chance of victory and a 94% probability that Nelson will be unharmed. The odds are definitely in their favor.

Just as important as the favorable odds is the decisive effect a British victory can have at this stage of the game. If the British manage to force the French back into Toulon, they will be able to establish a complete blockade in their Naval Phase. With any luck this will "put paid" to French aspirations at sea. This result alone makes it worthwhile for the British player to try to intercept and fight the French. The potential for this decisive outcome, plus the favorable odds, renders the high-risk option a reasonable and even preferred strategy.

The disadvantage of this option, on the other hand, must be mentioned. Basically, the British stand a very small chance of suffering a devastating defeat or series of defeats. Table 2 shows that there is a 6% probability that Nelson will be killed. While the loss of his fleet is not that bad, his death would be a blow to the British naval effort. Unfortunately, the train of disastrous events may not stop at Nelson's death.

After sinking Nelson, the French get to finish their move. In all likelihood they will go on to attack a British fleet on blockade duty. At 2 to 1 odds they have a 33% chance of sinking it and another 33% probability of lifting the blockade by forcing it to retreat. If the worst happens they will have killed Nelson, sunk two units, partially lifted the blockade, and have four naval units free.

Another way to embarrass the British (and this is really a worst case scenario) is to defeat Nelson along with a two unit fleet. Here it is assumed the second fleet came from Cartagena, the Gibraltar fleet having failed to intercept. In this case the three French units will be able to combine with the Spanish fleet at Cartagena to make two 2 to 1 attacks on British blockade fleets (eg, at Cadiz and Amsterdam). Although the Frogs would not kill Nelson, they could conceivably sink two units and free a total of six units from the blockade. Also, in yet another situation they could fight Nelson and his fleet and force them to retreat. This would then allow the French to make a 2 to 1 attack on a blockade fleet.

All of these permutations of disaster (plus a fourth), along with their probability of occurrence, are summarized in Table 3. The probabilities are based on the assumption that Nelson has already intercepted the French.

The point of this rather esoteric analysis in Table 3 is to show that, while the British do risk incurring several different types of disasters when following a high-risk strategy, the probability of any one of them happening is extremely low. About the best the French can hope for is to kill Nelson and sink his naval unit and even this is a long shot. In summary, the principal advantages of the high-risk option is to allow the British to complete their blockade at favorable odds. The main disadvantage consists of a fairly low probability that Nelson will be killed, one fleet sunk, and the blockade badly damaged.

The other possible response to the French opening move is to literally do nothing. The British player allows the Frogs to break out of Toulon and attack one of his fleets on blockade. Under this strategy he cautiously and passively hopes for the best. Mr. Waido recommends this option.

Table 2

Event/Odds	A: Nelson + 1 Br. F.	B: Nelson + 2 Br. F.	Total Odds*
Nelson + 1 Br. Fleet Sunk	17%	0%	6%
Nelson + 1 Br. Fleet Retreat	33%	—	11%
Nelson + 2 Br. Fleet Retreat	—	33%	22%
All French Fleet Retreat	50%	50%	50%
1 French Fleet Sunk, Others Retreat	0%	17%	11%

*That is, the combined probability that the event will happen given that either A or B can occur in an interception attempt: A is twice as likely to occur as B (67% vs 33%).

There are advantages to the "cautious" strategy. First, and most important, it does not endanger Nelson. It also limits the number of naval units the French can destroy to a maximum of one. In addition, it has the redeeming virtue of simplicity.

On the other hand, it has several disadvantages. Amazingly enough, the Frogs actually have a better chance of sinking a British fleet under this strategy than under the high-risk option. They have a flat 33% chance of success. Thus the probability is over five times greater than under the high-risk strategy. Another drawback is that it denies the British player an opportunity to sink a French unit. In fact, it is unlikely that the cautious option will force the Frogs to pay any kind of price for their aggressive behavior. Unlike the other option, it is not calculated to deter French enthusiasm for naval activity. Finally, Mr. Waido's recommended solution aids and abets the French attempt to destroy the British blockade. This result is exactly the opposite of the high-risk alternative, which seeks to force the Frogs back into their aquatic lair at Toulon.

This leaves the question of where to place Nelson if the British player decides to follow the cautious strategy. Mr. Waido suggests Cartagena but Gibraltar is probably a better location. The problem with Cartagena is that it encourages the French player to leave the Med and attack either Cadiz or Amsterdam. And if he is smart he will take the transport with him. The net result is to induce the French player to concentrate his forces by moving closer to Britain. This increases the threat of invasion.

For example, while in the Med the transport at Toulon is not close enough to properly invade England. The only hex it can reach, assuming Plymouth is defended, is at the extreme western end of the island. Most players will agree this is a fairly stupid place to land an invasion. This means the French must first move their transport closer to England on a turn prior to the invasion. There is no reason why the British player should embolden the Frogs to make this preliminary move on the first

turn of the game. Instead, he should refrain from reinforcing the fleet on blockade at Cartagena. With luck this might induce the French to attack there rather than striking at one of the other locations.

British interests are also served by placing Nelson at Gibraltar. The location is advantageous because it allows Nelson to run intercepts into both the Mediterranean and Atlantic sea zones. Also, it is closer to Britain.

Which option the British player chooses to respond to the French opening move will ultimately rest on the personality of the player. Aggressive or lucky players should use the high-risk option. Timid or unlucky players should consider the cautious strategy. There are two final factors to consider when making your decision. First, British players should be aggressive at sea. Let the French take the passive approach. Second, if the Frogs try to break out with the three units and the transport, I would recommend attempting to intercept. One does not want that transport to get any closer to England. This concludes the discussion on British responses to the French opening move.

What the British do in their own Naval Phase is, of course, contingent on what the Frogs managed to accomplish. As we have seen, any number of situations could develop. Realistically, however, the British should be confronted by one of the following situations: (a) they have suffered no losses and there are 2-4 unblockaded enemy units, (b) they have lost one fleet (and possibly Nelson) and there are 3-4 unblockaded units, or (c) they have lost two units (and possibly Nelson) and there are 4-6 unblockaded units.

In situation (a) the British are in excellent position. Significantly, this situation is the one most likely to occur. Under (a), the worst that could happen is that the British could find that the French have managed to free four naval units. For example, the British could adopt a cautious strategy and the Toulon fleet could break out, sail to Amsterdam and lift the blockade there by forcing the covering fleet to retreat to London. There would be four

Table 3

Event/Odds	Nelson Killed	1 Br. F. Sunk	2 Br. F. Sunk
Nelson + 1 British Fleet Sunk	6%	6%	2%
Nelson + 1 British Fleet Retreat	0%	4%	0%
Nelson + 2 British Fleets Retreat & 1 of the British Fleets from Gibraltar	0%	4%	0%
Nelson + 2 British Fleets Retreat & 1 of the British Fleets from Cartagena	0%	4%	1%

French units at Amsterdam, one British fleet at London, Nelson and two units at Gibraltar, and Toulon would be empty. All other naval forces would be employed as shown in Table 1.

Given our example, what should the British player do? What he wants to do is blockade Amsterdam. To do this he needs the two allied units. He also must move his fleets in such a way as to deter the Frogs at Amsterdam from attempting interception. Finally, he does not want the allied fleets to stand alone or lower the morale of a joint allied-British force. All of these conditions can be met by using the tactic of "blockading by shell game".

Following our example, "blockade by shell game" works in this manner. First, the British player moves the Portuguese fleet at Lisbon to Brest. Second, he moves the Gibraltar fleet to Brest. Third, he moves Nelson and his fleet from Gibraltar to Brest, where he picks up two of the original Brest units. Nelson and the three units then continue on to Amsterdam. Brest remains under blockade by an original Brest fleet, the Portuguese fleet, and the fleet from Gibraltar. Note that the Portuguese fleet has been used in conjunction with the British without lowering their morale.

Now the French at Amsterdam could try to intercept Nelson when he enters the North Sea sea zone; buy why bother? Chances are best that the French would be able to intercept with only two combat units. Fifth, the British player now moves the Russian fleet at St. Petersburg to Amsterdam in order to complete its blockade. At this point a rule dispute arises. Can the French at Amsterdam try to intercept the Russian fleet before it reaches Amsterdam?

The answer must be "yes" because the French are not yet fully blockaded. But the catch is that the three British units already off Amsterdam should be able to attack the Frogs as they move out of port. The rules are not clear on this point but logic would dictate that the British should get a crack at the French as they sail past them. Also, rule *F6a*, stipulates that "when the active player's naval units enter a coastal hex which is occupied by naval units controlled by the inactive player, the active player may initiate combat against units in that hex . . .". The point is that when the French leave the port they will occupy a coastal hex which the British, as the active player, have entered. Thus, the British should be allowed to attack before the French make contact with the Russians. Sixth, once Amsterdam is blockaded, the British should move the fleet at London to Gibraltar in order to cover the port. Everything is now under control. The British have blockaded all enemy fleets, properly made use of the allied fleets, protected Gibraltar, and deterred interception attempts. Also, Nelson has been moved to the highest concentration of enemy forces, where he can do the most good. All that is left to do is tidy up the transports.

This is done by moving the Portuguese transport at Lisbon to London. There are two reasons for the move. First, it concentrates the transports for invasion purposes. Second, the transport is now in a position to carry reinforcements to Portugal in the event of war. In addition, one of the transports at Plymouth should be moved to Portsmouth in order to reduce the attrition of army units to be placed on board. Finally, during the remainder of the turn the British should build two army strength points at Plymouth, begin building a combat fleet, and move two army units from London to Portsmouth. All the army factors should be loaded onto the transports. This concludes the British turn of September 1805.

In situation (b) things are a little trickier. Here the British have lost one fleet and there are several French fleets unblockaded. Since they have lost a fleet, the British cannot simultaneously blockade all of the enemy units and protect Gibraltar. One of

the worst ways this problem could arise is by getting Nelson killed in a single-handed interception. For the sake of variety, let us assume the French then went on to Cadiz and drove the British fleet there to Gibraltar. We now have one Spanish and three French units at Cadiz, two British units at Gibraltar, and Toulon is empty. All other fleets are deployed as shown in Table One.

This situation calls for the tactic of "blockading on the cheap". Here is what you do. First, move the fleet blockading Cartagena to Gibraltar, pick up the two units there, and move all three to Cadiz. Second, move the Portuguese fleet to Cadiz. This completes the blockade there. Third, move the Russian fleet to Brest. At this point you have one spare naval unit at Brest. Do you use it to blockade Cartagena or cover Gibraltar?

Using the extra unit to blockade Cartagena seems to make sense as long as the French do not run a blockade. If they do, they can capture Gibraltar with the aid of the Spanish army. And once Gibraltar is taken the British are not likely to recapture it because of the special protection rule (see *F2h*). So the best is to blockade on the cheap by evacuating the Med and leaving Cartagena unblockaded. Use the extra fleet to cover Gibraltar. Leaving the Spanish fleet at Cartagena unblockaded makes for a cheap blockade, but it will not create much of a problem. In February 1806 the newly built British fleet will be able to fill the gap. Until then there probably will not be a great deal of British naval activity in the Med anyway. As a result, there is no need to worry about interception problems unless the French move the Cartagena fleet to another sea zone. Another potential problem is that the French could try to use it to lift the blockade somewhere else. But the best odds they could obtain would be 1 to 1, minus one. These are poor odds (i.e., 33% chance forced to retreat, 16% probability sunk, and 16% chance captured). Note that the fleet could not be used together with the friendly blockaded fleet to make a combined 2 to 1 attack on the blockading force. In this case the British would be subjected to two 1 to 1 attacks.

Thus, the unblockaded fleet should not unduly embarrass the British. If it does become a problem, they can always blockade it with the Gibraltar fleet, wait for the 1806 reinforcement, and hope for the best until then. Blockading on the cheap works best when only one enemy unit is left unblockaded. If two or more units are free they could be combined to attack a single British blockade fleet at 2 to 1 odds.

In situation (c), where the Royal Navy has lost two naval units, the British are in trouble. In this case they must either blockade on the cheap and leave Gibraltar unprotected or pack up the blockade. Put bluntly, they should set Gibraltar adrift. In the final analysis keeping Gibraltar is not worth the loss of the blockade. The importance of Gibraltar lies in its ability to allow Britain to safely project into the Med. Underlying this view are several assumptions including (1) Britain will not have access to any other bases in the Med, (2) the Royal Navy will suffer adverse combat results while in the Med, and (3) the Med is critical to British grand strategy. Within the context of the game, all of these assumptions are suspect, particularly the last one. The "bottom line" is that Britain can win the game without the Med but not without the blockade. Fortunately, British players will only very rarely be faced with this unsavory situation.

Also, there is sometimes one other alternative response to a type (c) predicament. It is possible the British could arrange the blockade so that the enemy units are concentrated in a small number of ports. This would allow for much larger blockading forces off each port. For example, they could blockade twelve naval units in three groups of four. In this case they could allow up to five enemy units

to remain in unblockaded and still retain 1 to 1 minus one odds in the event of an attack. Of course, allowing that many units to be free would raise havoc with the movement of transports.

The Later Turns

There probably will not be much opportunity for naval activity in the closing months of 1805. If September went well for the British—and in all probability it should—the blockade will be fully in force. With the Frogs caged, the British should start thinking about invading Denmark. The problem in 1805 is that they do not have enough naval units to blockade France, Spain and Denmark. They are exactly one combat unit short. Of course, they could blockade on the cheap and use the extra fleet against Denmark. But overall, it is far more prudent to wait for completion of the new fleet in early 1806.

However, even in 1805, the British should be on the lookout for possible cutting-out operations. Since the Frogs are already under blockade, they would not need escorts for the transports. With luck the French or Spanish might start reducing their port garrisons. Priority targets include ports with transports or high concentrations of combat units.

By February or March of 1806 the British should be prepared to invade Denmark. Unless they are under any pressure, the invasion should be launched in March in order to avoid winter attrition. (Remember that attrition is rolled after the Naval Phase but before the Combat Phase). The four allied transports should be loaded with eight regular infantry strength points. Uxbridge, a "+1" leader, should accompany the British infantry. The three British transports and at least one combat fleet should sail first for Copenhagen. Nelson, if alive, should command the combat fleet, which will be used to blockade the port. The British transports should land at an adjacent hex, to be followed by the Russian transport after Copenhagen has been blockaded.

With eight infantry factors the British will have 1 to 1 odds even after attrition. They will also have a two pip die roll advantage due to their higher morale and Uxbridge. The assault should be successfully completed by the end of the March turn after three to four rounds of combat. The allies should lose about three to four factors in casualties.

In April, all of the fleets should sail back to Britain and Russia for infantry replacements. In May they are again ready for action. They now have five transports, three British (including the captured Dane), one Russian, and one Portuguese. At this point they should seriously consider a cutting-out expedition. Boulogne and Brest are both good targets; but Boulogne is better because it has a transport. Also, it is initially garrisoned with only three infantry factors. The British should use all five transports, ten regular infantry, Uxbridge, and a combat fleet. By June all fleets, including the captured French transport, should be back in port loading up with fresh infantry.

Sweden should be invaded in July. It is a tough nut to crack, particularly by seaborne assault. Those wily Swedes have got six infantry and two cavalry factors at Stockholm. The British should use a bare minimum of five transports, ten regular infantry, Uxbridge, Nelson and a combat fleet. This will give the allies the same odds as at Copenhagen. It is now obvious why the British needed to invade Denmark first. The extra Danish transport must carry the additional infantry required to compensate for attrition losses incurred before the assault on Stockholm.

One last point about Sweden. Mr. Waudo suggests that the Russians (as Pro-French allies) should invade Sweden via the overland route. In fact, the overland route is an optional rule. The

British player should *not* agree to it. Without the rule, it is impossible for the Russians and extremely difficult for the Frogs to take Sweden. Thus the Swedish plum falls into British hands.

The timetable outlined above is certainly sanguine. Major problems that could disrupt British planning include the Anglo-American War, the invasion of Portugal, and the defection of the Russians. There is nothing the British can do to prevent a war with the United States, but its probability of occurring in 1806 is only 17%. They cannot do much about Portugal either, but they should reinforce it as soon as possible and entrench a sizeable force outside of Lisbon. Russia is an entirely different matter, however.

As Mr. Waido points out, under the alliance rules Russia can be forced fairly easily and quickly to go neutral and later Pro-French. Fortunately, there are three ways around this problem. The first solution is the simplest and most effective. Go find another player! Under the rules the third player must take Russia. And under rule *Gld.* major states controlled by an individual player are *not* subject to French alliance machinations. As noted earlier, a second "half" solution is to cut-out, capture or destroy the third Russian fleets once they go neutral. Mr. Waido suggested the third solution. His idea is to disregard *Landwehr* production cities for the purposes of affecting faction status in the Alliance Phase. This would in effect reduce France's ability to "turn" Russia by reducing the number of production cities she can conquer in Austria. Mr. Waido's suggestion is fair and sensible and should be wholeheartedly accepted.

In conclusion, the British, with a little luck, should be able to completely blockade the French and Spanish in 1805 and conquer Denmark and Sweden by late 1806 or early 1807. After that they should continue to operate cutting-out expeditions and start beating Boney about the head and shoulders on the Continent. I leave these later moves in the capable hands of the readers of Avalon Hill's magazine *The GENERAL*.

