*"Strange as News from Bree..."*
The Lord of the Rings, chapter 9

# Stopping Agents!
## How to neutralise their impact
*by Clint Oldridge*

From time to time I get a player sending in an irate email saying how they have had 5 characters killed this turn from agents and when are we going to do something about them? With that in mind, and using my experience as a player, I've written some things that I think are effective tactics for neutralising enemy agents.

On a more general note Commanders are essential with armies, Emissaries can take a PC with no risk to themselves, and Mages kill at a distance so each character class has it's own strength. You can't easily stop Agents but you can minimise their impact. It's a fast moving game and death is a common enough occurrence so don't grow too accustomed to that big army or tasty character that you've spent weeks building up. (I have listed actions you can take to minimise agents spoiling your fun in order of importance as I perceive it, top first).

**Economy**: Take out the enemy pcs and steal gold from them. Keep the market low and the enemy agent nations (mostly DS) will find it hard to support naming new characters. When they steal from you (or you suspect that they are going to) run a zero economy. (Ie have no cash to steal).

**Backups**: Having multi-class Com/Ags in your army as back-up commanders is a bit of a double egded sword as they can be killed in combat and are easily spotted with "divine character with forces" spell. But it does work. Often an agent nation can only afford to send 2 agents at best to take out an army. So having multiple back-up commanders keeps your army alive.

**Downgrading**: If the enemy agents are downgraded to you and you not them then there is a plus 15% chance of assassinating. Players often underestimate the value of downgrading – as a rule I would advise any FP to downgrade against the Cloud Lord at the earliest tactical opportunity. (Ice King, Dunlendings, Noldo, Sindar, Long Rider are nations with decent agents available in large numbers so downgrading against them is often useful if they are opposed to you).

**Expendable characters**: Players often get attached to a character. From a purely wargame perspective, and I appreciate that there are many ways of enjoying the game, a character is a capital order, 5,000 gold and the relevant skill to do so. Similarly you can often anticipate character deaths. As this comes after the 6xx orders you can name a character to replace your loss ready for next turn.
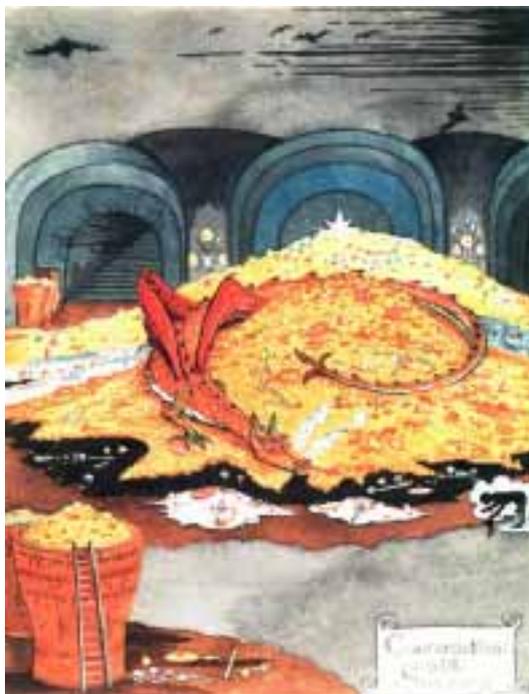
**Target rich environment**: Obviously hot-spots are difficult to avoid – so use tactical attacks – chat to your team-mates and organise attacks so that you and 5 other nations turn up. Not a lot the agent nations can do in a target rich environment. Use the 355 order – often players will go for the biggest armies as 925 I often the best way of finding targets – so you can 230-255 and then 355 saving those expensive armies.

**Outmaneouvre them**: Don't be at the location they are at. When moving armies use the 780 command to transfer ownership of the army – then their scouts for armies (905) will fail. Be in unexpected locations and keep the armies off map whenever possible. (FP have the advantage of lots more map information – use it).

**Information**: Locating the artefacts or the dangerous characters themselves is very important using 420,430, 418, 428 and some Encounters.

**Population centres**: Put your characters in big Fortifications, with high loyalties – this has a big impact. If they are in armies that can be very helpful as well as the size of the army is rumoured to have a defensive agent value. Capitals appear to have a bigger agent defensive bonus as well. This works for enemy PCs as well - as long as they are not the same as the nation doing the assassinations.

**Guarding agents**: If you are going up against a 80 level agent then you need at least a 40 agent to guard (note Agents guard (605/610) upto 2x their level so with a 40 rank guarding agent they have anything from 40-80 guard rating without any other factors thrown in). Agents need to be around 60+ to do an assassination attempt so you should be able to achieve some level of parity here.

**Doubling**: Emissaries are very good against lone agents. Doubling an agent makes only your nation safe against pro-active agent orders from that nation. (Note they are not a 100% defence - if an agent's assassination/kidnap roll means that they would die

**Battle of the Five Armies (Bofa)**
*[Game 4]*
2week turnaround
Veteran or Beginners game - (Vet: ALL 1650 orders available): 3 Nations taken but all nations available. Note that FP have been upgraded.

**1650**
*[Game 135]*
1week turnaround
Waiting List, Upto 2 nation game.
17 nations available.
*[Game 37]*
2 week turnaround
1-2, 4-6, 9 available (1 nation "any" in addition taken)

**2950**
*[Game 236]*
2 week turnaround
Email game. Waiting List.
15 nations available.

**1000**
*[Game 149]*
2 week turnaround
17 available. 2 FP, 6 DS taken - no format decioded yet, probably Normal though.

*Note please ask for variant games we can try to get you opposition for them if you are interested - mostly Grudge teams though - if I get 10 players for any single type of game then I will put it up for general availability below and push it.*

**Grudge Games we need opposition for:**
**1650**: None
**2950**: Matt Ashley (FP preferred), James (Group of prisoners)
**1000**: None
**WoTR**: None
**Last Alliance**: None
**World Championship**: None


Middle Earth PBM Games

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then they will often succeed in the attempt .) Critical successes/high agent rank can effectively negate the effects of doubling.

✗ **Rumours**: Use the rumours that come out on the turns. They can give you useful information for locations of agents but does take a lot of work to organise.

✗ **Mage Squads**; Weakness/Sickness/Curse: Even the best of agents die against these squads.

✗ **Challenges**: All but Emis have a higher challenge rank so use it. Yes the agent can 215 but you can catch an in-cautious Agent and if they do refuse, unless in a company, they're stuck at that location.

✗ **Artefacts**: Getting the artefacts and/or fast tracking these Mage squads can be an essential defence. Mages can be used to get the Agent/

Stealth artefacts themselves - if you get them first then they don't have them. You can also use smaller agents to steal the items that the enemy agents are using and use the agent artefacts against them.

✗ **Multi-class Agents** : If you can multi-class your characters with agent rank. Agent gives you a chance to escape if you are kidnapped [the choice of better agents] each turn (comparing agent ranks).

✗ **A tooth for a tooth**: All the above failed? Try playing from the DS side would be my advice here and see it from their perspective.

Okay, to this is a quick insight into aggressive agent defence. Not comprehensive and I could go into a lot more detail about specific situations but I hope it gives you some ideas on how to combat this very effective character class.

# From out of the West
## Projects Status & Ed Muses on Life!

Thought you might like to know the status on the projects we're working on:

**Automagic (AM)**
Pretty much sorted now. Thanks to all those players who have taken the time to work out the intricacies of this, what I have found, very useful program. The usual teething problems have occurred, as expected, but we're pretty happy with the way it's going now. Mostly the files that we have problems with are due to the way they come through due to the way that servers deal with attachments (ie embed them in the main body of the email). If you are able to use it then please do so.

**Middle Earth Order Writer (MEOW)**
We've just had the 1st version of this through now. Lots of work yet to go on it but it's very promising. We estimate completion date around September, so expect December... [:-)]

**Jester - accounts program**
Work on this has presently come to a near halt, but still working through it all. Lots of little bits for that that will make your life easier.

**MAIN**
Our program that converts the AM and MEOW files so that we can auto-input them. This is working well although we're still seeing some interesting bits and pieces. It's working 99.99% of the time - plesase don't put <provide> as a name - leave it blank! With games having around 1/3 of the turns by AM format we're not able to save much (if any) time with this at present but we're working on it.

**Graphical representation of the game.**
Looking quite good - it's capable of reading turns and showing them on the map - but nowhere near release (so don't ask). We might need playtesters for this - so keep an eye out (don't contact us yet). This will be able to export the files to other players in the team and help with order creation and the like. As a sub part of this plan we're working on being able to import your nation so that you can use MEOW and/

or AM for easy turn creation at your end and lots of other very useful bits and pieces such as Army movement, army sizes etc.
As a side issue to that we're looking for some people who can do Colour art for this potentially though to represent the characters that you see in your Portraits.

Clint

*A quick glance around the office gives the impression that today is a nice quiet day - not much going on (it being Friday and all, I've even found time to write this). All the games for today have been done, backed up, the couple of edit's have been sorted out and all is right with the world. Well I suppose it is but I did have to get up early.*

*It's all gone so quiet that I can even hear Clint complaining about a paper cut in the other room. Yes it's true we still use paper in the office, which is a bit of a shock considering the number of email players - the automagic system is letting us cut down on the amount we print off though (so if you are using it you are helping the enviroment too - besides saving me entering your turn - not that I'm biased).*

*I guess I should probably not head too far off topic and into the rest of my life - lots of trapeze type antics going on there, new show coming up though called ImMortal as part of the Cardiff Summer Festival which seems to be taking up too much of my time - I can only manage to play in a couple of games at the moment.*

*Just starting in a new one - looks like it's going to be hard work for a while learning a couple of new nations. I normally get to play Rhudaur or the Eothraim or something. I've got quite good at the whole military - blocking, holding them off another turn or two until support arrives, so it should be interesting playing a higher powered nation. What do you do with these characters with stats over 30? Perhaps retire them is the best solution - but then I suppose I have to be the support that arrives to save the day.*

*Well, only another couple of hours and I can slope off and have a think about it.*

*Cheers*

*Edward [:)]*

*There are many rumours concerning changes which have been made to the forthcoming second film of the trilogy. Don't believe all of them! Nevertheless, in the interests of gossip*

**Which Two Towers?**

FILMS: Gandalf says the following line, ""The veiling shadow of the East takes shape. There is a union now between the Two Towers… Orthanc and Barad-dûr…"

BOOKS: The postscript at the end of The Fellowship of the Ring says, "The second part is called The Two Towers, since the events recounted in it are domininated by Orthanc, the citadel of Saruman, and the fortress of Minas Morgul that guards the entrance ot Mordor."

COMMENT: Many readers of the book assume that the second tower referred to is Barad-dûr, since Minas Morgul is mentioned only in passing. Frodo is journeying to Mordor in his portion of the story, and Barad-dûr is the seat of power in Mordor.

**More Frightening Treebeard Encounter**

FILMS: After escaping the Uruk-hai, Merry and Pippin stumble through Fangorn Forest, frightened and hungry, until Treebeard smacks them on the head with a"branch" and picks the terrified two up.

BOOKS: The hobbits are nourished by lembas and journey through Fangorn rather cheerfully. They travel for a few miles before encountering Treebeard, who talks with them briefly before picking the pair up.

COMMENT: Lembas is a luxury that can be cut to accommodate the film's running time. A more dramatic encounter between Treebeard and the hobbits makes for a more effective cut to another scene in the film.

**Funnier Treebeard Encounter**

FILMS: Pippin climbs a tree, that blinks to an open eye. Pippin is pulling himself up upon the nose, turns and looks straight at the eye, turns to tell Merry something, when he realizes he just saw an eye in a tree.

BOOKS: Pippin and Merry discover Treebeard when the Ent walks up behind the two hobbits and begins talking to them.

COMMENT: This is a more visually interesting introduction to Treebeard than it would be if the book were followed precisely.

# Proposed Changes

## Part 1: Rationalization & Additions

In the Spring of 2001, Lucas Cuccia began a thread on the mepbmlist@yahoogroups.com email list regarding his ideas for a 2$^{nd}$ Edition of MEPBM. Much discussion was generated! Laurence Tilley has more recently (July 2001) put together a compilation of his favourites from the thread along with many of his own excellent ideas. Here I present as complete listing as I have found from both sources, interspersed with, of course! my own ideas, some of which have been shared on either the lists or one of the two MEPBM internet message boards.

The motivations behind these proposed changes essentially keep to the following list:

1) Balance a game perceived as slanted towards the Dark Servants.
2) Improve combat
3) Make racial differences meaningful
4) Increase realism and internal "world" consistency

Below I have listed the proposed changes in a strictly arbitrary manner. I don't believe I've left any out, but if I have, I'd love to hear about it or any of your own! I have declined to credit the individual ideas because for those I can trace, there are 5 I cannot. Lucas and Laurence deserve credit for their work in this regard, amongst various mepbmlist regulars. I have also included my own commentary on each item, regardless of its source (maybe even my own…). *Italic* text signifies my disagreement, and hopefully, reasonable cause for such. Most of the remaining I am in agreement or at least acceptance of. Wherever possible, I have attempted to follow Laurences Two Principles in this regard:

1) Good fantasy worlds should be internally consistent.
2) Don't add complexity, unless there's a real advantage. Simplify where you can do so without disadvantage.

And, Rà is read as Rationale:

**Rationalizing Orders**

1. Add orders 232 Attack Navy and 237 Attack Nation Navy – ship on ship combat, no troops go ashore without explicit orders.
2. 240 Defend change – When a nations fortifications are present in the hex, the army issuing this order automatically gains the defense value of the fortification. Rà why fight in the open when you have a wall?

*Why would an attacking army continue if their intended victim ran behind the walls? Even ragged ranks would pause and say "Um, sir?"*

3. 280 Abandon Ships: Delete. Rat: silly remote control order. A commander signing papers in the capital do not destroy ships 1000 miles away….
4. 310, 315, 320, 325 orders switch names from Caravan to Market. Rà this represents the elimination of Trade Caravans in tandem with the modification of Caravan movement, as discussed later.

*I'll have some red commentary under the movement section, so I have to maintain consistency and disregard the necessity for these changes.*

5. 351, 353, 370, 375 orders are deleted. Rà these are the Transfer and Upgrade weapons and armour orders that are never used and serve merely to confuse newbies.

*I've seen these used, and used them myself for those rare occasions when metal arrives at the last turn of building a large army. Backups build weapons and armour and improve the troops on the march. Breaks 2$^{nd}$ principle by simplifying to a disadvantage.*

6. 452 Make Ships: required info includes Type of ship to combine 2 orders.
7. 470 Destroy Pop Centre Stores: changed to a miscellaneous order issuable by any character.
8. 520 Influence Loyalty: combines the two emissary orders to effect a loyalty change, where successful, "for" the nation of the emissary.

*Unfortunately, like many others, the current 520 order is there to allow nationals to improve loyalty before the enemy gets the podium, and attempts to reduce it. When an emissary is unable to 525 because the pop is of the same nation, just imagine him at the podium with only one speech, unable to ad-lib…*

9. 565 Reduce Population Centre: combines with Disband Camp, really, reducing a camp 1 level disbands it…
10. 745, 755, 790, 810, 820, 870 and maybe others: Now Army Commanders can issue these orders. Rà An army commander can leave an army by any method. If another command character is present, the Transfer Command order is not necessary, as it is automatic (as when the commander dies) and if there are no other commanders present, the Commander thus abandons the army. Leaderless armies are dealt with later.
11. 870 Move Join: a character can move and join a Company also.
12. 905, 910, 915, 930: Agent scouting orders are made more difficult, give skill increases, and the failure messages are altered to be less obvious (everyone knows that if a skill rank title isn't given, it ain't accurate..)

*By giving skill rank, agents increase faster, but making*
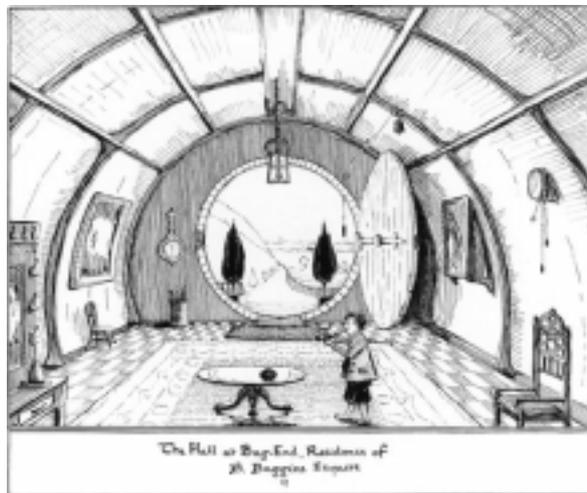
# silver screen (cont)

## Gandalf's Resurrection Shown on Screen
FILMS: Gandalf is shown being resurrected as Gandalf the White while lying naked upon the snowy mountain-top after his battle with the Balrog.

BOOKS: Gandalf merely discusses this event when he meets up with Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli.

COMMENT: It is more effective film storytelling to show things rather than have characters talk about them. However the danger is that the filmmakers may portray Gandalf's resurrection in a way different from how Tolkien would have visualized it.

## Éowyn Sword Shattering Maneuver (ESSM)
FILMS: Éowyn spars with Aragorn to demonstrate her prowess with a sword, and shatters Aragorn's sword in the process.

BOOKS: The only physical interaction Éowyn and Aragorn have is when she handed him a cup of wine and their hands met."

COMMENT: Such scenes make Éowyn a more memorable character in the second film.

## Théodred's Funeral
FILMS: Théoden's son, Théodred, is brought back to Edoras after being killed in battle with Saruman's forces. Éowyn mourns her cousin besides the bed he is set upon, and Grima enters to speak to her. Later, after Wormtongue is banished, Théoden buries his son in the flower-covered tombs outside the Edoras and prays while Gandalf speaks words of comfort to the grieving king.

BOOKS: There are no such scenes. Théodred was killed in the first battle of the Fords of Isen five days before Gandalf and company's arrival in Edoras, but he was buried at the battle site.

COMMENT: The funeral is a dramatic way of showing how Saruman's aggression personally affected the people of Rohan.

*More next time!*

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*them more difficult counters that effect. Considering the quality of 930 orders anyway, this order appears to defeat it's own purpose, unless it is to make 930 an elite level order…another red comment for that one…*

### Racial Modifications
13. Specialty racial troop types (Elven archers attack at 8? Dunadan HI at 11/11?)
14. Nation troop type and terrain modifiers drastically altered. Instead of 1 table showing the nations special combat modifiers by climate and terrain, make one for each troop type. Ex: Elven archers have a much larger bonus in the forest than Elven cavalry, which is still greater than, say, Dwarven cavalry. Of course, Dwarven pony riders kick in the mountains….
15. Population limits by race Rà there are only so many elves, why should the Noldo make city after city?

*Pandora's box here – how can they then recruit so many elven troops from captured population centres? If the Witch King takes Mithlond West as a major town, how can he then recruit trolls or orcs? Where do they come from?*

16. Dark Servants can get "creature" characters in place of the odd bonus. Example, Vampire, with +10 mage and +10 emissary and stealth, or Demons, etcetera.
17. Elves guaranteed stealth. Varying rank depending on race: Silvan, Sinda, Noldo
18. Troll characters automatically get extra healing and challenge bonuses.

### The Lists
19. Starting unkown artifacts have numbers and/or powers randomized.
20. Secondary artifact powers randomized.
21. Dragon tables randomized game to game, while maintaining consistency throughout each game.
22. Encounter lists expanded.

### Combat
23. Allow archers 1st shot advantage, with resulting casualties removed from the combat. 1/3 the number of archers, or some range based on training.
24. Provide bonuses for mixed troop type armies.
25. Allow subcommanders to issue separate orders for different troop types as if they were "specialists" in that particular type of combat/troop.

*While interesting, the same can be accomplished by splitting troop types into separate armies which issue separate attack orders. Is this a case of players wanting it all too easily?*

26. Similarly, commanders can have bonuses for leading specific troop types. Rà the commander rose through the cavalry ranks, so he commands all cavalry at +15.
27. Eliminate light troops, maintaining Cavalry, Infantry, and Archers. Rà man on horse, man on foot, man with bow. Extra gold can't make Bob twice as good as Bill.
28. Create a Retreat or Stop Attack order, or option on combat. Combat can halt, or the army can actually move backwards a hex.

*Armies shouldn't be able to move out of the hex. Movement point issues, terrain issues, etc.*

29. Light cavalry alone (presuming we keep it…?) has extended movement (say, 16).
30. Light cavalry (presuming we keep it…?) provides

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an automatic recon. Skill level equal to training, commander, or some related formula.

### Miscellaneous and Economic
31. Desertion. An army that finds itself without a commander is not automatically disbanded. It suffers an immediate serious morale penalty, and then is reduced in numbers by certain percentages each turn until finally disbanded. Add orders 782 Rally Army and 865 Move and Rally Army to enable a new command character to take charge. Morale then readjusted. Desertion is also a constant factor of army morale, with a % range of desertion pegged to moral like pop centre loyalty and taxes.
32. Chief Administrator: Allow a limited number of capital orders per turn (unless capital is besieged) without using character orders. Sells and transports only. Rà Bureaucrats can accomplish this without the help from Warlord Tigmig saying "Do this!"

*This would be useful and supported if the transport system were drastically overhauled, otherwise it just makes it easier to play. Nation Sell orders are serious business! ALL of a product! It takes the Top Dogs to get these things done. The other orders would require sign off by the chiefs as they relate to national security and strategic operations, etc…*

33. Allow a limited number of hexes to be excluded from 947 and 325 orders.
34. *Product Movement based on actual movement, rated, for example, as fed cavalry. Rà why do armies have to trudge up hills and through trees, when wagon loads of bronze can teleport to far off corners of the map?\**
35. Character and Company Movement based on similar principles as above. Orders for movement would continue to be by hex number, but the program would determine if they were actually able to be reached, else a closest hex at the point of maximum allowable movement would be the result.

*Added realism, yes. But the 2nd Principle is here again broken. The current rules allow teams to move product to far flung towns for recruitment and to support their allies. Both ideas 34 and 35 would so drastically alter the game as to change it entirely. No longer would nations be global in outlook, remaining within their limited, albeit more realistic, region. Companies could not bounce around between capitals, off map hexes would take so long to be developed into surprise recruiting centres, etc. Even if the time required for these actions is invested, the strategic outlook of the game would be so dramatically different by the time they were enabled. The game is a fantasy with magic and dragons. It also attempts to combine various different styles of play: A world war game AND a character game combined. For purposes of game play, something may have to be unrealistic. To effect these types of changes, either the map is reduced in size (limiting the scope of the game), or frankly, the game is split into two...*

*Think about the caravans in a different way. If we can have all the different races in all corners of the world, all speaking the same language, then the caravan people are the gypsies that have their own communcation methods. Pigeons at the worst, ancient and secret palantirs at the best. When Argeleb places an order, based on his nation's credit, of 2500 timber for his Easterlings ally, he simply makes the arrangements with his local gypsie guild, who communicates the order to his counterpart across the map. Even today, while we can do astonishing things electronically, we're still shipping our "characters" all over the world via Business Class…*

# Dwarven Agents

*by Bernd Lührsen*

The Dwarf wiped the sweat from his forehead and leaned back against a low, crumbling wall. This is no place for Dwarves, he thought by himself. Though the haradan sun was already setting, the heat was hardly to endure. There was still so much light that he had to shadow his eyes with his hand as he watched the horizon. But when he did not find what he was looking for, he grumbled angrily, emptied his water-skin and tried to relax a little. He thought of his home: cold, dark halls and tunnels and fresh mountain air.

His name was Trár III, leader of the Blue Mountain Dwarves and member of the Dwarven council. He had been chosen to lead a special mission which was more than unusual for Dwarves. He was an agent, leading and instructing other agents. He didn't think too much of his knowledge, a little of the silent skills he had learned from the Elves of the Grey Havens, the rest from books and own experiences. The council had decided that the Dwarves should have their own agents, and now he was here, far in the southern deserts, where the air tasted only of dust. There was no solid rock in the ground, only the ever moving sand which could not be trusted. Again, Trár forced his eyes to stare into the flickering distance. He was waiting for his companions who formed his company, but they were late again. Suddenly, a shadow fell upon his feet. He reached for his weapons, but then he recognised the small, hooded figure.

"You didn't notice me, my Lord! My sneaking has become a lot better hasn't it?"

Trár smiled. Naugrim was the best of his "students", he learned fast and indeed the young Dwarf was more talented in the deadly arts than Trár himself. But the most important was that he listened to what Trár was saying, what was not always true of the other members of the company. Their arrival was not silent at all. They came walking together on the open road, visible and audible much too far. Trár was angry, but he had been wise enough to choose this deserted oasis for their meeting.

"I ordered you to travel alone and disguised as hunched humans!" Trár shouted as the two were close enough. "With so little discipline, our mission will never be a success."

Rugrin and Zelegrin looked to the ground after the had dusted off their cloaks and beards.

"Well, my Lord", Zelegrin, who was the older, began. "It is a strange land here and also dangerous. We thought it would be safer this way... I swear no one has seen us, except one or two camel-herders"

"You are making it dangerous" Trár rumbled "and you would not have noticed if this camel-herders reported to the local authorities about two Dwarves."

"We could have passed as two hunched beggars, travelling together" Rugrin claimed.

"Yes, hunched beggars" Trár hissed, "leaning on a battle-axe". With that, he pulled away Rugrin´s cloak under which the Dwarf had badly hidden his weapon. "I ordered to bring no large weapons on this mission! Where are your daggers?"

"I don't feel safe without my axe, my Lord" Rugrin explained. Zelegrin nodded and produced a similar weapon from under his hood "Daggers are for apple-peeling", he added. Trár sighed. Had all his efforts been in vain? Only Naugrim proudly waved his mithril dagger.

"Look", he tried to explain "assassination is a matter of silence and stealth. How will you manage to assassinate somebody with an axe?"

Rugrin grinned. "Well, I go in, hit `em on the head and leave. Sounds like good assassination to me. If them guys wear good chainmail, a dagger would be useless anyway"

Trár sadly shook his head. "The Haradrim do not wear chainmail all day", he said. "Besides, you are supposed to slit the throat, if it should be the case."

"Why slit the throat if I can chop off the head?" Rugrin insisted. "Them camel-guys are quite tall, what if I cannot reach up to their throat?"

Trár gave up. "All right, keep your axes, but don't blame me if anything goes wrong. Now let me see your clothing!"

Naugrim was clad in soft, black leather, which seemed to absorb the fading light. "Very well", Trár commented, "and you?" Zelegrin shrugged and revealed his chainmail. It was painted black, but the links still glinted and creaked with every movement. Trár prepared for the worst as he turned to Rugrin. The young Dwarf thudded heavily with his fist on his chest. "Nothing better than plate mail, my Lord" he said " my Grandfather has worn this breastplate in the battle of-" "Enough" yelled Trár, who was known as a patient Dwarf. "Remove this armour at once, or I´ll cut your beards off! The guards will hear you from miles away if you come clanking with all this equipment. And I don't care if you feel naked."

The two Dwarves grumbled as they stripped off their metal armour. "The guards carry nasty scimitars, my Lord" Zelegrin complained. "Can we keep a shield at last?"

"You should not fight the guards, you should avoid them", answered Trár and added in his professional tone: "Every needless item increases the chance of being detected unnecessarily." He had read that in a book. "I told you all this more than once, have you forgotten all my lessons?"

"Well, my Lord, er... at least not those parts about stealing gold," Rugrin answered slowly.

Trár resignated. What had been lost in the last weeks could not be recovered in the remaining hours before their mission would begin. Darkness was already creeping over the desert, and he had to make the best of it and use the time to explain the mission so that also Rugrin would understand it. He ordered his men to sit down, swallowed hard and began in a solemn voice: "Warriors! Every Dwarf would be proud to be here tonight. You have been chosen to perform a very important mission for our nation. It is very dangerous, bur this only increases the reward and the honour." He looked around and into the beaming face of young Rugrin. "Somebody will definitely not, er..., if one of us might not survive this mission, he will die as a hero in the service of our people." None of his companions seemed to be bothered by this remark. "Now I will explain our plan for tonight", Trár continued, "and do me one last, er, favour: listen very carefully."

As they left the camp some hours later, the darkness had taken complete control of the desert. They headed for the distant lights of a town where their victims would already lie asleep. Trár glanced at the unknown stars above and sent a short prayer to Mahal, the Maker. He silently swore to himself: "If I survive this night, I`ll be back in the Blue Mountains as soon as possible." Suddenly, coal mining seemed to be the most desirable profession he ever thought of...

# Beginner's Guide
## Part 3: The Mid Game

*by Jeffery Dobberpuhl*

*'There was an angry debate concerning what they were to do now: which way they were to take and what should be done with the prisoners.'*
Lord of the Rings II

A MID-GAME of Middle Earth PBM probably begins around turn 10 or so in most games. It can be the longest portion of the game, and one in which it is far too easy to become complacent. Mid-game should be defined as a period which starts when two events occur: (i) at least three neutral nations have aligned themselves with good or evil, and (ii) the camp limit has been met (ie, no more population centers can be regularly placed by emissaries. Note that the game only allows a fixed number of population centers in the game at one time. In an extremely aggressive game, this number can be met around turn 7 or 8. At that point, only ruins can be 'camped' until other population centers have been destroyed.).

Until these events occur, it is difficult to say truly that the game has gotten a full head of steam. This is because the declaration of neutrals drastically determines the balance of power in Middle Earth and the fixing of population centers determines where are the resources and staging areas available to those powers.

## Establishing Goals

As with the opening moves of the game, it is important to have long-term goals for both the team and each individual nation. These goals must include: a method of tracking enemy Army movements, a method of tracking enemy Agent movements, a method of turning Emissaries from mere economic supporters to offensive tools, and the development and deployment of character killers - Agents, Curse Companies, and Challengers. Armies, of course, must continue to press their goals.

Tracking enemy army movements is not always an easy task. This is because each player's map is small compared to the entire area covered by the game map. Recon is possibly the most effective Army locator in the game. However, there are a number of spells, Agent actions and artifacts that can help. Also, a major town will give its owner a mini-map of the town and each hex surrounding it.

Learning what is in an Army is more problematic. Recon typically only gives you a guess as to the Army's size. You will need spells or an Agent actually scouting the Army to get a better read of its composition. Further, be warned: an anomaly in the game will sometimes prevent an Agent performing a 'scout for characters' order to detect the name of an enemy Army Commander. Issuing the 'recon' order is actually more effective for discovering this information on a reliable basis.

Finally, do the math. If another player knows where an Army was last turn, even 'off-map', one can easily pull out the master map and figure out where the Army could be. Comparing this against known targets in the area will more often than not reveal the Army's new location.

Methods for tracking enemy Agents are few and far between. There are two magic spells, one for revealing a character's location, and one for revealing the location of an artifact the Agent is known to be carrying, that are somewhat effective. However, experienced players will use Emissaries to turn enemy Agents into double Agents! Each turn, that turncoat will reveal the orders she was given as well as her new location. Best of all, the owning player does not know the Agent is revealing this information to the enemy!

It is also critical to check each player's turn sheet for messages. By comparing notes, it is actually possible to track enemy Agent movements based on the 'gold stolen' reports.

During the mid-game, it is very important to start using Emissaries on aggressive missions. An Emissary Company (a number of Emissaries led by a single Commander) can be devastating if used against former neutral nations. This is because, unless the neutral nation has used valuable orders to shift its nation's political views, it is vulnerable to diplomatic attacks. On a single turn, Saruman (The White Wizard) can fall to a coordinated strike from a team even with an enormous Army in Isengard. Additionally, Emissaries can deny critical resource producing sites from the enemy, as well as recruiting centers.

When should Emissaries start taking this role? As soon as all population centers have been camped. At that point, it makes no sense to try to establish new population centers (see above). Keep in mind the two exceptions: a hex with ruins on it can almost always be camped, and when another population center is eliminated, this frees up a new hex to be camped.

How to develop and deploy character killers has to be considered. There are three basic forms and all three have their uses.

First are Agents. Once Agents reach about level 60, they can start assassinating enemy characters on a regular basis. The chance of success depends on whether the character is in a population center, is guarded, commands an army, and how skilled the character is. A stealthy Agent's chances go up dramatically. Assassination and Curse Companies can kill anything, even a cowardly enemy Commander (see below).

Curse Companies are amazing. They are a group of wizards who have learned a spell that attacks an enemy's characters from a one hex distance. Coordinated Agent scouting and Commanders issuing recon will give any Curse Company plenty of targets. However, many gamers forget to use lesser-powered versions of the spells. Weakness and Sickness Companies are perhaps just as devastating. Unfortunately, the only way really to get these spells is first to find artifacts that will let wizards learn the magic necessary. Each side starts the game with one such artifact ...

Challengers are characters who have a great deal of fighting skill. They run about, perhaps with an army, perhaps with a company, or perhaps just on their own. When they meet an enemy character, they issue a challenge. The better character wins and gets just a bit stronger. Mages and Commanders tend to make the best challengers. The limitations on challengers are two-

# the secret Diaries

**The Very Secret Diary of Frodo Baggins**

*Day One:*
Feeling much better in House of Elrond after nice long nap. Also, Sam gave me fabulous backrub and bubble bath. Platonic, brotherly love so wonderful. Wasn't quite entirely sure why he needed to suck on my toes, but am assured it has something to do with Elf medicine.

*Day Three*
Have agreed to carry Ring to Mordor. Bad move.

*Day Four*
Aragorn and Boromir had big fight over who got to carry me up Mount Caradhras. Aragorn shoved Boromir into snowbank. Boromir bit Aragorn on the ear. Ring must be affecting them more seriously than I thought.

*Day Six*
Woke up to find Aragorn playing with buttons on my shirt. He must be after the Ring. Damn its siren call. Ah well, Sam will kill him if he tries anything.

*Day Ten*
Today Legolas began stroking my inner thigh with his bow. Was stunned. Had no idea Legolas wanted the Ring too. It must truly be an object of awesome power.

*Day Eleven*
Gandalf showed me very strange trick he can do. Apparently pointy wizard hat not just for show. Wonder if Ring is affecting him, or perhaps he is just v. peculiar.

*Day 24*
Finally feel rested. Is too dark in Mines of Moria for Aragorn to find me and pinch me as he has been doing lately. Gandalf died. Sad to see pointy hat go.

*Day 27*
Lothlorien so pretty. Galadriel pretty too. Offered her One Ring, but she kept saying, "No, there's something else I'd rather have from you, Frodo Baggins," and trying to slide foot up inside my breeches. So, gave her my extra pair of breeches since she seemed fond of them. Maybe some kind of breeches shortage in Lothlorien.

fold. First, an Army Commander cannot be challenged by a non-Army Commander, and second, a character can be a gutless ankle-biting coward and issue the 'refuse personal combat' order and be immune to attack (Wormtongue always comes to mind when I think of this order...).

With the above in mind, Armies must continue to press their attacks. If a nation is on the ropes, never give it any breathing room. Kill it or it will return. Also, be aware that many players are willing to do a 'suicide run' to wipe out an enemy. This tactic uses a little understood part of the rules that states that a population center that is attacked during a turn produces no income. Since combat occurs before production, an attacked population center will yield no gold, an event that can put a nation on the edge into bankruptcy.

Here is a specific example (from the 2950 scenario): The Dog Lord has established a Major Town near Rohan. It is fortified. Rohan cannot bear a large amount of troops on the Dog Lord because of pressure from Saruman (that rat). So.... Galadriel leads a Curse Company and wipes out the Dog Lord's Army in the Major Town. Rohan now attacks with 100 men at arms. Rohan's commander will die, and the Army will die, but the Dog Lord will be out the Major Town's entire production! If this happens when the Dog Lord is close to the edge economically, this could put the nation into bankruptcy.

Clever teams will coordinate more than one suicide run to occur turn after turn or even on multiple population centers on the same turn.

## Characters

Mid-game is a challenging time for character development. Each nation's strategies during the opening moves must be built on during this time period. It is not uncommon to have characters that are now 'dead weight' because of a too heavy focus or too light a focus in any particular area. Did the nation hire too many Emissaries? Then the military may suffer. Did the nation fail to hire enough Agents? Then enemy Agents may be stealing the nation blind. Did the nation fail to maintain enough wizards? Then the ability to shift combats unexpectedly, as well as locate artifacts, is compromised.

That said, there seem to be two goals of character development: Advancing current characters, and Recruiting new characters.

Advancing current characters is always a challenge. Emissaries and Mages in particular find themselves typically getting only 1-5 points per skill enhancing event. Agents and Commanders have more opportunities.

Perhaps the best 'second class' for a multi-skilled character is Commander. Consider the possibilities: A 20-point Agent 10-point Commander is placed in an Army. Each turn, it can train the troops for 1-7 point of command rank, the Commander of the Army (a separate character) can train the Army for an additional 1-5 points of command rank, and the character can also guard the Army Commander for 1-5 points of Agent rank. This character can become very deadly in a short amount of time. By mid game, such a character can easily expect to be a 30 Agent/ 30 Commander or better.

Commanders should be available for training Armies, raising Armies, and providing all the economic orders necessary, such as changing alignment, changing relations, and raising or lowering taxes. Agents should be stealing gold, scouting for enemy characters and assassinating enemy characters. Emissaries should be congregating on enemy population centers to take them over. Mages should be locating enemy characters, either through a character name or an artifact known to be possessed by the enemy.

Recruiting new characters is especially challenging during the mid game. First, each character costs at least 5,000 gold. This can be a challenge for an economically strapped nation. Second, each character requires upkeep. When a nation is trying to pay for fortifications and armies, characters are just another straw on the economic camel's back. Finally, unexpected loss of a character may mean scrambling to fill in a gap in the nation's skill needs. A trick some economically challenged players employ is to hire a 10 point Commander to issue buy-sell orders. The upkeep is minimal even though the commander still costs 10 points.

*To be continued ...*

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***Lake Town (Esgaroth) from the Hobbit***

*Day 30*
Rowed all day in boats. V. tired. Merry and Pippin offered to give me a group massage. Glad Ring is not affecting my friends. Although did not need back rubbed quite so much, nor other parts. Pippin does remember we're cousins, right? Right?

*Day 33*
Boromir tried to take the Ring. Am not entirely certain, but am fairly sure he also tried to have a little cuddle. Was most unnerving, as Boromir quite huge.

*Day 36*
Everyone keeps hitting on me. Cannot cope. Off to Mordor. Sam coming too. Good thing, as will enable me to have more of those platonic, brotherly foot massages he's so good at. Am sad to leave rest of Company though, as found myself quite fancying the idea of shagging Gimli. Chunky braids and huge helmet quite a turn-on.

Ah, well, he never would have liked me anyway.

# cardiff game

**UK Game**:
**July 26th (Fri) - 28th (Sun)**
Clint writes ...
*Okay, I have 24 players and have allocated nations as per requests. On the day if players want to swop nations that is fine with me. I have now taken the deposit from your account. So with that in mind unless there is anything else I will see you in July... I have 12vs12 1650 game.*

# payments

Payments to **Middle Earth PBM Games** not Harlequin. 5% charge for UK Credit card payments & you can pay directly through our website (World Pay [WP] will appear on your statement). You can also set up a monthly payment with us for a SET amount taken from your credit card at the beginning of each month. Ask for more details if interested. If your account is low funds there will be an administration charge of £1 for the first turn, and 50p for subsequent turns on Low funds.

*Note that CC payments are accepted in the following currencies: UK£, US$ & AUS$ as well as some other currencies.*

# Hall of Fame

**Game 72** *(by Paul Romaine)*

A great team effort by all the FP. Good job everyone.

**Early game**
In Angmar the forces of Arthedain <Benny Ensig> and the Dwarves <Brian Ensig> put heavy pressure on the WK early. Rhudaur joined the DS a little too late and he faced the same fate as that of the WK.

Thanks to additional aid from the armies of Cardolan <Kevin Given> and the Noldo <Ulrik Bisgard>. In Mirkwood the DrL faced a brutal assault from the Eothraim <Lorenzo Ricagni> at Dol Guldur and the Dwarves at Goblin Gate. Followed by the Woodmen troops <Pelle Stine> at Mt. Gundabad, Mirkwood was secured very quickly. The Northmen <Drew Carson> did a fine job of thwarting the DogL cavalry, so the DS were unable to take advantage of the opening in Rhovanion at this point. Around the Rhun sea, the LR got off to a slow start, but he did manage to take a few minor population centers which were quickly recovered. NG <George Martinez> and SG <Jim Carson> launched a massive military assault into the Ithil pass, which failed to break Barad Ungol, but was successful at eliminating most of the DS starting armies in Mordor. Great artifact coordination by the Noldo led to the FP gaining control of every major unowned artifact. Except for Miramarth, which was pried out of Khamul's cold, (un)dead grasp by Sinda agents <Paul Romaine>.


The Forest of Lothlorien in Spring

**Mid game**
Clean up of the WK and Rhudaur was left to Arthedain. Surviving FP armies in the Great Wood rushed south into Mordor. The Eothraim had several substantial military victories including the capture of Thurwingwathost, Barad-Dur, and Durthang. Sinda, WM, and Dwarven armies followed, and took control of the Morannon. Dunland <Rob Pegg> joined the ranks of the Free and launched a military thrust which ended in the destruction of Kal Nargil (3630). NG did an excellent job holding the hordes of Sauron inside Mordor, not a single troll, orc or goblin set foot on the west side of the Anduin (although Barad-Ungol withstood the storm time and again). SG managed to intercept the first wave of Corsair marines. A large number of Corsair troops ended up at the bottom of the ocean. The mutual destruction of both fleets left us at an advantage.

Donations of timber were contributed from all over Middle Earth, allowing the FP to rebuild the lost fleet quickly. Sinda, Cardolan, SG and NG took the war into north Harad. The NM continued to play cat and mouse with the LR navy and eventually it was destroyed. The Sinda/WM agent company was unopposed in Haradwaith and Umbar. Noldo agents also had great success in the east and south. Curiously absent were CL assassins. The Easterlings join the DS.

**End game**
The Easterlings sweep most of the NM holdings near the Rhun sea. The weight of the Harad, Corsairs and Easterlings puts a strain on FP resources and the DS enjoy a brief resurgence. The Easterlings are pushed back by a combined effort from the NM, Eot, Dw and Arth. The Sinda and WM agents' unrestrained access to south-west DS recruitment centers opens the door for a SG/Card/Sinda naval invasion which devastates the Harad/Corsairs/QA. (Kudos to Kevin Given for his outstanding strategic planning in the south-west theatre.).

The CL makes an appearance at the FK capitol in the first (and only) real agent shoot-out and assassinates two key Noldo agents. But with help from Noldo/Dun agents, Barad Ungol finally falls to NG. The LR and Easterlings continue to fight fiercely but cannot withstand the combined might of the FP and fall to a combination of armies, emissaries , agents, and mages. The BS emerges as a powerful nation with a sickness squad and strong emissaries, but with only the DkLt left as an ally. They both struggle vainly until they are overwhelmed by a massive FP military and character campaign that engulfs all of Mordor.

**Game 30** *(by Tom Jaggard)*

Well, the long and the short of it was that they whooped our keisters. They exhibited excellent team play and were extremely aggressive from the start. That, coupled with our having a dropped player who didn't notify anyone that he wouldn't be playing even the first turn of his two nations and having a rookie player who couldn't fill out his turn form properly put us behind from the start.

The Dark Servants started with a sickness/curses squad that they positioned at Osgiliath on the first turn. By killing off an army each turn they were able to achieve local superiority in the Ithil Valley. We had below average luck in our artifact searches. During the course of the game, we never had an accurate 'locate artifact' spell. Due to their aggressiveness and our incompetence, they steamrolled their way to victory.

# MEPBM Order Companion
## Part 2: 370 - 520

*by Brad Brunet*

In this article, I will attempt, in sequential order, to enlighten the newcomer to how the game works. I will refer to orders, or sections of orders that I feel require some clarification or further exploration.

**Maintenance is Paid**
Now you will pay maintenance according to the estimates on your turn sheet. You will pay for all the towers, ships, harbours, character skill points, etceteras that exist at this very point. If you lost town, then you Do NOT pay for it's fortifications or harbour/port. Same with ships and characters lost in challenges or combat (200's). YOU WILL PAY FOR ALL ARMIES YOU STARTED THE TURN WITH, even if they die in combat (200's). This is crucial. Why? Not fair! Well, you recruit troops AFTER you pay maintenance, so the programmers decided you had to pay for them sometime...if nothing else, there's survivor's benefits....

This is absolutely essential to keep in mind. Many a player has gone bankrupt because they misunderstood this crucial fact.

The computer will, at this point, automatically increase taxes if necessary. THIS is what you do NOT want to happen if you can avoid it. If you do not have enough money after increasing taxes on your own, or selling what you can, the computer increases your taxes in order to pay your maintenance. THIS will have an adverse affect on your population centre loyalties just like the 300 order. IF the computer has to raise taxes above 100%, you are bankrupt and out of the game. The rest of your orders will still go through, but at the end of the turn (even if your allies ship you a million gold..) you're done.

Often, you will not be able to increase taxes (no commander at the capital or you just don't have the extra order). Oh well, it's a desperate game... Remember: you purchase from the caravans BEFORE the computer pays the maintenance. I've seen someone once buy tonnes of bronze, only to go bankrupt immediately after when the computer held him accountable! His game was over with thousands of bronze at his capital...I wonder who ended up with it...idiot.... There are many things that can affect your economy after this point. You can Steal gold or allies can ship you some, but this gold will end up in your reserves AFTER any automatic changes. The orders to hire armies or name new characters all come AFTER this point and cost money. Similarly, enemies can't steal gold that you don't have.... This is why you have to be at least 2 turns ahead of yourself economically. Ship allies gold if they need it NEXT turn...this turn is too late...
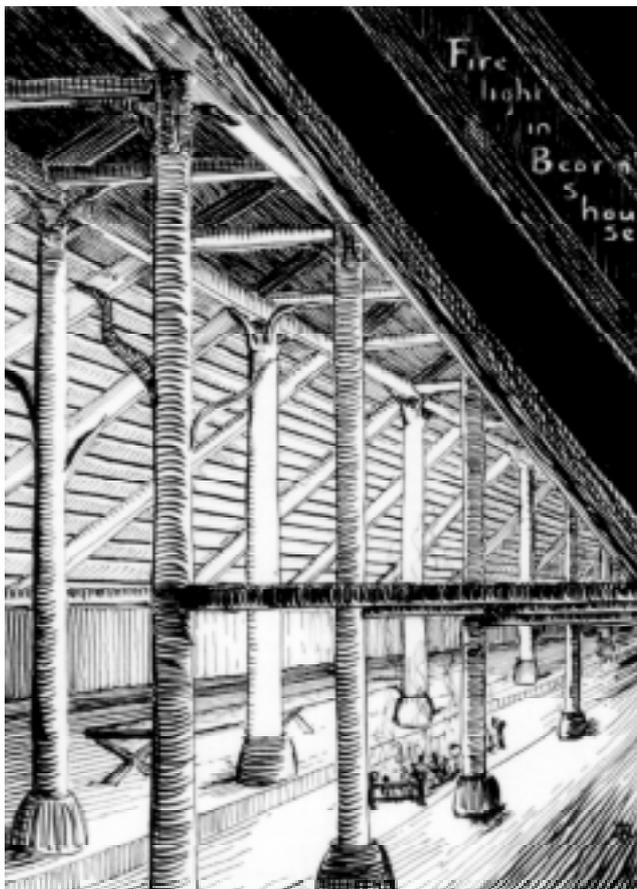
**370, 375, 444, 448 - Upgrading or Making Weapons and Armour**
Very rarely used order since you can recruit troops with armour. The only effective use of these orders is as follows:

A army has been building up for some period of time on a population centre. The turn BEFORE they move out, product can be transferred to that population centre. A command character with that army can then make armour and/or weapons on the same turn that the army commander moves the army out. The characters can subsequently upgrade the armour or weapons while the army is on the march. It all depends on how many orders you have and when you have them. If you have a long way to go, this might be the best way to create that effective force, instead of transporting not enough metals to your population centre over and over again as the army builds up.

**460, 465 - Remove Harbour or Port**
Useful to either reduce maintenance costs, or reduce the likelihood of a naval invasion.

**470 - Destroy Population Centre Stores**
If you have a Commander on a population centre that's going to be taken, either by threat that very turn, or through combat the next, and you do not have the order in your capital to ship the stuff out or sell it, you may as well get spiteful and burn it...see Kuwait...

# GUNBOAT RULES
## A 1650 Variant

*We're running another Gunboat game 36 - same sets of nations as before. I will create a list of players that you CANNOT talk to about this game when we get to filling the game. No discussing with potential team-mates nations before hand please... [:-)]*

*2 nation game - you must play 2 nations. Nation combos are below - no Easterling nation.*
*4+22 Arthedain +Harad, 6+23 N Gondor +Duns, 7+1 S Gondor +Wood, 8+2 Dwarves+North, 9+5 Sinda+Cardolan, 10+3 Noldo+Eothraim.*
*18+14 Fire King+Cloud Lord, 20+24 D.Lieut+Rhudaur, 16+19 Ice King+ L.Rider, 11+15 Blind + Witch K, 17+13 QA+Dog Lord, 12+21 DragonL +Corsair (Note change to normal)*

*Rules for this game: Players are allowed to take offensive actions against unknown characters upon their OWN population centres. In other words, if Elrond, Erestor and John Smith appear on the Cloud Lord capital the latter is now a legitimate target for challenge, curse etc by the Cloud Lord even though the nation of the character is unknown.*

*List of Dropped nations once every two turns. List of players who are playing but not nations nor side. No Diplomacy - under ANY circumstances [:-)]*

*Note Game ENDS (then and only then are the players names revealed) after 50 turns - highest total team victory points wins (unless within 10% - then draw declared) - Or one side has a greater than 4 to 1 player advantage.*

*Drop outs can be filled - but we will be discrete.*

*Individual victory points at end of game = average of your two nations (dead nations = 400 )*

*Nations (normal WChamp rules except 21 +22 swopped around, Fort on 1910 & 4217, Easterling Capital with a camp - not to be affected by Players). If you are playing nations 21-24 you will have a character called: Lead a-d these are there for you to 175 (correct allegiance) and 740 - no other orders allowed.*

*Trust the players not to try and find out who their team mates/oppo are - and not to diplome even if they come by such knowledge - it being deemed unsportsmanlike. You are not allowed to use camp or character names to exchange information.*

*No influencing, stealing, cursing etc on or from or to your team. No influencing, stealing, cursing etc on or from or to your team. No ass/kid if you do not know the nation of the character if you are not at your own PC. If you think it is forbidden by the rules it probably is so don't do it (ask us for clarification BEFORE the event). If you can provide feedback that would be very useful - the first game is going very well so we hope to make this one better.*

## 475 - Destroy Bridge
Generally a desperate defensive ploy. If you do not, in the foreseeable future, have enough to successfully gain and/or maintain a position on the other side, blow it. See: North Gondor Defence Protocol C-22: South Gondor led by a Huckleberry.

## 494 - Fortify Population Centre
Enemy armies will automatically be stopped by "non-friendly/tolerant fortifications". Putting towers up on strategic population centres is one way to not only slow the enemies progress, but to also determine what's coming at you, as the army size, nation, and commander shows up on your population centre report (unless he's moving evasively...). Fortifications will also stop a population centre from degrading from low loyalty (see 300 Change Tax Rate). Of course, if you only have the one Major Town, you may also want to improve the fortifications there (or not...) to help keep it...
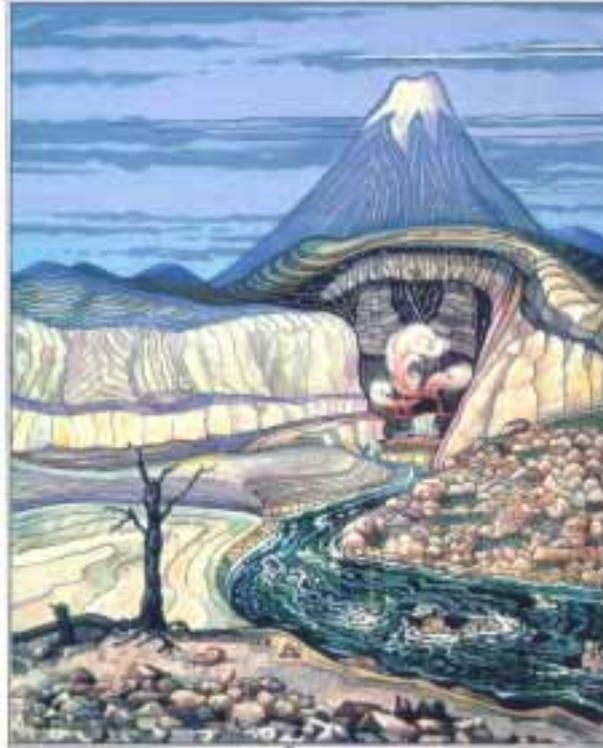


. The Front Gate .

## 498 - Threaten Population Centre
An effective way to take an enemy population centre without incurring casualties. Also, if you capture a population centre during combat (order 255) it will be reduce one level (capture a town, it will end up being your village). This does not happen when you threaten it. Threatening is difficult, though. A formula I've seen to determine the chance for a threat is as follows:

*The (modified) Command Rank of the Army Commander has to be greater than:*
- *the loyalty of the population centre*
- *+ 20 per level of fortifications*
- *+ 20 if the population centre is the capital*

Exactly what kind of penalties are incurred if you do not have the recommended number of troops is not know. This formula has been developed over time, but does NOT come from the programmers.

## Emissary Orders – the 500's
Emissaries are an essential tool in Middle Earth warfare. They have a wide range of uses and are often under-appreciated. A solid emissary plan is as follows:

Create at least 2 at the start of the game, and preferably more during later opportunities to name new characters. Create as many camps as possible.

Once the camp limit is reached, improve many of those to villages. Once you have accomplished this, you will have a few emissaries with skill ranks over 60. Together, these characters can perform many tasks for you nation and allegiance, not the lease of which is out right stealing population centres!

Many players relegate emissaries to the position of national gophers, sitting at the capital issuing buy/sell orders, or chasing dangerous dragons. I personally love the emissary, having both been eliminated and eliminated enemies using them as my primary tools in many games.

## 500 - Recruit Double Agent
This is effective in many ways. A double agent (agent or emissary skill) will have a reduced chance of successfully doing bad things to you. It's also a good training order to use by doubling your ally's characters. ALSO: A character can only be a double agent to one other nation at a time...If you can double your friends key characters, then 1) you know the enemy hasn't done so, and if they suddenly are no longer your doubled agent, then 2) you know the enemy HAS done so...

## 505 - Bribe/Recruit Character
This order can only be used on a character of a nation that is no longer playing. Either militarily eliminated, bankrupt, or inactive for a period of time. If you or an ally is going to be eliminated from play, it is common to have the soon-gone player transfer whatever possible to allies. This includes characters by attempting, wherever possible, to move them as close to their allies as possible. The allies then try to scoop up the good characters with this order.

A formula I've seen that determines your chance of success is as follows:

$$\% \text{ Chance} = \text{Bribe}/200 + 1/2 \text{ (E-Char)} \qquad 100\%$$
$$\text{Chance à Bribe} = 20{,}000 - 100(\text{E-Char})$$

## 520 - Influence Own Population Centre Loyalty
This is your basic emissary-training tool. Generally, do a couple of these with a new emissary and then move out of the capital to begin creating camps (555). Once the camp limit has been reached, you'd generally move around from one low loyalty camp to another, issuing this order to ensure all are stable. Loyalty has a definite affect on many aspects of the game. All combat at pop centres, enemy character actions, etceteras. The higher the loyalty, the better for the owner, always! It's always worthwhile to have emissaries improving your loyalty, within strategic limitations, of course...

*To be continued ...*