

A War of Whispers
Revised competitive rules
(Unofficial)



Plain text edition

A word about why this exists

For reasons unknown, the official manual for A War of Whispers came with loopholes and other ambiguities regarding rules, leading to game breaking exploits. Moreover, the designer of the game has posted variants on BoardGameGeek that are now considered official by the community and are not in the publisher manual either.

The aim of this revised rulebook is to follow the vision of the designer as close as possible. In the absence of an official position regarding a rule ambiguity, community consensus will be applied.

Official designer variants are not considered variants but core rules in this manual, as they all result in a better and more competitive experience.

For design and clarity purposes, the terminology has been revised.

I strongly recommend getting a tracker of some form for which council order is currently executed, as the game contains temporary time leaps.

This document was designed by Nactra and freely distributed for the BoardGameGeek community. I am not affiliated in any way with anyone involved in the creation of A War of Whispers. All work done on this document was benevolent.

A War of Whispers

Revised competitive rules (Unofficial)

Setting

Players leads secret societies from the shadows to manipulate the outcome of a 4 year war between 5 empires.

When the war ends, the player whose loyalties are closest to the dominating empires will win the game and dominate the realm.

Scoring

At the end of the 4th year, the game is over and the score is counted in the following order:

- Players get 1 point for each of their still concealed loyalties, then reveal them.
- For each empire, players get X points, where X is the number indicated on their loyalty sheet for that empire, times the number of cities and allied field agents controlled by that empire.

The player whose secret society earns the most points wins the game and dominates the realm from the shadows.

In case of tie, the player with the most concealed loyalties at the end of the 4th year wins. If there is still a tie, the player holding the most decrees wins. If there is still a tie, there is no winner.

Scoring Example

Jeremy leads the Pale Raven society with the following allegiances at the end of the 4th year of war:

Devout(x4): Bear, Dutiful(x3): Egale, Affiliated (x2): Elephant, Unallied(x0): Lion, Opposed(x-1): Horse.

Step 1 - Jeremy earns 1 point for each loyalty still concealed, then reveals them. For example, if Jeremy switched alliances only once, he still has 3 concealed loyalties and therefore earns 3 points.

Step 2 - We will use the following final board state for the empires:

The Bear Empire controls two cities.

The Eagle Empire has been annihilated and controls 0 cities.

The Elephant Empire controls 1 city, but Jeremy also has a field agent in a region controlled by the field Empire.

The Lion Empire controls 3 cities.

The Horse Empire controls 4 cities.

Jeremy's score is as follows:

Bear: $2 \times 4 = 8$ pts.

Eagle: $0 \times 3 = 0$ pts.

Elephant: $2 \times 2 = 4$ pts. His opponents only score for 1 city.

Lion: $0 \times 3 = 0$ pts.

Horse: $4 \times -1 = -4$.

Jeremy's Final score is $3 + 8 + 0 + 4 + 0 - 4 = 19$ pts.

Setup

Before seating, Pick 5 loyalty tokens from the same secret society and place them **concealed/face down**. Every player picks one at random. The player who picks the loyalty closest to the start position on the gameboard in clockwise fashion becomes the first player. Give him the « first player » coin or marker. Other players sit in the empire turn order around the table, each one to the left of the player before him. Once seated, shuffle the tokens back and pick one at random again.

Every player picks any secret society mat and matching material. (Except the currently kept tokens).

Every player put the loyalty token for his secret society that matches the one he got dealt for the seat order in his « devout » slot. If a player is using the secret society whose loyalty tokens were used for the seat order, **he retrieves them now**.

Players shuffle their remaining loyalty tokens face down and place them randomly on their other loyalties. They can only peek at them once they are placed. They may **not** move them once placed. They may peek at them secretly.

Place each empire's decree deck and soliders near their council around the board.

Shuffle the decree decks.

Place the marker for each year in their corresponding spot on the board.

Place starting deployed soliders for each empire as indicated by the banner markings on the realm map for each empire.

Place city miniatures on corresponding drawn cities on the map.

The game is ready to go.

Flow

The game is divided into 4 years of wars following the same structure:

Phase 1: Secret societies deploy their agents into councils or on the field.

Phase 2: Councils are manipulated by the players, giving order as the players controlling them see fit depending on their agency.. Each time a council has finished giving orders, supply levels are checked on the field and excess troops die due to famine.

Phase 3: The year ends. On year 1 to 3, Players retrieves one of their agents back to the shadows. Players discard decrees until they hold 5 decrees or less in the name of their secret society. players have the option to swap two concealed loyalties at the cost of revealing them. The player to the left of the current 4th player becomes the 4th player. Flip the just played year's marker and Go to phase 1 of the next year.

On the end of the 4th year, the game ends: players may not shift loyalties or retrieve agents. Proceed with scoring.

Hostilities: Invade / Attack / Control

Any action with a sword icon allows you to get the active council's empire to declare an attack on another empire's soldiers or invade an empty territory from another empire. The rules for invading and attacking are as follows:

-To invade, chose a territory containing at least 1 soldier from the active empire. Move any number of soldiers to an adjacent empty ennemy territory, respecting the following rules:

-You may not cross the sea.

-You may not invade the empire's own homeland or an already conquered territory.

- You may not abandon a conquered territory: If you are declaring an invasion from a conquered territory, you must leave at least 1 soldier here to keep it's conquered status.

To attack, do the same, but to an adjacent territory containing troops from another empire. Remove troops from both Empires at a 1:1 ratio until one side is annihilated.

whenever an empire's soldiers enters a region featuring a fort controlled by another empire, one of the entering soldiers dies immediately no matter what.

An empire is controlling a region and its cities if it is one of their home region and there is no invader present, or if they currently have at least 1 soldier on an ennemy region.

Phase 1: Deploying Agents

Starting with the first player, players deploy one agent each, going clockwise, until every player has deployed two. Players may deploy their agent the following ways:

Deploy a field agent: Put one of your secret society's agents on any region on the board. This agent is considered a city, but only for your own secret society. You may deploy a field agent in a region even if there is already a city or a field agent from another secret society on it. You can have a **maximum of 2 field agents** deployed for your secret society at any given time.

Deploy a political agent: Put one of your secret society's agents in any vacant political position in any empire's council. Your agent **manipulates all vacant positions to his left within this empire's council** + the one he is sitting on.

Once two agents have been deployed per player, move to Phase 2: Council Holdings.

2 player adjustment: Deploy 3 agents instead of 2 during Phase .

Phase 2: Council Holdings

Going clockwise from the start position, every empire council position from every empire that is being manipulated by a player agent will execute **one** order from that player.

(If an empire has not been infiltrated by any player, they do nothing and their council is skipped).

Example: Jeremy is the only player who has deployed a political agent to manipulate the Bear Empire, and made him hold the rôle of Marshall.

In this order, Jeremy makes one decision between the two available for the Bear Empire's Sheriff, one decision between the two available for the Bear Empire's Steward, and one decision between the two available for the Bear Empire's Marshall.

Jeremy cannot manipulate the Bear empire's Chancellor to give an order because he is to the right of his agent (the chancellor is higher in hierarchy.)

The Bear Empire Council ends and the supply level of troops of every soldier of every empire on the field is checked. Any soldiers in excess of 4 on a non-farm region die immediately. Any soldiers in excess of 6 on a farm region die immediately.

Repeat these steps for every empire's council, then Phase 3: Year End begins.

Whenever «active» is mentioned, treat it as «any army» but not different armies during the same action.

Council orders

Bear Empire

Sheriff

Order A: For each farm controlled by the empire, Deploy 1 solider in a homeland or conquered region.

Order B: Invade or attack **once**.

Steward

Order A: **Your secret society** draws a Bear Empire decree for each set of two farms controlled by the bear empire.

Order B: Deploy 2 soliders in a homeland or conquered region.

Marshall

Order A: For each fort controlled by the empire, Deploy 1 solider in a homeland or conquered region.

Order B: Invade or attack **once**.

Chancellor

Order A: Invade or attack **once**.

Order B: Switch your agent currently manipulating the Bear Empire's Chancellor with an other political agent manipulatng this council, then immediately execute **one** order from this new position. After your order is executed, the Bear Empire's Council is over: check the supply level and commence the next Empire's Council. (You may execute your order from any position you just acquired control of.)

Eagle Empire

Sheriff Order A: Deploy 2 soliders in a homeland or conquered region.

Steward

Order A: **Your secret society** draws an Eagle Empire decree for each set of two farms controlled by the Eagle Empire.

Order B: Deploy 1 solider in a homeland or conquered region for each farm controlled by the Eagle Empire.

Marshall

Order A: For each fort controlled by the empire, Deploy 1 solider in a homeland or conquered region.

Order B: Invade or attack **once**.

Chancellor

Order A: Invade or attack **once**.

Order B: Switch your agent currently manipulating the Eagle Empire's Chancellor with an other political agent manipulatng this council, then immediately execute **one** order from this new position. After your order is executed, the Eagle Empire's Council is over: check the supply level and commence the next Empire's Council. (You may execute your order from any position you just acquired control of).

Elephant Empire

Sheriff

Order A: For each farm controlled by the empire, Deploy 1 solider in a homeland or conquered region.

Steward

Order A: Your secret society draws an Elephant Empire decree for each set of three forts controlled by the Elephant Empire.

Order B: Deploy 2 soliders in a homeland or conquered region.

Marshall

Order A: For each fort controlled by the empire, Deploy 1 solider in a homeland or conquered region.

Order B: Invade or attack **once**.

Chancellor

Order A: Invade or attack **once**.

Order B: Switch your agent currently manipulating the Elephant Empire's Chancellor with an other political agent manipulatng this council, then immediately execute **one** order from this new position. After your order is executed, the Elephant Empire's Council is over: check the supply level and commence the next Empire's Council. (You may execute your order from any position you just acquired control of).

Lion Empire

Sheriff

Order A: For each farm controlled by the Empire, Deploy 1 solider in a homeland or conquered region.

Order B: **Your secret society** draw a decree from the Lion Empire's decree deck.

Steward

Order A: **Your secret society** draws a decree from the Lion Empire's decree deck for each set of three farms controlled by the Lion Empire.

Order B: Deploy 2 soliders in a homeland or conquered region.

Marshall

Order A: Deploy 2 soliders in a homeland or conquered region for each fort controlled by the Lion Empire.

Chancellor

Order A: Invade or attack **once**.

Order B: Switch your agent currently manipulating the Lion Empire's Chancellor with an other political agent manipulatng this council, then immediately execute **one** order from this new position. After your order is executed, the Lion Empire's Council is over: check the supply level and commence the next Empire's Council. (You may execute your order from any position your agent just acquired control of).

Horse Empire

Sheriff

Order A: For each farm controlled by the empire, Deploy 1 soldier in a homeland or conquered region.

Steward

Order A: **Your secret society** draws a Horse Empire decree for each set of two forts controlled by the Horse empire.

Marshall

Order A: For each fort controlled by the empire, Deploy 1 soldier in a homeland or conquered region.

Order B: Invade or attack **once**.

Chancellor

Order A: Invade or attack **once**.

Order B: Switch your agent currently manipulating the Horse Empire's Chancellor with an other political agent manipulating this council, then immediately execute **one** order from this new position. After your order is executed, the Horse Empire's Council is over: check the supply level, then the year ends. (You may execute your order from any position you just acquired control of).

Phase 3: Year end

On the end of the year 1 to 3, Players retrieves one of their agents back to the shadows. Players discard decrees until they hold 5 decrees or less in the name of their secret society. players have the option to swap two **concealed** loyalties at the cost of revealing them. The player to the left of the current first player becomes the first player. Flip the just played year's marker and Go to phase 1 of the next year.

On the end of the 4th year, the game ends: players may not shift loyalties or retrieve agents. Proceed with scoring.

Decrees

Some decrees generate actions by themselves **(G)**, while others modify a council order currently ongoing **(M)**. Dark alliances decrees are instant effects that must be resolved immediately **(I)**.

(G) effects must be played **before** executing a council order. You may play any number of them before executing a given order.

(M) effects must be played **during** an active agent's action. They don't count as an additional order, they modify the behavior of the council order. For example, the Bear Empire's second decree effect do not allow you to attack a second time then kill everyone involved. It only allows you to kill all banners involved in the attack declared by the council you have chosen to influence with a decree.

(I) effects must be played immediately as the decree is drawn by the player who drew it.

You must choose **one** effect and discard the corresponding number of top left symbols for it, including the decree you played, to activate it. Once done, put all of them in a discard pile next to their respective deck.

Reminder: per this ruleset you **may not play a decree after** a council order is executed. You may however play it before your next action if you have more than one action in a row. When you control two actions in a row, this effectively changes nothing.

Note: This directly contradicts the official publisher rules, but Jeremy has precised, for the biggest offender, the Eagle Decree's first effect, that playing it after an order is disallowed. This official legal precedent was simply extended to everything in this ruleset to prevent any loophole.

You may play any empire's decree in the name of any council. For example, you can play a Bear Empire decree in the interest of the Eagle Empire.

You may play any number of decrees as long as the timing for the effects are all respected.

Bear Empire

(G) After your attack, you may make an additional attack with any surviving banners:
You declare another attack action, from the region you just conquered. Since you can't abandon conquered territory, you must leave at least 1 soldier behind.

(M) After your attack, kill all banners involved in that attack - This must be played as you take an attack action within a council. It modifies its behavior, it is not another attack.

Treasure: This is a wild decree to discard to pay the cost for an effect of another card you play.

(I) Warring clans - bad blood: Because the effect is immediate, The empire considered is always the Bear Empire.

(I) Warring clans - Savaged: Self-explanatory.

(I) The Trials - Absolve: No order is taken, only the position is changed. The turn keeps moving clockwise one position next to the action that led to this card being drawn is fully executed.

(I) The Trials - Exile: No action is taken, only the position is changed. The turn keeps moving clockwise one position next to the action that led to this card being drawn is fully executed.

(G) Recruit - Self-explanatory.

(G) Mercenaries - Self-explanatory.

(M) Subjugate - Resurrect the attacking empire's killed units in any region controlled by the attacking empire. You may choose different eligible regions for each resurrected unit.

(G) Disperse - You must give up control of the region you have chosen if you are choosing a conquered region. The card contradicts the game rules, but the card is correct for the duration of its effect.

Eagle Empire

(M) Move the active agent to any empty council position and then take that position's action immediately.

- You may take an empty position in another council.
- You take the action you moved to **instead** of the one corresponding to the current executed order before the card was played.
- This does not influence the Council Holdings: Once your action is executed, the Council Holdings advance one position from the currently executed order. (Time passes as if you did not use this decree.)

- If you put your agent further ahead on the empire turn, the active action will eventually get to the agent you moved. **You do take another action with him**, effectively allowing you to perform the same action twice during the turn.

(M) Your attack may target any empty region.

This must be played as you take an invade action within a council. It allows you to invade any empty enemy territory instead of an adjacent empty, effectively teleporting an army. You may not fully abandon a conquered territory using this effect, you must leave at least one banner behind if the starting territory for the effect is conquered.

You do lose a unit if your arrival territory contains a fort.

Treasure: This is a wild card to discard to pay the cost for an effect of another card you play.

Elephant Empire

(I) Bountiful Harvest - Trade: Discard this decree only at the end of the turn; put it next to the board for the duration of the turn. Whenever a farm icon is considered for an action, count relevant farms twice each.

(I) Bountiful Harvest - Hoard: Discard this decree only at the end of the turn; put it next to the board for the duration of the turn. Ignore supply checks until the end of the turn. Perform a supply check before the beginning of the next turn.

(I) Assassination plot - Avert: You must target a region containing at least one eagle banner.

(I) Assassination plot - Enact: Self explanatory. This does not reset the council holdings, time still moves forward one space once the order that led to this card being drawn is fully executed.

(M) Armada: This must be played as you take an attack action within a council. It modifies its behavior, it is not another attack. You must still chose a region controlled by an enemy empire. (You may not declare the empire is attacking itself.)

(G) Populate: this includes the actives empire's home region that contains no troops.

(G) Alchemist's fire: You may chose different eligible regions for each unit.

(G) Mercenaries: You may target a region that has less than 3 units. You may target the active empire's units.

(G) Add one banner to your attack - This includes invading.

(G) Add 3 banners to your attack - This includes invading.

Treasure: This is a wild decree to discard to pay the cost for an effect of another card you play.

(I) Stampede - Self-explanatory.

(I) Peace through strength - Purge: This only applies to regions containing a minimum of 1 Elephant unit.

(I) Peace through strength - Permit: Self-Explanatory.

(G) Recruit - Self-explanatory.

(G) Uprising - Self-explanatory.

(G) Alchemist's fire: You may chose different eligible regions for each unit.

(M) Reinforce: This must be played as you take an invade/attack order within a council. It modifies its behavior, it is not another order. **You may not chose to lose control** of a conquered territory while picking the source of your reinforcements. You may add 0 banners. You may chose to teleport banners from a region controlled by the attacking empire that is not adjacent to the attacked region.

Lion Empire

(M) Instead of using the active agent position action, use a position action held by one of your other agents - this does not change the council holdings resolution. You perform your newly selected order, then the next order is the one that is one space after the replaced action, not the replacing order.

(G) Add 3 friendly banners to any one city - **Friendly means allied to the current active council.**

Treasure: This is a wild decree to discard to pay the cost for an effect of another card you play.

(I) Plague - Control: A Lion Empire home region, not any home region.

(I) Plague - Let it Spread: Self-explanatory.

(M) Midnight oil: The repeat of the order is considered an effect, not a second performing of the order. Therefore, you cannot play two Midnight oils in a row on the same action.

(G) Populate: this includes the actives empire's home regions that contains no troops.

(M) Reinforce: This must be played as you take an invade/attack order within a council. It modifies its behavior, it is not another order. You may not lose control of a conquered territory while picking the source of your reinforcements. You may add 0 banners. You may chose to teleport banners from a region controlled by the attacking empire that is not adjacent to the attacked region.

(M) Subjugate - Resurrect the attacking empire's killed units in any region controlled by the attacking empire. You may chose different eligible regions for each resurrected unit.

Horse Empire

(G) Move one army of the active empire to any region it controls: Self-explanatory.

(G) Rearrange any empire's banners within it's controlled regions: Splitting banners on any number of empty home regions is allowed.

Treasure: This is a wild decree to discard to pay the cost for an effect of another card you play.

(I) Nomadic Life: It's a from one region to **one single empty region** full transfer of troops. (The starting region must be abandoned even if it is conquered territory).

(I) Succession Crisis: This is the only card in the game that breaks the turn order and allow the active council position to go counter clockwise.

(M) Armada: This must be played as you take an invade/attack order within a council. It modifies its behavior, it is not another order. You must still select an enemy controlled territory, you can't attack yourself. If you do it from a conquered territory, you may not lose control of it.

(M) Midnight oil: The repeat of the action is considered an effect, not a second performing of the order. Therefore, you cannot play two Midnight oils in a row on the same order.

(G) Uprising: Self-explanatory.

(G) Disperse - You must give up control of the region you have chosen if you are choosing a conquered region. The card contradicts the game rules, but the card is correct for the duration of its effect.

From @Ziquant's Unofficial FAQ

Executing an order when you control a council position is mandatory. It may have no effect.

Addendum for this ruleset: If there is no valid target, you may not choose this order. If no order is valid for a given council position, that position is skipped.

It is impossible for a region to be uncontrolled.

If all 20 banners for an empire are in play and you are supposed to add some, simply don't add any.

