

## Programmed Nations in DBA Campaigns

The De Bellis Antiquitatis (DBA) Campaign rules allow simple and short campaigns to be conducted without excessive complication. However, occasionally you are set to run your campaign only to find a player can not make the event or the number of players are limited. How can you continue your campaign?

Provided here are some basic rules to automate the running of those countries that do not have a player associated with them.

The original rules concept appeared in *Wargames Illustrated* in the 1990s in an article by a P. Raper. This is a modified version based on that appearing on the Fanaticus website<sup>1</sup> further modified by myself.



Hopefully, your resulting campaign using a mix of player and non-player nations will be interesting and amusing yet provide a series of challenging tabletop games. However, be careful of ambitious tyrants on your borders!

### Tyrants, Kings and Generals:

For those nations without a player, referred to as a non-player nation, the following method is used to determine the characteristics of the nations foreign policy and the commanding general's character. For simplicity they are deemed the same.

Roll one D6 at the start of the campaign for each non-player nation. All players are immediately aware of the resulting die roll and non-playing nation's character.

| Die Roll | Character   |
|----------|---|
| 1        | <b>Feeble Leader</b> - timid, fearful, even cowardly; lacking martial skills.   |
| 2 or 3   | <b>Incompetent Leader</b> - not feeble, but lacking in sound military judgment.   |
| 4 or 5   | <b>Skilled Leader</b> - a veteran commander who uses sound strategy and tactics to maximise the odds of military success. |
| 6        | <b>Rash Leader</b> - an ambitious, even impetuous leader who consistently takes dangerous risks against long odds.        |

Note, some historical nations may have clearly defined characteristics which may, at least initially, determine foreign policy.

A non-player nations foreign policy and leader type is re-rolled when:

- The the non-playing nation's general is lost following a battle or when the field army is lost due to siege.
- If a feeble leader's main army is defeated in battle, even if the general is not killed. This represents a coup or replacement of a general.

### Placement of Armies and Movement:

The armies of non-player nations are placed in their respective capitals at the start of the campaign year and return to the capital at the completion of each campaign year.

Armies controlled by feeble and incompetent leaders may only move one map route per seasonal turn. Skilled and rash leaders may move up to two map routes per season. Contingents operating outside the command of the leader move two provinces as normal.

Movement is further subject to the following additional restrictions:

- Feeble leaders will not move beyond their own initial borders. Feeble leaders will retire from invading aggressors toward their capital. Otherwise movement will be determined by random die roll.
- Incompetent leaders will always invade the nearest province, regardless of its strength or weakness. If there is more than one option, determine movement by random die roll. Incompetent leaders will not hesitate to use sea or mountain routes in spring or autumn.
- Skilled leaders will always seek to gain territory and avoid battle, by invading the nearest undefended province or weakest available opponent. The weakest foe is determined by comparing the size of the respective armies in number of elements, regardless of composition and without accounting for possible allied contingents. Skilled leaders will use sea or mountain routes only in summer.
- Rash leaders will always seek battle by invading the nearest available province garrisoned by an opponent's army, regardless of strength or weakness, and will cross sea or mountain routes in spring and autumn.

Where there is more than one movement option or direction, assign equal probability to each option and resolve by random die roll.

The nearest enemy is determined by counting provinces between the non-player capital and a potential enemy province.

#### **Non-Player Nation Attacks:**

At the start of the campaign year, after all other nations have declared war, each non-player nation, rolls one D6 to determine the action.

Once the non-player country has declared war it remains at war for the rest of the campaign year.

| Die Roll | Feeble Coward | Incompetent | Veteran Campaigner | Ambitious Tyrant |
|----------|---------------|-------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 1        |               |             |                    |                  |
| 2        |               |             |                    | Declare War      |
| 3        |               |             | Declare War        | Declare War      |
| 4        |               | Declare War | Declare War        | Declare War      |
| 5        | Declare War   | Declare War | Declare War        | Declare War      |
| 6        | Declare War   | Declare War | Declare War        | Declare War      |

Modifiers:

- Subtract one from the die score for each element a non-players army is less than 12 elements.

The declaration of war is applies, in descending order, as follows:

- Against player nations that have occupied the non-players provinces.
- Against independent provinces.
- Against the nation with nearest province.

Where there is more than one option at the same level, assign equal probability to each option and resolve by random die roll.

Each campaign turn roll a D6 and consult the above table again. As before the score is modified for army strength. Another "Declare War" result means the army attacks in an attempt to relieve a siege, or if not under siege itself, another province of a nation it is at war with. The action is directed at the nation or province as determined previously above.

An attack may be delayed further in some situations. For example a skilled leader does not conduct an attack by a sea route until another summer. However, if a more direct route exists, without attacking another nation, this is taken by the skilled leader and his army in the spring even if longer.

### Non-Player Nation Defence:

When a non-player nation is attacked, in another nations turn, roll one D6 and consult the following table to determine the non-player nation's reaction:

| <b>Feeble Leader</b>      |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1 to 4                    | Abandons his province to siege, retiring his army directly to his capital   |
| 5 or 6                    | Abandons his province to siege, retiring his army to the nearest adjacent province on route to the capital, otherwise does not move if already in another province. |
| <b>Incompetent Leader</b> |   |
| 1 or 2                    | Stands siege, retiring his army to the nearest adjacent province, otherwise does nothing.   |
| 3 or 4                    | Stands siege, without retiring army if present, otherwise does nothing.   |
| 5 or 6                    | Gives battle, moving his army up if required, regardless of odds.   |
| <b>Skilled Leader</b>     |   |
| 1 to 3                    | Stands siege retiring his army if present to the nearest adjacent province.   |
| 4 to 6                    | Gives battle, moving his army up if required, unless outnumbered by 3 or more elements, otherwise same as 1 to 3.   |
| <b>Rash Leader</b>        |   |
| 1 or 2                    | Stands siege leaving his army in the city/province if already present, otherwise does nothing.  |
| 3 to 6                    | Gives battle, moving his army up if required, regardless of the odds.   |

If a programmed leaders army is besieged for more than one season, roll one D6 and consult the following table to determine what action the programmed leader will take in another player turn.

| <b>Feeble Leader</b>      |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1 to 4                    | Continue to stand siege.   |
| 5                         | Sally forth, moving his army up if required, and give battle.  |
| 6                         | Surrender and accept tributary status.   |
| <b>Incompetent Leader</b> |  |
| 1 to 4                    | Continue to stand siege.   |
| 5 or 6                    | Sally forth, moving his army up if required, and give battle.  |
| <b>Skilled Leader</b>     |  |
| 1                         | Continue to stand siege regardless of odds.  |
| 2 or 3                    | Continue to stand siege unless army enjoys a numerical advantage over the opponent, otherwise see 4-6.                             |
| 4 to 6                    | Sally forth, moving his army up if required, and give battle, unless army is at a 3 or more element disadvantage, otherwise see 1. |
| <b>Rash Leader</b>        |  |
| 1 or 2                    | Continue to stand siege  |
| 3 to 6                    | Sally forth, moving his army up if required, and give battle regardless of odds.   |

### Battles:

When a battle involving a non-player nation must be fought the non-player nation's army will be controlled by an otherwise unoccupied player in the campaign. If there is more than one eligible player rolls a D6 to determine who will control the non-player army or by mutual agreement assign command to a player who has the least to gain by the non-player nation's defeat.

The player controlling a non-player nation's army in battle suffers the following constraints depending on the nature of the programmed leader:

- Feeble Leaders have a -1 PIP modifier, not moving on a result of 0 or lower. The general's element fights with a -1 modifier for close combat or missile fire.
- Incompetent Leaders have a -1 PIP modifier, not moving on a result of 0 or lower. The general's element fights without the +1 bonus for close combat or missile fire.

- Skilled Leaders roll an unmodified PIP die. The general's element receives the regular +1 modifier in close combat or missile fire.
- Rash Leaders enjoy a +1 PIP modifier with a maximum of 6 PIPS. The general's element receives the regular +1 modifier in close combat or missile fire.

### Allied Contingents:

Players may provide an allied contingent to a non-player nation any time they wish. If more than one player wishes to provide an allied contingent, then players roll die, with the high result earning the privilege of offering allies.

Players may seek an allied contingent from a non-player nation once per season. To determine whether a programmed leader accepts an invitation to provide an allied contingent, roll one D6 and consult the following table:

| <b>Feeble Leader</b>      |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1 to 5                    | Refuses to provide an allied contingent.   |
| 6                         | Provides an allied contingent.   |
| <b>Incompetent Leader</b> |  |
| 1 to 4                    | Refuses to provide an allied contingent.   |
| 5 or 6                    | Provides an allied contingent.   |
| <b>Skilled Leader</b>     |  |
| 1 to 3                    | Refuses to provide an allied contingent unless the prospective ally already enjoys an advantage of 3 or more elements, in which case see 4 to 6. |
| 4 to 6                    | Provides an allied contingent unless the prospective ally is already at a disadvantage of 4 or more elements, in which case see 1 to 3.          |
| <b>Rash Leader</b>        |  |
| 1 or 2                    | Refuses to provide an allied contingent.   |
| 3 to 5                    | Provides an allied contingent.   |
| 6                         | Provides an allied contingent to the requester's opponent.   |

As provided in the DBA Campaign Rules, a non-player nation may not provide an allied contingent if it has already made an attack for that season; otherwise. Otherwise a non-player nation will provide as many contingents as are successfully requested.

The requesting player who is granted an allied contingent may select the number (1 to 3) and type of elements forming the contingent from among the available elements in the non-player nation's army. Elements used in a previous contingent that season are not available.

A non-player nation may also request an allied contingent from a non-player nation. To determine whether a request is made, roll one D6 and consult the following table:

| <b>Feeble Leader</b>      |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1 or 2                    | Requests.   |
| 3 to 6                    | Does not request.   |
| <b>Incompetent Leader</b> |   |
| 1 to 3                    | Requests.   |
| 4 to 6                    | Does not request.   |
| <b>Skilled Leader</b>     |   |
| 1 to 5                    | Requests.   |
| 6                         | Does not request.   |
| <b>Rash Leader</b>        |   |
| 1 to 4                    | Requests unless army already outnumbered opponent without allied contingent, otherwise see 5-6. |
| 5 or 6                    | Does not request.   |

If a non-player nation decides to request an allied contingent from another non-player nation, then consult the preceding table to determine whether the allied contingent is actually provided. A neutral player, determined by die roll or mutual agreement, will then select the number and type of elements from those available to form the allied contingent.

## Tributary Status:

At the end of each campaign year the player who has captured the most of the non-player nations original provinces this campaign year may attempt subject a non-player nation into tributary status. If more than one nation has captured an equal number of provinces that season that which moved first attempts first. If unsuccessful other nations which have captured the same number of provinces may attempt to subject the non-player nation in order of movement for the yearly turn just completed.

If an attempt is successful, the player becomes the overlord of the non-player nation, who remains under the player's control until either party is knocked out of the campaign.

To determine whether an attempted subjugation is successful, roll one D6, add +1 if the player controls twice as many provinces as the programmed leader in question, and consult the following table:

| <b>Feeble Leader</b>      |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1-3                       | Rejects tributary status.                                     |
| 4-6                       | Accepts tributary status.                                     |
| <b>Incompetent Leader</b> |   |
| 1-4                       | Rejects tributary status.                                     |
| 5-6                       | Accepts tributary status.                                     |
| <b>Skilled Leader</b>     |   |
| 1-5                       | Rejects tributary status.                                     |
| 6                         | Accepts tributary status.                                     |
| <b>Rash Leader</b>        |   |
| 1 to 6                    | A rash leader will never voluntarily accept tributary status. |

A nation that is a tributary to another may still wage war. However, the tributary must obtain final permission, before movement, for the invasion from his overlord. If this is not obtained the nations "Declare War" result is assumed to be directed at the next most eligible nation.

## Additional Rules:

Additional modifications to the DBA Campaign Rules are as follows:

- Allied contingents do not receive their own movement dice, rather one additional PIP is always available for their use. One element is designated as the command stand for PIP command range penalties. No combat modifiers apply to this element. Additional PIPs must come from the main armies PIP dice.
- Elements from allied contingents can not move in groups with elements from the main army or other allied contingents.
- Elements from allied contingents can not provide or receive rear support from elements from the main army or other allied contingents.
- Armies not involved in combat in any given year are not reduced to 10 stands.

All other DBA Campaign Rules apply.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.fanaticus.org/DBA/variants/varprogrammedleaders.html>