Problem: Wars in Underlight are too open ended. There is no upside, outside of fostering a better roleplaynig environment, for capitulating. There is also great harm done to the playerbase that doesn't wish to constantly fight. That said, wars are an integral part of the game and essential to keep the game fun. We need to propose a well balanced system that:

- Rewards the victor of war and/or punishes the loser
- Enforces a time limit on the war
- Makes war less painful for the playerbase

Proposal: Change the gameplay mechanics to allow for a declaration of war.

I. Introduction to War

Being in "war" is a binary state of the game. The game is either in "war" mode or "neutral" mode. This means that there can only ever be one war that occurs at a time. This is for the best given the small number of guilds that exist.

Wars have two sides: aggressor and defender. Each guild can choose to be either on the side of the aggressor or defender. In this way partnerships may be formed.

When in war, house primes of those involved will be "frozen" in Chimeric Plane. They can not be moved or drained. They can not be added to. They **may** be used to create Power Tokens. They may not be used for any house activities such as initiation, knighting, etc. Whilst in a war a house's membership is frozen.

II. How is a war declared?

The aggressor -- a single guild -- takes dreamer essences of members of the defending guild. They must have a minimum of 10 essences (this number may fluctuate with the size of the player base): at least 3 ruler essences and 3 guardian essences. The essences must come from at least 5 distinct players.

A war declaration is a document. It contains the reason for declaring war, the goals of the war, et cetera. This document is the living record of the war.

Once a war is declared rulers of the opposing house have 24 (48?) hours to acknowledge the declaration. They can choose to accept the declaration of war, abstain or enter an immediate truce agreement.

a. Acceptance of war

Accepting the war puts the game immediately into a "war" state. What this means will be explained below. The war is initiated with the aggressor as being the initiators of war and the defenders being those who accepted the declaration.

b. Abstention from war

If the defenders choose to abstain, this puts the burden back on the aggressors. They can unilaterally force a war if they bring 5 more essences (1 ruler, 2 guardian with a minimum of 3 distinct) within 24 hours of the abstention. Unilaterally forcing a war has repercussions on the defenders which will be explained below.

c. **Immediate Truce Agreement**
This signals the end of the war. Since war never actually occurred the truce agreement is a roleplaying device only and there is no reward or penalty to either side. This can be considered akin to an "out of court settlement."

III. <u>The Cost of War</u>

War must have a cost such that it is unattractive to game the system (note that there should be barriers in place such that war can't be declared constantly) and so that the wars can reach a timely end. Therefore:

a. **Daily Cost**
War has a daily cost associated with it. The initial aggressor must pay 2000 strength per day of the war. The defenders and all allies pay 1000 strength per day of the war.

Note that in the event of an abstention forced war, the defenders will pay the same amount as the aggressors: 2,000 per day.

b. **Collapse Cost**
Each ruler essence fed into the "war machine" charges the respective guild of that ruler 2% of the **initial starting strength.** If the player has a rank in more than one guild we always prefer the higher rank. If the player is a ruler in two guilds we first prefer to deduct from the initial participants. If the player is a ruler of two allied participants then we choose one at random.

Each knight essence fed into the war machine charges 1% of the **initial starting strength.**

Each initiate charges 0.5% of the **initial starting strength.**

"Feeding the war machine" means bringing the dreamer essences to Chimeric Plane and depositing them into your prime artifact (Note: during war time you can not lift any prime artifact except for the artifact for the house in which you hold the highest rank). For example, if HC were fighting DoL and a ruler of HC had a Wraith head and a KeeKa head (each rulers in DoL), he would pick up Orb of Calenture and "use" it. This would consume the dreamer heads and drain

strength from the opposing side's prime. (Note: collapses always drain from the primary aggressor or defender).

IV. The Rewards of War

In order to mitigate XP loss due to war, all houses participating in the war treaty will have their XP pools widened. During war time the XP pool for guardians and rulers is tripled. Similarly, during war the aggressors earn 2x the XP for collapsing mares and the defenders earn 3x. Note that in the case of an abstention forced war the defenders will only earn 2x, similar to the aggressors.

NOTE: Do we want to make it more attractive to be an aggressor or defender? Because it could be possible to force someone into declaring war out of desperation to keep their house functioning. Maybe we need to balance it with where I put this previous note, so the defender earns 3x the XP for mares, but it costs the defender 2000 strength per day? Maybe we let allies donate 25% of their prime strength to defenders? Not sure.

The reward for winning/losing a war is described in the following section.

V. The End to War

War can end in one of two ways: by negotiating a treaty or by one house's prime reaching 0.

If a treaty is negotiated then the war ends in a "stalemate." Neither side wins. The primes are returned to each house with their current (drained) strength. If one side's prime reaches 0, they are deemed to be the "loser" of the war. All parties return to Chimeric. The winning party is given the prime artifact of the losing house as well as the prime artifact of their house. The victor must be a ruler of one of the primary houses in the conflict. Declare War is evoked again and results in a victory declaration from the victor. The winning house's prime is returned to its initial strength. The losing house's prime remains at 0 and is dropped upon victory declaration.

When victory is declared the winning house receives a "War Token." For example if DoL defeats HC, DoL receives a "War Token - Calenture." If DoL can collect four War Tokens for HC, they can demote a ruler to initiate or self-Knight into the house. With five tokens a ruler can be demoted out of the house completely or a ruler can self-ascend-to-ruler of the losing house.

Note that the end to war will probably need some GM involvement to ensure primes are returned. This is an essential part of the war ceremony: primes return back to their owners.

VI. Allies

Any house, at any point during the war, can ally themselves with the primary aggressor or defender. Allying donates strength from the allying house into the primary party's house at a rate of 2:1 (2 strength is drained from the ally and 1 goes into the primrary party). If a house allies themselves to any particular side they are given smaller XP bonuses (as they do not pay the daily cost of war, but also cannot strengthen their prime once they ally). Allying is a one-time grant from ally to primary party. A minimum of 10,000 strength must be drained from the ally. At maximum their entire prime may be drained into the primary party, resulting in a total loss of strength from the ally and a 50% gain of allyStrength into the primary party's prime.

Note that if in increasing the primary party's strength, their prime strength exceeds their initial starting value, the initial starting value is reset to the greater number, such that collapses are always 2%/1%/0.5% of the greatest prime strength that existed at any point during the war.

Once a house allies with the primary party the ally receives 2x mission board XP and 1.5x mare XP. Collapses of all rulers (in either the primary or allied houses) increase the drain rate to 2.5%, knights to 1.25% and initiates to 0.65% of the greatest prime strength.

VII. Time required between wars

Wars take a toll on the playerbase and, as such, may not be declared ad-hoc. There must be at least 10 calendar days between wars. In general, the formula for the amount of time between declarations of war will be: max(10, previousWar.days()), i.e. if the previous war lasted 14 days then there must be 14 days between that war and the next declaration. If it lasted 8 days then the next war may begin in 10 days.