

**The Infinite  
Views on  
Diplomacy or:  
How I Learned  
to Stop  
Worrying and  
Love Killing  
You**

By  
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# I changed it

- I had a very different presentation but then I saw from the activity feed that Mentar was planning almost the same thing so I decided to go more DEEP than intended....

# The idea here:

- A problem, phenomenon, that has bothered me for all these years (2012→).
- A CLAIM of why it happens
- A CLAIM of how on Earth it's connected to diplomacy – as I CLAIM it very much is!
- My suggestions about how to deal with this problem.

# "Rage quit"

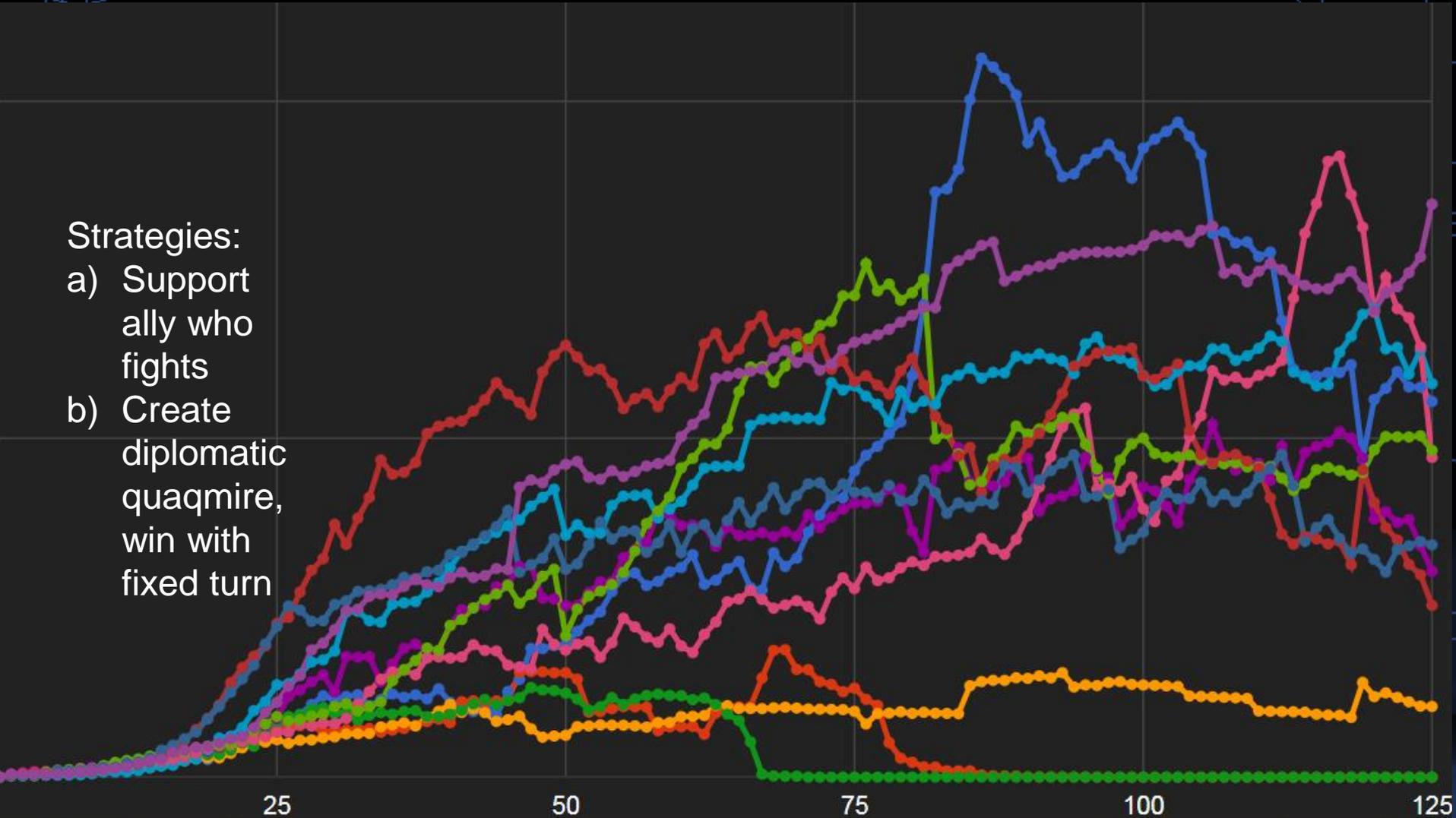
- When a player suddenly resigns or drops all games due to game events and stops playing (at least for awhile).
- Game events, such as:
  - Sudden, surprising military defeat
  - An ally "betrays" you
  - Super-Vassalage
  - Collective of players
- Not as much of a "rage quit", rather "shock quit"

# DIE HARD 16

Strategies:

a) Support ally who fights

b) Create diplomatic quaqmare, win with fixed turn





# Cosmology episode

- Coined by Karl E. Weick
- In short: Your concept and understanding of world and how it works, worldview even, is shattered in collision with real life, ensuing in sudden loss of meaning and sense of the world, causing dramatic feelings and behaviour.

# Cosmology episode:

- "These people are playing a whole different game! They are playing **WRONG! THIS IS NOT RIGHT!** Screw you, screw this game, I'm going home!"
  - What is the aim of the game?
  - How do you play the game?
  - What does cooperation mean?
  - (DIE HARD 16 example)

# Nice. Cosmology Episode.

- Great. But how is it connected to *diplomacy*?
- Diplomacy: the free use of communication to create relations to other players, position yourself among them, persuade and manipulate, and co-create meaning of the game.
- With diplomacy you are playing, but also creating actual relations to actual people and connecting to their narrative.

# Narratives

- Our concept of understanding of the world can be approached in many ways, but let's use here "narratives".
- Narrative: A social construct of meaning shaped by us, our history and life events. Our internal grand "plot" about what is going on and why.

# Excerpts of narratives

Me:

- Background:
  - Strategy games with scheming, back-stabbing
- How to play:
  - “Game of thrones” (I love cloak and dagger)
- Cooperative ideal:
  - Support as long as useful, exploit

Iso--t:

- Background:
  - Strategy games with cooperation, “band of brothers”
- How to play:
  - Maximize fleet, crush opponents
- Cooperative ideal:
  - Fight together until the end

I expect deception, Iso--t expects trust.  
This is a disaster waiting to happen.

# CLAIM

1. We are very diverse, global bunch with infinite amount of views to this game.
2. When your own narrative is trashed by other players' actions, you might very well experience a "cosmology episode".
3. Conflicting narratives cause conflicts, hostilities and good players to quit playing Planets. Even on the highest levels.

# CLAIM

- Strategy games in general AIM to surprise and crush your opponent by novel tactics, strategies and exploiting the rules.
- Byproduct of all this: to cause cosmology episodes to your opponents.
  - People spend awfully lot of time and effort to figure out how this works – only to realize that it doesn't → results in shock

# Normative directions (what to make out of all this)

1. Due to our different backgrounds, we all are playing a different game.
2. Communication here is limitless. It is very hard to keep just in-game. You can make *anything you want* with it. Also bad things that actually hurt.
3. You can **AND WILL** hurt other players in this game. You **WILL** be hurt yourself. Reason: conflicting competition and only one wins.  
→ You should be considerate to your opponents or you are **EVIL**.

# Normative directions (Examples: how I play)

- Communicate your intentions:
  - ” I’m looking forward for cooperation and trade as long as it’s beneficial for my victory. I hope a game with this high DM will turn out to be a real Game of Thrones. Happy gaming everybody, may the dagger in your back be sharp!”
- People will not have wrong expectations of complete trust.

# Normative directions (Examples: how I play)

- Deceit mostly in-game with ship movements etc., not by communication. It's too easily out-of-the-game.
- If you make a deal, honor it. If you need to break it, warn beforehand. Agree beforehand a policy about how to break a deal.

# Normative directions (Examples: how I play)

- Design deals in a way that you anticipate most situations beforehand – no need to break deals:
  - You benefit more than your ally OR
  - The situation in near future benefits you more
  - Prepare for sudden resignations
  - Prepare for sudden changes of alignments
  - Prepare for sudden defeats

# Moralistic endnotes

- Even though it's effective, it's not necessarily right (vs. the competitive gaming -discourse)
- This is NOT "just a game"! YOU ARE ACTUAL PEOPLE!
- "When you have to kill a man, it costs nothing to be polite."
  - Try to help your opponent to overcome the pain.

It's okay that I want to kill you.  
It's my way of saying I love you.

In the Echo Cluster.