Wargaming to Deceive the Sponsor

Why and How?

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The opinions contained in this briefing are those of the author alone.

Why do we want to do this?

Caveats

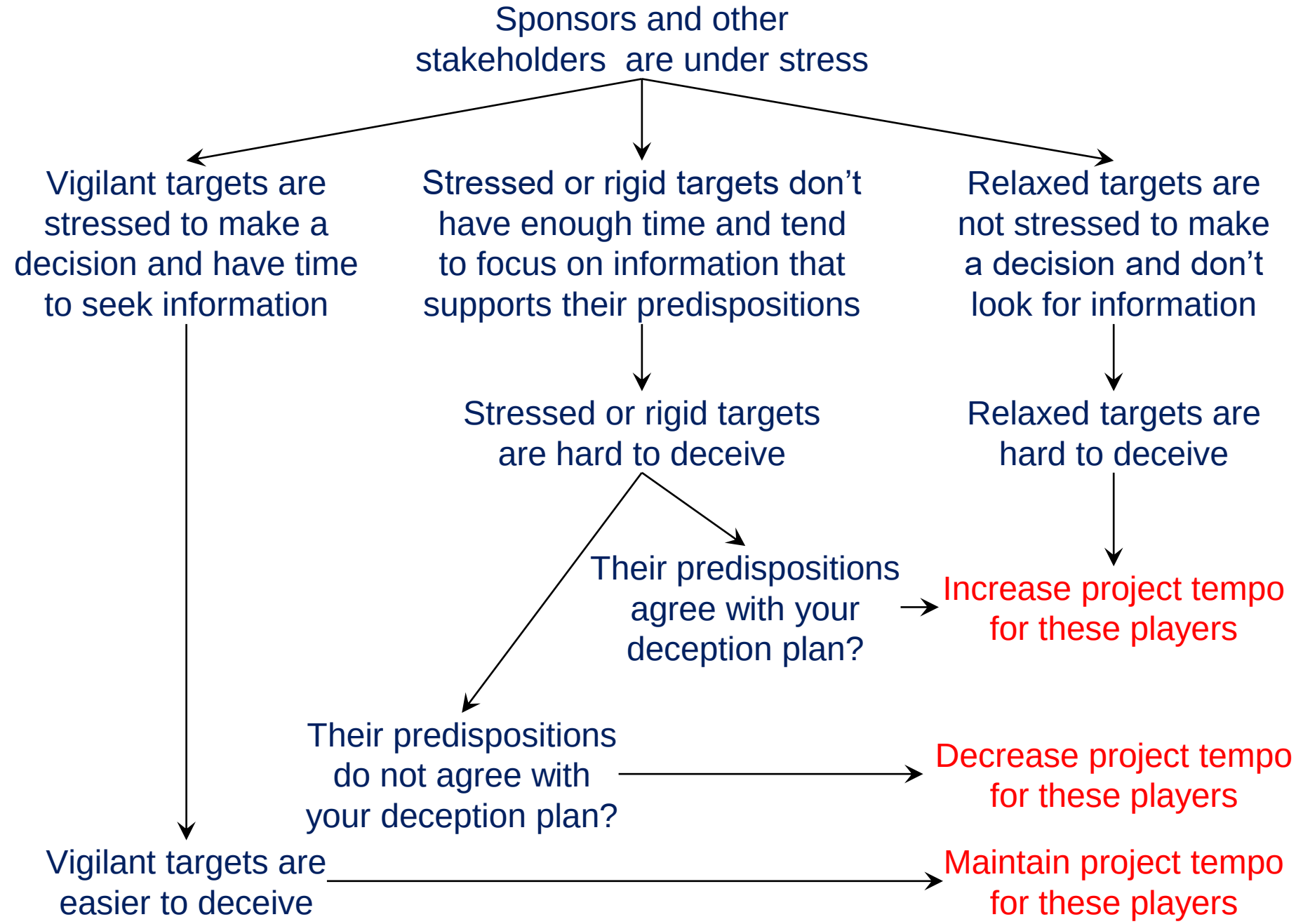
- Wargaming applied to serious high stakes National Security issues:
  - Operational or Strategic levels of war
  - Novel or future environments
  - Acquisition of equipment
  - Implementation of new concepts
- Does not apply to benign deception of players using “hidden scenario” for example.
- By Sponsor I often include “other senior Stakeholders”
- I do not distinguish between different roles within the wargaming organization producing the wargame (designer, developer, etc)

Two Simultaneous Approaches

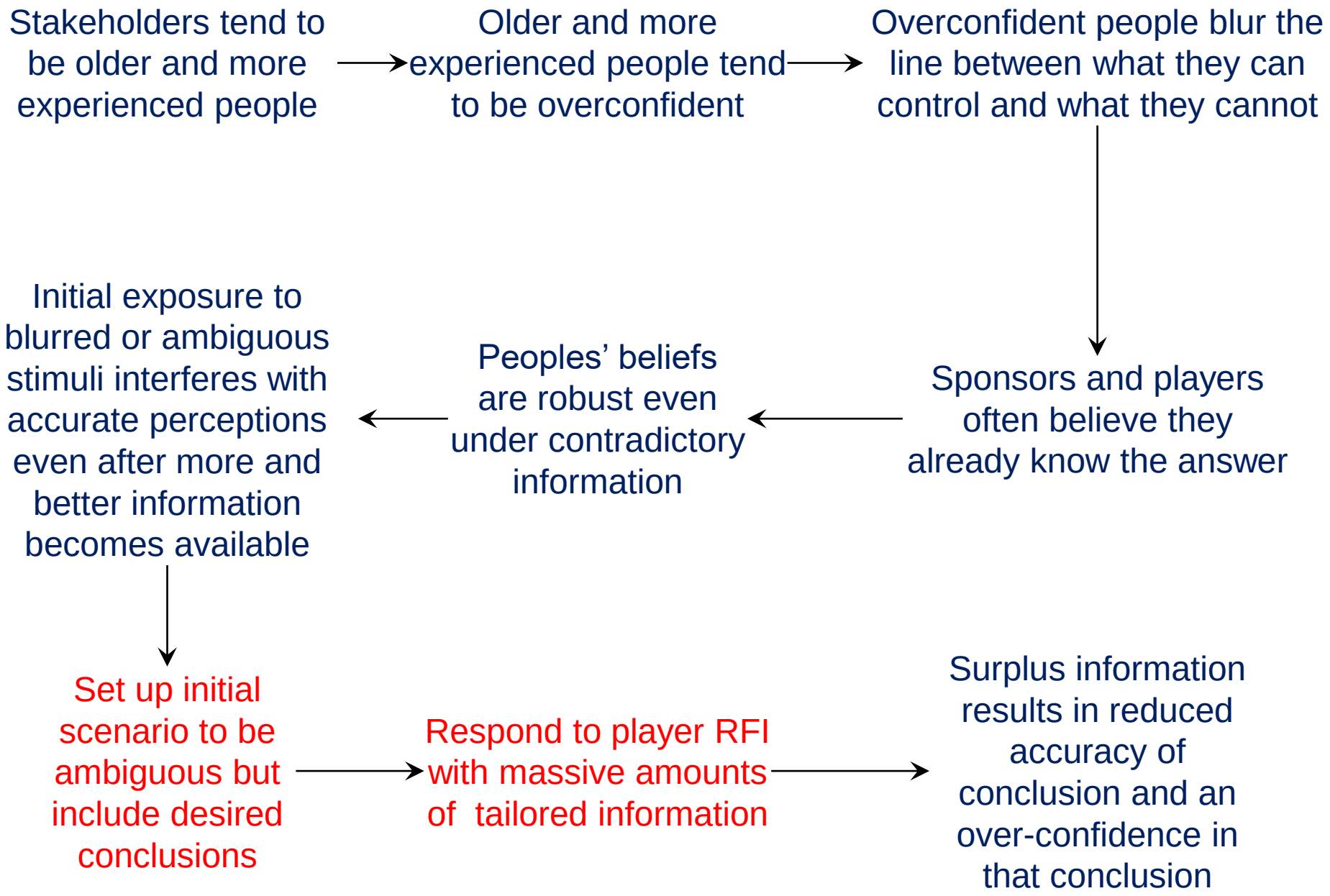
- Deceive the Sponsor or other Stakeholders Directly during the game design, development and post game analysis stages.

- Deceive players during the game IN ORDER TO deceive the Sponsor and other stakeholders.

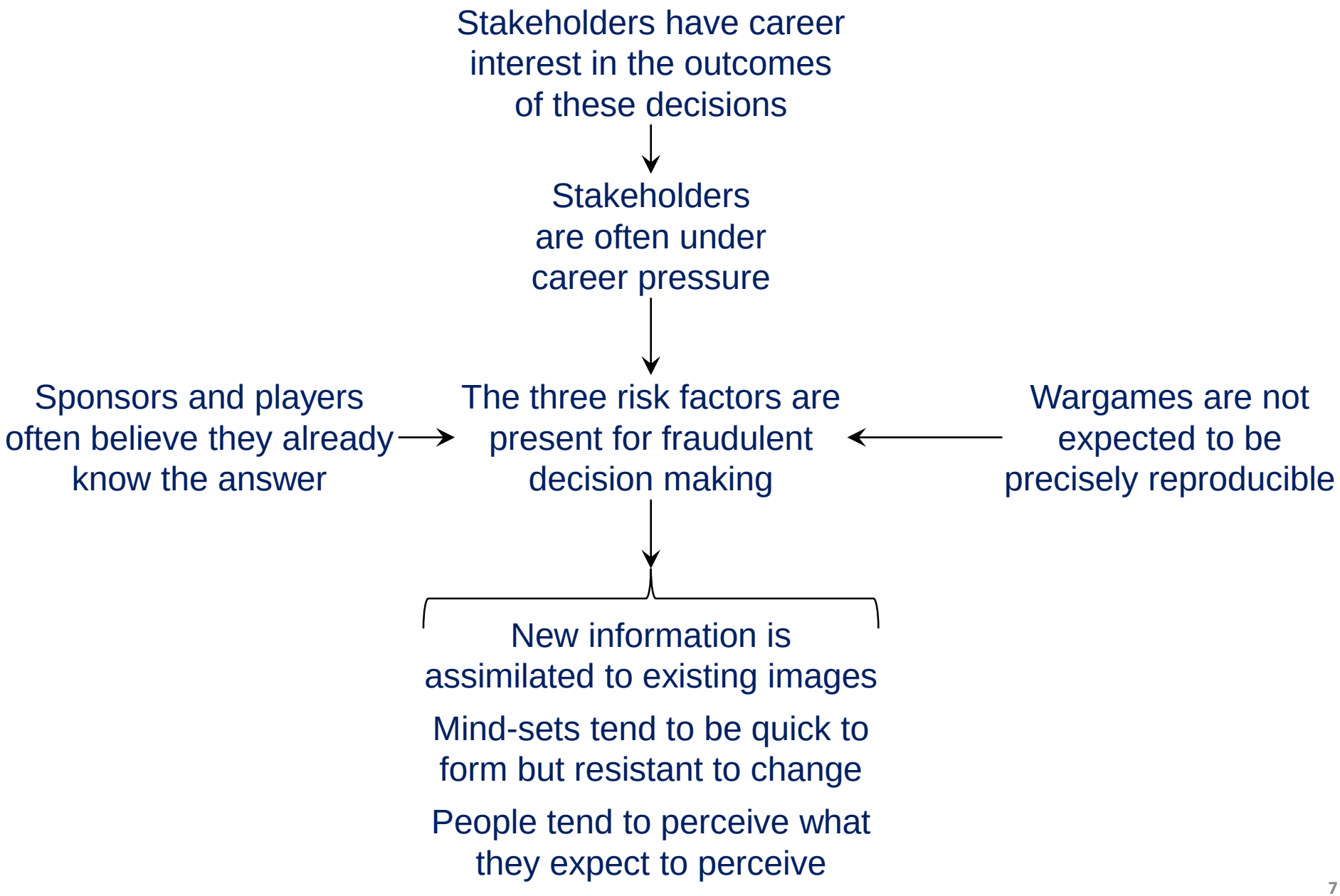
Directly deceive the Sponsor – Stress



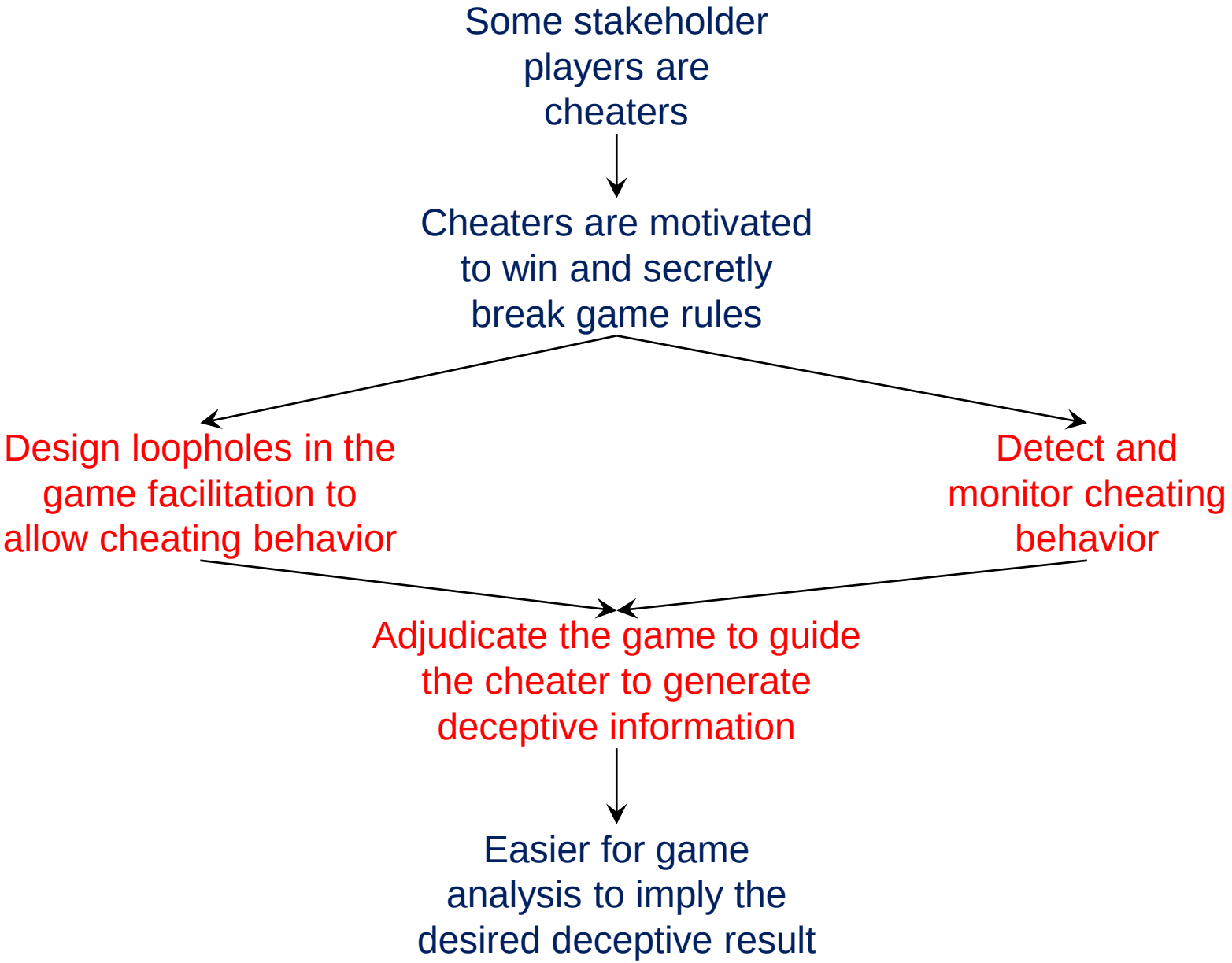
Directly deceive the Sponsor – Overconfidence



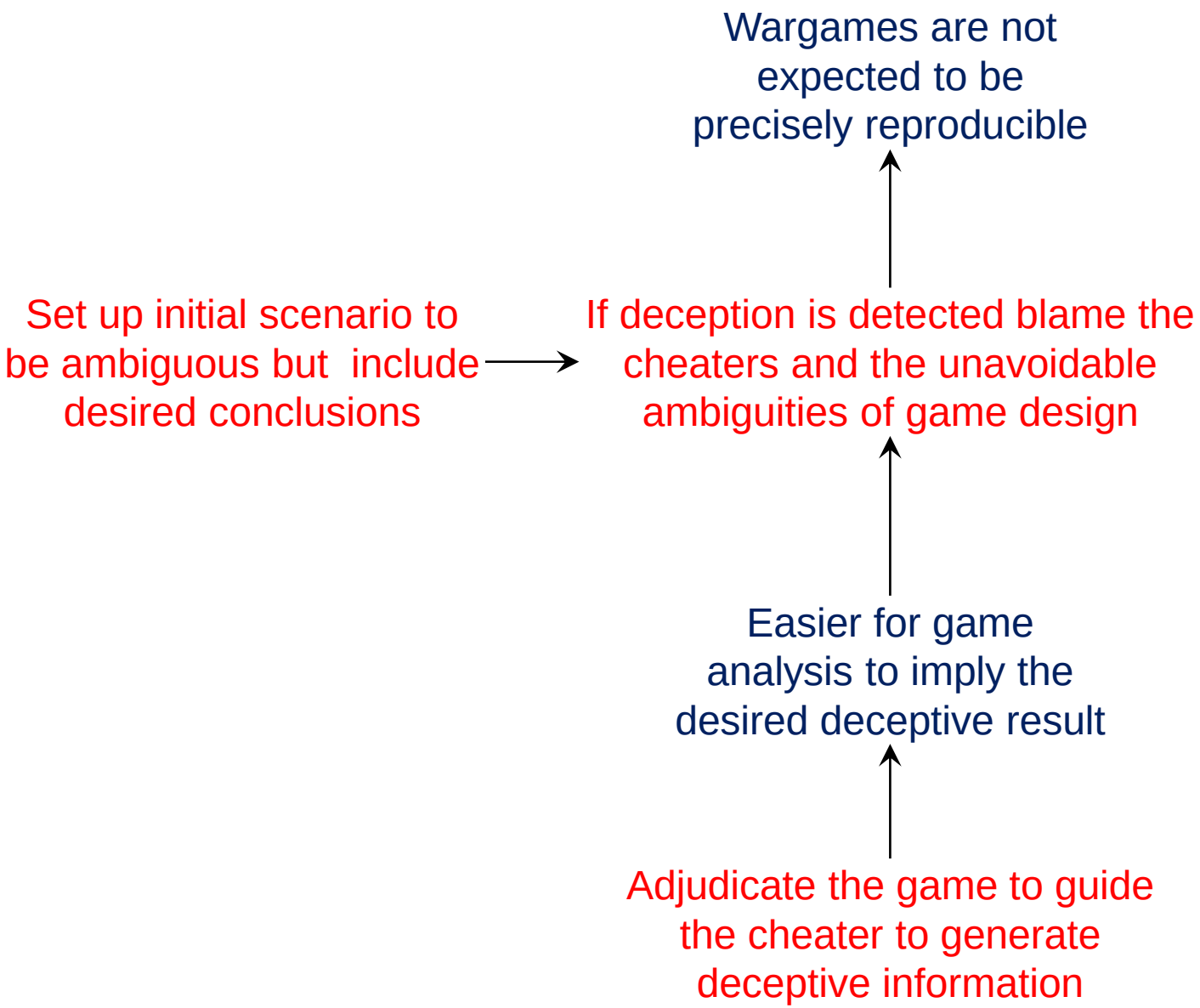
Directly deceive the Sponsor – Career Pressure

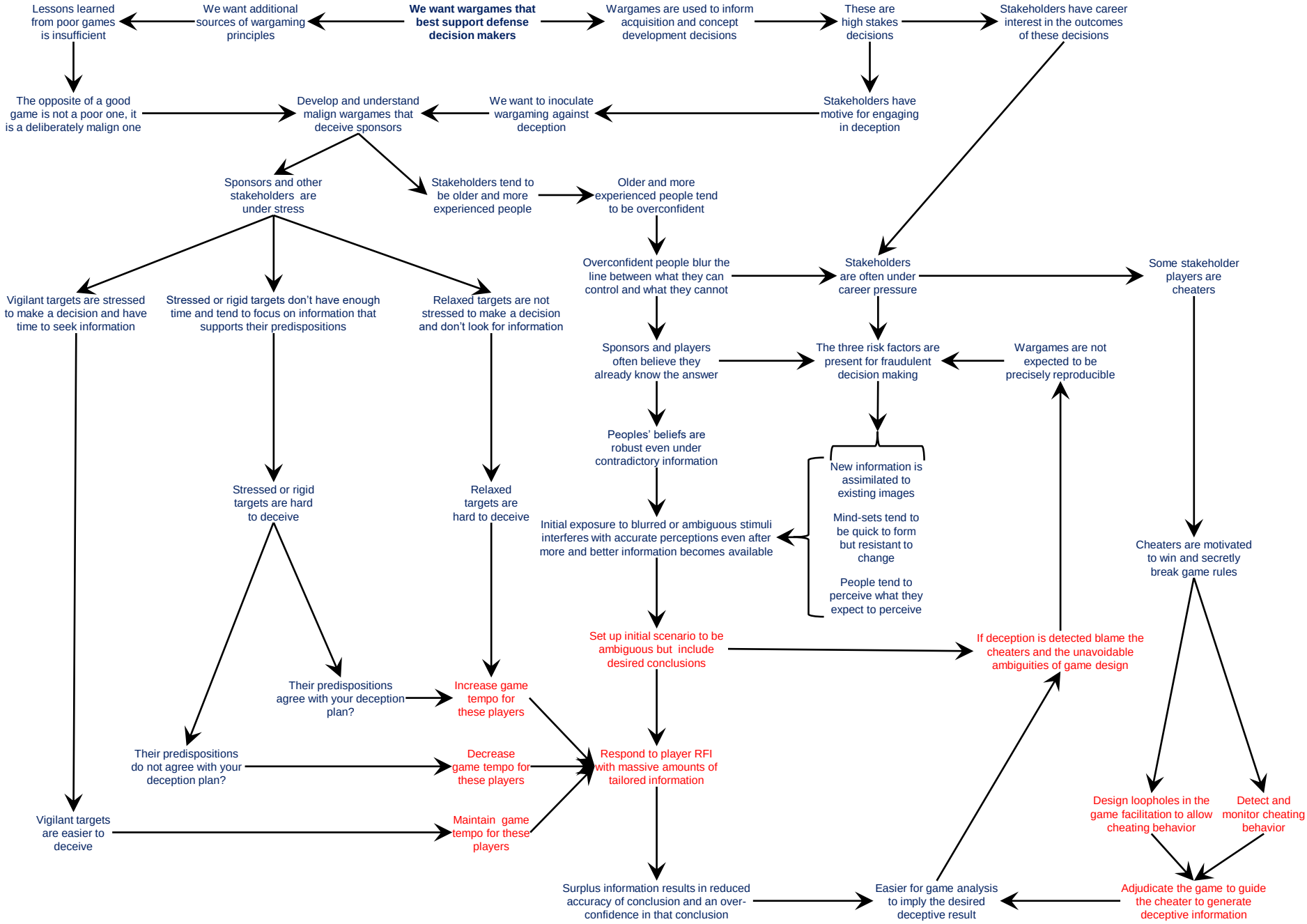


Indirectly deceive the Sponsor via the Players



Don’t Leave Fingerprints!




Lessons learned from poor games is insufficient
We want additional sources of wargaming principles
We want wargames that best support defense decision makers
Wargames are used to inform acquisition and concept development decisions
These are high stakes decisions
Stakeholders have career interest in the outcomes of these decisions
The opposite of a good game is not a poor one, it is a deliberately malign one
Develop and understand malign wargames that deceive sponsors
We want to inoculate wargaming against deception
Stakeholders have motive for engaging in deception
Sponsors and other stakeholders are under stress
Stakeholders tend to be older and more experienced people
Older and more experienced people tend to be overconfident
Overconfident people blur the line between what they can control and what they cannot
Stakeholders are often under career pressure
Some stakeholder players are cheaters
Vigilant targets are stressed to make a decision and have time to seek information
Stressed or rigid targets don't have enough time and tend to focus on information that supports their predispositions
Relaxed targets are not stressed to make a decision and don't look for information
Sponsors and players often believe they already know the answer
The three risk factors are present for fraudulent decision making
Wargames are not expected to be precisely reproducible
Peoples' beliefs are robust even under contradictory information
New information is assimilated to existing images
Mind-sets tend to be quick to form but resistant to change
People tend to perceive what they expect to perceive
Stressed or rigid targets are hard to deceive
Relaxed targets are hard to deceive
Initial exposure to blurred or ambiguous stimuli interferes with accurate perceptions even after more and better information becomes available
Cheaters are motivated to win and secretly break game rules
Set up initial scenario to be ambiguous but include desired conclusions
If deception is detected blame the cheaters and the unavoidable ambiguities of game design
Their predispositions agree with your deception plan?
Increase game tempo for these players
Their predispositions do not agree with your deception plan?
Decrease game tempo for these players
Respond to player RFI with massive amounts of tailored information
Design loopholes in the game facilitation to allow cheating behavior
Detect and monitor cheating behavior
Vigilant targets are easier to deceive
Maintain game tempo for these players
Surplus information results in reduced accuracy of conclusion and an over-confidence in that conclusion
Easier for game analysis to imply the desired deceptive result
Adjudicate the game to guide the cheater to generate deceptive information

What is to be Done?

- Game Peer Review Board
- Player Stress
- Engage the Sponsor
- Punish and Learn from Cheating
- Match Game Information Flow to Level of Gamed War
- Identify and Monitor Ambiguous Game Rules or Process
- Rotate Player Roles