

Accessible Abstract: Machine learning techniques to detect deception in online communications requires training and evaluation data. However, there is a dearth of data either because of uncertain gold labels or privacy concerns; we create a new, large deception-centered dataset in the online game of Diplomacy. We gathered 17,289 messages from 12 games (each of which took over a month) involving 84 players, the majority of which were unique users. This data was collected with a custom-made bot that allowed us to collect messages and annotations. The user pool was created from scratch: we varied participant demographics across gender, age, nationality, and past game experience. Some of our participants included the former president of the Diplomacy players’ association, several top ranked players in the world, a board game shop owner, and scientists. We create machine learning models to detect lies using linguistic, context, and power-dynamic features. Our best model had similar lie detection accuracy to humans.

Links:
- Video [http://youtu.be/BVAAhIUtf9U]
- Podcast [https://diplomacygames.com/the-lying-interview/]
- Data and Code [http://go.umd.edu/diplomacy_data]

Downloaded from [http://umiacs.umd.edu/~jbg/docs/2020_acl_diplomacy.pdf]

Contact Jordan Boyd-Graber (jbg@boydgraber.org) for questions about this paper.
Trust is implicit in many online text conversations—striking up new friendships, or asking for tech support. But trust can be betrayed through deception. We study the language and dynamics of deception in the negotiation-based game Diplomacy, where seven players compete for world domination by forging and breaking alliances with each other. Our study with players from the Diplomacy community gathers 17,289 messages annotated by the sender for their intended truthfulness and by the receiver for their perceived truthfulness. Unlike existing datasets, this captures deception in long-lasting relationships, where the interlocutors strategically combine truth with lies to advance objectives. A model that uses power dynamics and conversational contexts can predict when a lie occurs nearly as well as human players.

1 Introduction

A functioning society is impossible without trust. In online text interactions, users are typically trusting (Shneiderman, 2000), but this trust can be betrayed through false identities on dating sites (Toma and Hancock, 2012), spearphishing attacks (Dhamija et al., 2006), sockpuppetry (Kumar et al., 2017) and, more broadly, disinformation campaigns (Kumar and Shah, 2018). Beyond such one-off antisocial acts directed at strangers, deception can also occur in sustained relationships, where it can be strategically combined with truthfulness to advance a long-term objective (Cornwell and Lundgren, 2001; Kaplar and Gordon, 2004).

We introduce a dataset to study the strategic use of deception in long-lasting relationships. To collect reliable ground truth in this complex scenario, we design an interface for players to naturally generate and annotate conversational data while playing a negotiation-based game called Diplomacy.

These annotations are done in real-time as the players send and receive messages. While this game setup might not directly translate to real-world situations, it enables computational frameworks for studying deception in a complex social context while avoiding privacy issues.

After providing background on the game of Diplomacy and our intended deception annotations (Section 2), we discuss our study (Section 3). To probe the value of the resulting dataset, we develop lie prediction models (Section 4) and analyze their results (Section 5).
2 Diplomacy

The Diplomacy board game places a player in the role of one of seven European powers on the eve of World War I. The goal is to conquer a simplified map of Europe by ordering armies in the field against rivals. Victory points determine the success of a player and allow them to build additional armies; the player who can gain and maintain the highest number of points wins.\textsuperscript{1} The mechanics of the game are simple and deterministic: armies, represented as figures on a given territory, can only move to adjacent spots and the side with the most armies always wins in a disputed move. The game movements become publicly available to all players after the end of a turn.

Because the game is deterministic and everyone begins with an equal amount of armies, a player cannot win the game without forming alliances with other players—hence the name of the game: Diplomacy. Conquering neighboring territories depends on support from another player’s armies. After an alliance has outlived its usefulness, a player often dramatically breaks it to take advantage of their erstwhile ally’s vulnerability. Table 1 shows the end of one such relationship. As in real life, to succeed a betrayal must be a surprise to the victim. Thus, players pride themselves on being able to lie and detect lies. Our study uses their skill and passion to build a dataset of deception created by battle-hardened diplomats. Senders annotate whether each message they write is an ACTUAL LIE and recipients annotate whether each message received is a SUSPECTED LIE. Further details on the annotation process are in Section 3.1.

2.1 A game walk-through

Figure 1 shows the raw counts of one game in our dataset. But numbers do not tell the whole story. We analyze this case study using rhetorical tactics (Cialdini and Goldstein, 2004), which Oliveira et al. (2017) use to dissect spear phishing e-mails and Anand et al. (2011) apply to persuasive blogs. Mentions of tactics are in italic (e.g., authority); context for quotes in Appendix, Table 7. For the rest of the paper, we will refer to players via the name of their assigned country.

\textsuperscript{1}In the parlance of Diplomacy games, points are “supply centers” in specific territories (e.g., London). Having more supply centers allows a player to build more armies and win the game by capturing more than half of the 34 supply centers on the board.

Figure 1: Counts from one game featuring an Italy (green) adept at lying but who does not fall for others’ lies. The player’s successful lies allow them to gain an advantage in points over the duration of the game. In 1906, Italy lies to England before breaking their relationship. In 1907, Italy lies to everybody else about wanting to agree to a draw, leading to the large spike in successful lies.

Through two lie-intense strategies—convincing England to betray Germany and convincing all remaining countries to agree to a draw—Italy gains control of the board. Italy’s first deception is a plan with Austria to dismantle Turkey. Turkey believes Italy’s initial assurance of non-aggression in 1901. Italy begins by excusing his initial silence due to a rough day at work, evoking empathy and likability. While they do not fall for subsequent lies, Turkey’s initial gullibility cements Italy’s first-strike advantage. Meanwhile, Italy proposes a long-term alliance with England against France, packaging several small truths with a big lie. The strategy succeeds, eliminating Italy’s greatest threat.

Local threats eliminated, Italy turns to rivals on the other end of the map. Italy persuades England to double-cross its long-time ally Germany in a moment of scarcity: if you do not act now, there will
be nowhere to expand. England accepts help from ascendant Italy, expecting reciprocity. However, Italy aggressively and successfully moves against England. The last year features a meta-game deception. After Italy becomes too powerful to contain, the remaining four players team up. Ingeniously, Italy feigns acquiescence to a five-way draw, individually lying to each player and establishing authority while brokering the deal. Despite Italy’s record of deception, the other players believe the proposal (annotating received messages from Italy as truthful) and expect a 1907 endgame, the year with the most lies. Italy goes on the offensive and knocks out Austria. Italy’s summary of the game in their own words is in the Appendix, Table 6.

Each game has relationships that are forged and then riven. In another game, an honest attempt by a strong Austria to woo an ascendant Germany backfires, knocking Austria from the game. Germany builds trust with Austria through a believed fictional experience as a Boy Scout in Maine (likability). In a third game, two consecutive unfulfilled promises by an ambitious Russia leads to a quick demise, as their subsequent excuses and apologies are perceived as lies (failed consistency). In another game, England, France, and Russia simultaneously attack Germany after offering duplicitous assurances. Game outcomes vary despite the identical, balanced starting board, as different players use unique strategies to persuade, and occasionally deceive, their opponents.

2.2 Defining a lie

Statements can be incorrect for a host of reasons: ignorance, misunderstanding, omission, exaggeration. Gokhman et al. (2012) highlight the difficulty of finding willful, honest, and skilled deception outside of short-term, artificial contexts (DePaulo et al., 2003). Crowdsourced and automatic datasets rely on simple negations (Pérez-Rosas et al., 2017) or completely implausible claims (e.g., “Tipper Gore was created in 1048” from Thorne et al. (2018)). While lawyers in depositions and users of dating sites will not willingly admit to their lies, the players of online games are more willing to revel in their deception.

We must first define what we mean by deception. Lying is a mischaracterization; it’s thus no surprise that a definition may be divisive or the subject of academic debate (Gettier, 1963). We provide this definition to our users: “Typically, when [someone] lies [they] say what [they] know to be false in an attempt to deceive the listener” (Siegler, 1966). An orthodox definition requires the speaker to utter an explicit falsehood (Mahon, 2016); skilled liars can deceive with a patina of veracity. A similar definition is required for prosecution of perjury, leading to a paucity of convictions (Bogner et al., 1974). Indeed, when we ask participants what a lie looks like, they mention evasiveness, shorter messages, over-qualification, and creating false hypothetical scenarios (DePaulo et al., 2003).

2.3 Annotating truthfulness

Previous work on the language of Diplomacy (Niculae et al., 2015) lacked access to players’ internal state and was limited to post-hoc analysis. We improve on this by designing our own interface that gathers players’ intentions and perceptions in real-time (Section 3.1). As with other highly subjective phenomena like sarcasm (González-Ibáñez et al., 2011; Bamman and Smith, 2015), sentiment (Pang et al., 2008) and framing (Greene and Resnik, 2009), the intention to deceive is reflective on someone’s internal state. Having individuals provide their own labels for their internal state is essential as third party annotators could not accurately access it (Chang et al., 2020).

Most importantly, our gracious players have allowed this language data to be released in accordance with IRB authorized anonymization, encouraging further work on the strategic use of deception in long-lasting relations.2


Figure 2: Every time they send a message, players say whether the message is truthful or intended to deceive. The receiver then labels whether incoming messages are a lie or not. Here Italy indicates they believe a message from England is truthful but that their reply is not.
3 Engaging a Community of Liars

This dataset requires both a social and technical setup: finding a community that plays Diplomacy online and having them use a framework for annotating these messages.

3.1 Technical implementation

We need two technical components for our study: a game engine and a chat system. We choose Backstabbr\textsuperscript{3} as an accessible game engine on desktop and mobile platforms: players input their moves and the site adjudicates game mechanics (Chiodini, 2020). Our communication framework is atypical. Thus, we create a server on Discord,\textsuperscript{4} the group messaging platform most used for online gaming and by the online Diplomacy community (Coberly, 2019). The app is reliable on both desktop and mobile devices, free, and does not limit access to messages. Instead of direct communication, players communicate with a bot; the bot does not forward messages to the recipient until the player annotates the messages (Figure 2). In addition, the bot scrapes the game state from Backstabbr to sync game and language data.

Annotation of lies is a forced binary choice in our experiment. Explicitly calling a statement a lie is difficult, and people would prefer degrees of deception (Bavelas et al., 1990; Bell and DePaulo, 1996). Thus, we follow previous work that views linguistic deception as binary (Buller et al., 1996; Braun and Van Swol, 2016). Some studies make a more fine-grained distinction; for example, Swol et al. (2012) separate strategic omissions from blatant lies (we consider both deception). However, because we are asking the speakers themselves (and not trained annotators) to make the decision, we follow the advice from crowdsourcing to simplify the task as much as possible (Snow et al., 2008; Sabou et al., 2014). Long messages can contain both truths and lies, and we ask players to categorize these as lies since the truth can be a shroud for their aims.

3.2 Building a player base

The Diplomacy players maintain an active, vibrant community through real-life meetups and online play (Hill, 2014; Chiodini, 2020). We recruit top players alongside inexperienced but committed players in the interest of having a diverse pool. Our experiments include top-ranked players and community leaders from online platforms, grizzled in-person tournament players with over 100 past games, and board game aficionados. These players serve as our foundation and during initial design helped us to create a minimally annoying interface and a definition of a lie that would be consistent with Diplomacy play. Good players—as determined by active participation, annotation and game outcome—are asked to play in future games.

In traditional crowdsourcing tasks compensation is tied to piecework that takes seconds to complete (Buhrmester et al., 2011). Diplomacy games are different in that they can last a month... and people already play the game for free. Thus, we do not want compensation to interfere with what these players already do well: lying. Even the obituary of the game’s inventor explains

Diplomacy rewards all manner of mendacity: spying, lying, bribery, rumor mongering, psychological manipulation, outright intimidation, betrayal, vengeance and backstabbing (the use of actual cutlery is discouraged) (Fox, 2013).

Thus, our goal is to have compensation mechanisms that get people to play this game as they normally would, finish their games, and put up with our (slightly) cumbersome interface. Part of the compensation is non-monetary: a game experience with players that are more engaged than the average online player.

To encourage complete games, most of the payment is conditioned on finishing a game, with rewards for doing well in the game. Players get at least $40 upon finishing a game. Additionally, we provide bonuses for specific outcomes: $24 for winning the game (an evenly divisible amount that can be split among remaining players) and $10 for having the most successful lies, i.e., statements they marked as a lie that others believed.\textsuperscript{5} Diplomacy usually ends with a handful of players dividing the board among themselves and agreeing to a tie. In the game described in Section 2.1, the remaining four players shared the winner’s pool with Italy after 10 in-game years, and Italy won the prize for most successful lies.

\textsuperscript{5}The lie incentive is relatively small (compared to incentives for participation and winning) to discourage an opportunistic player from marking everything as a lie. Games were monitored in real-time and no player was found abusing the system (marking more than $\sim 20\%$ lies).
### Table 2: Summary statistics for our train data (nine of twelve games). Messages are long and only five percent are lies, creating a class imbalance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Message Count</td>
<td>13,132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTUAL LIE Count</td>
<td>591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUSPECTED LIE Count</td>
<td>566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average # of Words</td>
<td>20.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Summary statistics for our train data (nine of twelve games). Messages are long and only five percent are lies, creating a class imbalance.

![Word Count per Message](image)

Figure 3: Individual messages can be quite long, wrapping deception in pleasantries and obfuscation.

#### 3.3 Data overview

Table 2 quantitatively summarizes our data. Messages vary in length and can be paragraphs long (Figure 3). Close to five percent of all messages in the dataset are marked as lies and almost the same percentage (but not necessarily the same messages) are perceived as lies, consistent with the “veracity effect” (Levine et al., 1999). In the game discussed above, eight percent of messages are marked as lies by the sender and three percent of messages are perceived as lies by the recipient; however, the messages perceived as lies are rarely lies (Figure 4).

#### 3.4 Demographics and self-assessment

We collect anonymous demographic information from our study participants: the average player identifies as male, between 20 and 35 years old, speaks English as their primary language, and has played over fifty Diplomacy games. Players self-assess their lying ability before the study. The average player views themselves as better than average at lying and average or better than average at perceiving lies.

6Our data skews 80% male and 95% of the players speak English as a primary language. Ages range from eighteen and sixty-four. Game experience is distributed across beginner, intermediate, and expert levels.

Figure 4: Most messages are truthful messages identified as the truth. Lies are often not caught. Table 3 provides an example from each quadrant.

In a post-game survey, players provide information on whom they betrayed and who betrayed them in a given game. This is a finer-grained determination than the post hoc analysis used in past work on Diplomacy (Niculae et al., 2015). We ask players to optionally provide linguistic cues to their lying and to summarize the game from their perspective (examples in Appendix, Table 6).

#### 3.5 An ontology of deception

Four possible combinations of deception and perception can arise from our data. The sender can be lying or telling the truth. Additionally, the receiver can perceive the message as deceptive or truthful. We name the possible outcomes for lies as Deceived or Caught, and the outcomes for truthful messages as Straightforward or Cassandra, based on the receiver’s annotation (examples in Table 3, distribution in Figure 4).

#### 4 Detecting Lies

We build computational models both to detect lies to better understand our dataset. The data from the user study provide a training corpus that maps language to annotations of truthfulness and deception. Our models progressively integrate information—conversational context and in-game power dynamics—to approach human parity in deception detection.

7In myth, Cassandra was cursed to utter true prophecies but never be believed. For a discussion of Cassandra’s curse vis a vis personal and political oaths, see Torrance (2015).
### 4.1 Metric and data splits

We investigate two phenomena: detecting what is *intended* as a lie and what is *perceived* as a lie. However, this is complicated because most statements are not lies: less than five percent of the messages are labeled as lies in both the ACTUAL LIE and the SUSPECTED LIE tasks (Table 2). Our results use a weighted $F_1$ feature across truth and lie prediction, as accuracy is an inflated metric given the class imbalance (Japkowicz and Stephen, 2002). We thus adopt an in-training approach (Zhou and Liu, 2005) where incorrect predictions of lies are penalized more than truthful statements. The relative penalty between the two classes is a hyper-parameter tuned on $F_1$.

Before we move to computational models for lie detection, we first establish the human baseline. We know when senders were lying and when receivers spotted a lie. Humans spot 88.3% of lies. However, given the class imbalance, this sounds better than it is. Following the suggestion of Levine et al. (1999), we focus on the detection of lies, where humans have a 22.5 Lie $F_1$.

To prevent overfitting to specific games, nine games are used as training data, one is used for validation for tuning parameters, and two games are test data. Some players repeat between games.

### 4.2 Logistic regression

Logistic regression models have interpretable coefficients which show linguistic phenomena that correlate with lies. A *word* that occurs infrequently overall but often in lies, such as ‘honest’ and ‘candidly’, helps identify which messages are lies.

Niculae et al. (2015) propose linguistic Harbingers that can predict deception. These are word lists that cover topics often used in interpersonal communication—*claims, subjectivity, premises, contingency, comparisons, expansion, temporal language associated with the future,* and *all other temporal language* (complete word list in Appendix, Table 8). The Harbingers word lists do not provide full coverage, as they focus on specific rhetorical areas. A logistic regression model with all word types as features further improves $F_1$.

Power dynamics influence the language and flow of conversation (Danescu-Niculescu-Mizil et al., 2012, 2013; Prabhakaran et al., 2013). These dynamics may influence the likeliness of lying: a stronger player may feel empowered to lie to their neighbor. Recall that victory points (Section 2) encode how well a player is doing (more is better). We represent the power differential as the difference between the two players. Peers will have a zero differential, while more powerful players will have a positive differential with their interlocutor. The differential changes throughout the game, so this feature encodes the difference in the season the message was sent. For example, a message sent by an Italy with seven points to a Germany with two points in a given season would have a value of five.

### 4.3 Neural

While less interpretable, neural models are often more accurate than logistic regression ones (Ribeiro et al., 2016; Belinkov and Glass, 2019). We build a standard long short-term memory network (Hochreiter and Schmidhuber, 1997, LSTM) to investigate if word sequences—ignored by logistic regression—can reveal lies.

Integrating message context and power dynamics improves on the neural baseline. A Hierarchical LSTM can help focus attention on specific phrases in long conversational contexts. In the same way it would be difficult for a human to determine *prima facie* if a statement is a lie without previous context, we posit that methods that operate at the level of a single message are limited in the types of cues they...
can extract. The hierarchical LSTM is given the context of previous messages when determining if a given message is a lie, which is akin to the labeling task humans do when annotating the data. The model does this by encoding a single message from the tokens, and then running a forward LSTM over all the messages. For each message, it looks at both the content and previous context to decide if the current message is a lie. Fine-tuning BERT (Devlin et al., 2019) embeddings to this model did not lead to notable improvement in $F_1$, likely due to the relative small size of our training data. Last, we incorporate information about power imbalance into this model. This model approaches human performance in terms of $F_1$ score by combining content with conversational context and power imbalance.

5 Qualitative Analysis

This section examines specific messages where both players and machines are correctly identifying lies and when they make mistakes on our test set. Most messages are correctly predicted by both the model and players (2055 of 2475 messages); but this is because of the veracity effect. The picture is less rosy if we only look at messages the sender marks as ACTUAL LIE: both players and models are generally wrong (Table 5).

Both models and players can detect lies when liars get into specifics. In Diplomacy, users must agree to help one another through orders that stipulate “I will help another player move from X to Y”. The in-game term for this is “support”; half the messages where players and computers correctly identify lies contain this word, but it rarely occurs in the other quadrants.

Models seem to be better at not falling for vague excuses or fantastical promises in the future. Players miss lies that promise long-term alliances, involve extensive apologies, or attribute motivation as coming from other countries’ disinformation (Model Correct). Unlike our models, players have access to conversations with other players and accordingly players can detect lies that can easily be verified through conversations with other players (Player Correct).

However, ultimately most lies are believable and fool both models and players (Both Wrong). For example, all messages that contain the word “true” are predicted as truthful by both models and play-
Not sure what your plan is, but I might be able to support you to Munich.

Don't believe Turkey, I said nothing of the sort. I imagine he's just trying to cause an upset between us.

Long time no see. Sorry for the stab earlier. I think we should try to work together to stop France from winning; if we work together we can stop France from getting 3 more centers, and then we will all win in a 3, 4, or 5 way draw when the game is hard-capped at 1910.

I'm considering playing fairly aggressive against England and cutting them off at the pass in 1901, your support for that would be very helpful.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player Prediction</th>
<th>Model Prediction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correct</td>
<td>Both Correct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrong</td>
<td>Model Correct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model Correct</td>
<td>Long time no see. Sorry for the stab earlier. I think we should try to work together to stop France from winning; if we work together we can stop France from getting 3 more centers, and then we will all win in a 3, 4, or 5 way draw when the game is hard-capped at 1910.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model Correct</td>
<td>Not sure what your plan is, but I might be able to support you to Munich.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model Wrong</td>
<td>Player Correct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrong</td>
<td>Player Correct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrong</td>
<td>Both Wrong</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: An example of an actual lie detected (or not) by both players and our best computational model (Context LSTM + Power) from each quadrant. Both the model and the human recipient are mostly correct overall (Both Correct), but they are both mostly wrong when it comes to specifically predicting lies (Both Wrong).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Correct</th>
<th>Model Wrong</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Conditioning on only lies, most messages are now identified incorrectly by both our best model (Context LSTM + Power) and players.

8 Examples include “It’s true—[Budapest] back to [Romania] and [Serbia] on to [Albania] could position for more forward convoys without needing the rear fleet…” and “idk if it’s true just letting u know since were allies”.

6 Related Work

Early computational deception work focuses on single utterances (Newman et al., 2003), especially for product reviews (Ott et al., 2012). But deception is intrinsically a discursive phenomenon and thus the context in which it appears is essential. Our platform provides an opportunity to observe deception in the context in which it arises: goal-oriented conversations around in-game objectives. Gathering data through an interactive game has a cheaper per-lie cost than hiring workers to write deceptive statements (Jurgens and Navigli, 2014).

Other conversational datasets are mostly based on games that involve deception including Werewolf (Girlea et al., 2016), Box of Lies (Soldner et al., 2019), and tailor-made games (Ho et al., 2017). However, these games assign individuals roles that they maintain throughout the game (i.e., in a role that is supposed to deceive or in a role that is deceived). Thus, deception labels are coarse: an individual always lies or always tells the truth. In contrast, our platform better captures a more multi-faceted reality about human nature: everyone can lie or be truthful with everyone else, and they use both strategically. Hence, players must think about every player lying at any moment: “given the evidence, do I think this person is lying to me now?”

Deception data with conversational labels is also available through interviews (Pérez-Rosas et al.,...
some of which allow for finer-grained deception spans (Levitan et al., 2018). Compared with game-sourced data, however, interviews provide shorter conversational context (often only a single exchange with a few follow-ups) and lack a strategic incentive—individuals lie because they are instructed to do so, not to strategically accomplish a larger goal. In Diplomacy, users have an intrinsic motivation to lie; they have entertainment-based and financial motivations to win the game. This leads to higher-quality, creative lies.

Real-world examples of lying include perjury (Louwerse et al., 2010), calumny (Fornaciari and Poesio, 2013), emails from malicious hackers (Dhamija et al., 2006), and surreptitious user recordings. But real-world data comes with real-world complications and privacy concerns. The artifice of Diplomacy allows us to gather pertinent language data with minimal risk and to access both sides of deception: intention and perception. Other avenues for less secure research include analyzing dating profiles for accuracy in self-presentation (Toma and Hancock, 2012) and classifying deceptive online spam (Ott et al., 2011).

7 Conclusion

In Dante’s *Inferno*, the ninth circle of Hell—a fate worse even than that reserved for murderers—is for betrayers. Dante asks Count Ugolino to name his betrayer, which leads him to say:

> but if my words can be the seed to bear the fruit of infamy for this betrayer who feeds my hunger, then I shall speak—in tears (Alighieri and Musa, 1995, Canto XXXIII)

Similarly, we ask victims to expose their betrayers in the game of Diplomacy. The seeds of players’ negotiations and deceit could, we hope, yield fruit to help others: understanding multi-party negotiation and protecting Internet users.

While we ignore nuances of the game board to keep our work general, Diplomacy is also a rich, multi-agent strategic environment; Paquette et al. (2019) ignore Diplomacy’s rich language to build bots that only move pieces around the board. An exciting synthesis would incorporate deception and language generation into an agent’s policy; our data would help train such agents. Beyond playing against humans, playing with a human in the loop (HITL) resembles designs for cybersecurity threats (Crano, 2008), annotation (Branson et al., 2010), and language alteration (Wallace et al., 2019). Likewise, our lie-detection models can help a user *in the moment* better decide whether they are being deceived (Lai et al., 2020). Computers can meld their attention to detail and nigh infinite memory to humans’ grasp of social interactions and nuance to forge a more discerning player.

Beyond a silly board game, humans often need help verifying claims are true when evaluating health information (Xie and Bugg, 2009), knowing when to take an e-mail at face value (Jagatic et al., 2007), or evaluating breaking news (Hassan et al., 2017). Building systems to help information consumers become more discerning and suspicious in low-stakes settings like online Diplomacy are the seeds that will bear the fruits of interfaces and machine learning tools necessary for a safer and more robust Internet ecosystem.

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Appendix

Table and Figure numbers continue from the main document. In the appendix are:

1. examples of game summaries written by players (Table 6);
2. the game engine view of the board (Figure 6);
3. examples of persuasion techniques (Table 7);
4. Harbingers word lists that are used as features in the logistic regression model (Table 8); and
5. A full transcript between two players, Germany and Italy (Table 9). Messages are long and carefully composed. This transcript is from the game described in Section 2.1 (Warning: it is twenty pages long).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>User</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>This was an interesting game, with some quality play all around, but I felt like I was playing harder than most of the others. I felt early on that I could count on Austria remaining loyal, which worked to my benefit, as it allowed me freedom to stab and defeat a very strong French player before he got his legs under him. At the same time, Austria was a little too generous in granting me centers and inviting me to come help him against Russia, which allowed me to take advantage once I was established in the Middle Atlantic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>Definitely a good game by Italy - which is interesting to me, because his initial press struck me as erratic and aggressive, making me not want to work with him. I’m curious if the same negotiating approach was taken with the other players who did work with him early on, or if he used a different negotiating approach with closer neighbors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Users optionally provide free response descriptions of the game. This can be used for qualitative analysis or potentially for algorithmic summarization.

Figure 6: The board game as implemented by Backstabbr. Players place moves on the board and the interface is scraped.
Authority

Sent to Germany, England, Austria, Russia: So, England, Germany, Russia, y’all played a great turn last turn. You got me to stab my long-time ally and you ended our pretty excellent 7-year run as an alliance. Russia told me he was with me if I stab Austria. England told me he wanted me to solo so long as I would “teach him” and help his along to second place. Then y’all pulled the rug out from under me. It was clever and effective. At this stage, my excitement about the game has diminished quite a bit. And of course I’m happy to play on and take my lumps for falling for “Hey, I really want you to solo, just help me place second,” but if you guys just want to call it a five-way draw among us and grab a beer together, while reviewing the statistics, that’s really my preference. I am outnumbered and I obviously can’t solo. And I’m sure some of you in the north are eager to send everyone else flying my way, but I expect Russia and England to be careful, and so I’m not sure there is much room to move forward without simply tipping the board to Germany’s favor.

I propose that we draw and hug it out.

Reciprocity

1) You’ve been straight with me all game. 2) You have a much better ability to read the board than she does. 3) You’re on the other side, so you can’t really stab me, but I could totally see her moving to Tyrolia some time soon. 4) You’re not in France’s pocket.

Likability

Maine is beautiful! I used to go to scout camp there.

Scarcity

I’d like to have your final thoughts on A/R as quickly as possible so that I have time to execute a plan. But I understand if you want time to think about it.

Table 7: Examples of persuasion from the games annotated with tactics from Cialdini and Goldstein (2004).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Key Word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>claim</td>
<td>accordingly, as a result, consequently, conclude that, clearly, demonstrates that, entails, follows that, hence, however, implies, in fact, in my opinion, in short, in conclusion, indicates that, it follows that, it is highly probable that, it is my contention, it should be clear that, I believe, I mean, I think, must be that, on the contrary, points to the conclusions, proves that, shows that, so, suggests that, the most obvious explanation', &quot;the point I’m trying to make&quot;, 'therefore, thus, the truth of the matter, to sum up, we may deduce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subjectivity</td>
<td>abandoned, abandonment, abandon, abase, abasement, abash, abate, abdicate, aberration, aberration, abhor, abhor, abhorred, abhorrence, abhorrent, abhorrently, abhors, abhors, abidance, abidance, abide, abject, abjectly, abjure, abilities, ability, able, abnormal, abolish, abominable, abominably, abominate, abomination, above, above-average, abound, abrade, abrasive, abrupt, abscond, absence, absentee, absent-minded, absolve, absolute, absolutely, absorbed, absurd, absurdity, absurdly, absurdness, abundant, abundance, abuse, abuse, abuses, abuses, abusive, abysmal, abyss, accede, accentuate, accept, acceptance, acceptable, accessible, accidental, acclaim, acclaim, acclaimed, acclamation, accolade, accolades, accommodative, accomplish, accomplishment, accomplishments, accord, accord, accordantly, account, accountable, accurate, accurately, accursed, accusation, accusations, accusative, accuse, accuses, accusing, accusingly, acerbate, acerbic, acerbically, ache, achievable, achieve, achievement, achievements, acknowledge, acknowledge, acquit, acrid, acridly, acridness, acrimonious, acrimoniously, acrimony, active, activist, activist, actual, actuality, actually, acumen, adamant, adamantly, adaptable, adaptability, adaptive, addict, addiction, adept, adeptly, adequate, adherence, adherent, adhesion, admirable, admirer, admirable, admirably, admiration, admire, admiring, admiringly, admission, admit, admittedly, admonish, admonisher, admonishingly, admonishment, admonition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expansion</td>
<td>additionally, also, alternatively, although, as an alternative, as if, as though, as well, besides, either or, else, except, finally, for example, for instance, further, furthermore, however, in addition, in fact, in other words, in particular, in short, in sum, in the end, in turn, indeed, instead, later, lest, likewise, meantime, meanwhile, moreover, much as, neither nor, next, nonetheless, nor, on the other hand, otherwise, overall, plus, rather, separately, similarly, specifically, then, ultimately, unless, until, when, while, yet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contingency</td>
<td>accordingly, as a result, as long as, because, consequently, hence, if and when, if then, in the end, in turn, indeed, insofar as, lest, now that, once, since, so that, then, thereby, therefore, thus, unless, until, when</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>premise</td>
<td>after all, assuming that, as, as indicated by, as shown, besides, because, deduced, derived from, due to, firstly, follows from, for, for example, for instance, for one thing, for the reason that, furthermore, given that, in addition, in light of, in that, in view of, in view of the fact that, indicated by, is supported by, may be inferred, moreover, owing to, researchers found that, secondly, this can be seen from since, since the evidence is, what’s more, whereas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>temporal-future</td>
<td>after, afterward, as soon as, by then, finally, in the end, later, next, once, then, thereafter, till, ultimately, until</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>temporal-other</td>
<td>also, as long as, before, before and after, earlier, in turn, meantime, meanwhile, now that, previously, simultaneously, since, still, when, when and if, while</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comparisons</td>
<td>after, although, as if, as though, besides, by comparison, by contrast, conversely, earlier, however, in contrast, in fact, in the end, indeed, instead, meanwhile, much as, neither nor, nevertheless, nonetheless, nor, on the contrary, on the one hand on the other hand, on the other hand, previously, rather, regardless, still, then, though, when, whereas, while, yet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: The word lists used for our Harbingers (Niculae et al., 2015) logistic regression models.
0 Italy Germany!
Just the person I want to speak with. I have a somewhat
crazy idea that I’ve always wanted to try with I/G, but
I’ve never actually convinced the other guy to try it.
And, what’s worse, it might make you suspicious of
me.
So...do I suggest it?
I’m thinking that this is a low stakes game, not a tour-
nament or anything, and an interesting and unusual
move set might make it more fun? That’s my hope
anyway.
What is your appetite like for unusual and crazy?

1 Germany You’ve whet my appetite, Italy. What’s the suggestion?

2 Italy Okay, don’t hate me! Key West (Just thought of the
name lol)
Basic point is that I move to Tyr in Spring and into
Mun in the Fall, while I take Tun with my fleet. I build
A Ven/F Nap. You open to Ruh/Hol/Kie, and force
Belgium. You wind up with 2 builds, and the sympathy
and concern of your neighbors who are astonished at
the crazy Italian. “What a stupid move, he can’t hold
Munich!” Trap is set to obliterate France in the Spring
of 02. Bel S Mun - Bur, Ven - Pie, Tun - WMed. France
won’t see it coming, He will see that attack on Munich
and think that both you and I will be occupied for a
while. So Spring 02 should be a serious surprise.
Now, you’re taking risk here, because you’re giving
up a home center for a turn hence the “Key”), but I
think you can see pretty clearly that I derive no benefit
from trying to double-cross you. After all, Italy trying
to hold Munich is just dumb. I’m from a school of
thought that even trying to move to Munich is just
dumb. But this would be the one exception. I can’t
hold Munich, and even if I wanted to, it would give me
an awkward snake formation in the middle of the board
that is a great way to be first eliminated. So I think this
works because you know (even more than Austria in
a traditional Key Lepanto), that I’m not going to stab
you. And doing it this way allows us to take Burgundy
by surprise, it ensures you get Belgium, and it crushes
your biggest rival and toughest border (France). Plus,
it’ll be fun. The Key West! Thoughts? *This message
crashed the Beta version of the bot due to its length
and is not in the dataset. It is manually extracted and
added here the purposes of readability*

3 Germany It seems like there are a lot of ways that could go
wrong...I don’t see why France would see you ap-
proaching/taking Munich–while I do nothing about
it–and not immediately feel skittish
4 Italy Yeah, I can’t say I’ve tried it and it works, cause I’ve never tried it or seen it. But how I think it would work is (a) my Spring move looks like an attack on Austria, so it would not be surprising if you did not cover Munich. Then (b) you build two armies, which looks like we’re really at war and you’re going to eject me. Then we launch the attack in Spring. So there is really no part of this that would raise alarm bells with France.
All that said, I’ve literally never done it before, and it does involve risk for you, so I’m not offended or concerned if it’s just not for you. I’m happy to play more conventionally too. Up to you.

5 Italy I am just sensing that you don’t like this idea, so shall we talk about something else? That was just a crazy idea I’ve always wanted to try. I’m happy to play more conservatively.

6 Italy Any thoughts? Truth None

7 Germany Sorry Italy I’ve been away doing, um, German things. Brewing Lagers? Truth Truth

8 Germany I don’t think I’m ready to go for that idea, however I’d be down for some good ol’-fashioned Austria-kicking? Truth Lie

9 Italy I am pretty conflicted about whether to guess that you were telling the truth or lying about the “brewing lagers” thing. I am going to take it literally and say thumbs down even though I don’t think you meant it deceptively.

10 Italy But I think I can get over “Lagergate” and we can still be friends.
As of right now, I think Austria may be my most reliable ally. I’m thinking I’d like to play as a Central Trio if you have any interest in that. Thoughts?

11 Germany We haven’t even passed a season yet and you have a ‘most reliable ally’?
I’ll consider this proposal but, basically, I’m not going to expose myself to risk from either of you until I’ve seen a bit of your behavior.

12 Italy Well, at least I have an idea of who to trust. Obviously, my ideas are subject to change.
I understand your desire to watch behavior before committing to anything. I, personally, am a partner player. I look carefully early in the game for a small group to work with, and then I value loyalty and collaboration. I like to work closely with a tight-knit alliance.
If you prefer to hop and back and forth, or play more of an individual game, then we might not be a good match.
I’m looking for a loyal ally or two that I can coordinate with and make awesome moves with. Makes the game easier and a lot more fun.
| 13 | Italy | Just an FYI: I’ve now had both England and France suggest to me that I should move to Tyrolia and France will support me to Munich in the Fall. One saying that to me is not a big deal, but with both mentioning it, my alarm bells are going off. I am concerned about an E/F. I’m certainly not moving to Tyrolia. But I just want you to be cautious here. I feel like England and France are working together. | Truth | None  |
| 14 | Germany | I appreciate the tip, but I’m wondering why you’re so against ousting me from Munich if I haven’t explicitly agreed to be your ally? | Truth | Truth |
| 15 | Italy | Because it is terrible, terrible play for Italy to attack Germany, in my view. If I were to attack you in Munich, I could never hold Munich. So, all I would be doing is weakening you, and helping France, England, or both to get really big. I don’t have any long-term path going north. Helping France to take you down is a sucker’s play, whether you are working with me or not. | Truth | None  |
| 16 | Italy | Did France tell you he was moving to Burgundy, or was that a stab? | Truth | Truth |
| 17 | Germany | I was not informed of it, no. And England is leading me to believe it’s part of a play for Belgium, so if they’re working together this might be a trick... Italy, you seem like a straight shooter, and Austria has confirmed with me about your two’s alliance. So I’ll confide in you–this is my first ever game of diplomacy, and I think that teaming up with the two of you could help me learn more and have more fun. So, if you’re still interested in a central powers alliance, I’m in. | Truth | Truth |
| 18 | Germany | Okay full disclosure: I’m not very smart, and I accidentally let slip to England that you told me France was plotting to take Munich. I’m sorry for the error but I figured it was better to admit it so you know that England/France may not trust you. | Truth | Truth |
| 19 | Italy | Okay, thanks for telling me. | Truth | Truth |
| 20 | Germany | So, um, no alliance then? | Truth | Truth |
| 21 | Italy | I do want to be allies. Sorry, busy weekend here running around with bambinos. More to come. | Truth | Truth |
| 22 | Germany | What would you think of helping me take Marseilles in two turns? | Truth | Truth |
| 23 | Italy | Hi Germany, I’ll certainly consider that. Though, I’ll note: traditionally, Germany would help Italy to Marseilles if the two of them work together there. The reason is that: if I help you to Marseilles, I’m basically cut off from going west and getting anything myself. So, usually, Germany would help Italy into Marseilles to encourage Italy to come west and Germany would plan to take Paris, Belgium and Brest. | Truth | Truth |
24 Germany Fair enough—I’ll help you take it, then, but I’ll need to deal with Belgium first.

25 Italy How are things going with England? I think that getting him to work with you is the main key here.

26 Germany I’m trying—I just offered to assist with taking Sweden in exchange for some assistance into Belgium...not sure if they’ll go for it...

27 Italy I’ll check with England and try to see where his head is at.

28 Germany I’ve actually been thinking about this game all day and have come up with a plan I like a bit better... but England still hasn’t responded to my initial offer.

29 Italy That’s the worst! And I’m glad to see you’re so focused on this in your first game. It’s a really great game if you put in the time and effort!

30 Germany You’re definitely telling the truth on that one. So can I count on you to move to Piedmont this season?

31 Italy I don’t think I can afford to move to Piedmont this season. I don’t really trust Austria to avoid walking through that door if I leave it wide open. I think you need to get England on board to attack France.

32 Germany That’s valid. And actually I was conferring with England and we concluded that it’s not really gonna be possible for me to help you take Marseilles this year anyway. ...what are you and Austria planning for this year, then? I’m willing to tell you my plans in exchange as a gesture of trust. Have you communicated at all with England or France?

33 Italy Hi, are you there? Just woke up. England did return my message, but he did not tell me anything substantive so I really don’t know what he’s doing. I’m planning to move towards Turkey.

34 Italy Well, you’re in trouble. That England move is trouble. I’m going to try to convince him to change course. I suggest you be very kind to him, and don’t burn that bridge. I think your game hinges on turning England around.

35 Italy Hi Germany, I’m working hard on turning England. And I’m also trying to get Russia to come to your aid. Doing the best I can! I’ll keep you posted.

36 Germany England just told me that Russia is helping them to take Denmark so that may be a lost cause. Granted, the source for that intel is a serpentine jackal-spawn
Okay, I’m reasonably sure that England wants to take the Channel and attack France now. I believe that you should basically do whatever England asks to help make this happen. As long as E attacks F, you will be in a much better position, and you’ll gain back centers quickly. What are you hearing?

What are your plans for this turn? I can’t help but notice that Munich is surrounded by foreign armies on three sides... I wish I could be more helpful but I’m pretty much just treading water right now trying not to lose anything else.

Hey — sorry, just getting back into this now.

I have good news! (1) I am finally attacking France this turn. (2) I will be supporting Munich to hold from Tyrolia. Let’s turn this game around, yes?

I am pretty sure that England is not attacking you this turn. And I am committed to supporting Munich holding. Make sure you don’t move Munich so that it can take my support.

Okay, can do. Thanks!

I suggest that you order: Kiel Support Berlin holding Berlin Support Munich holding Helg to Holland Munich Support Berlin holding

I agree completely–although I didn’t know that a country could hold *and* support at the same time! Thanks!

Thanks Italy. Hope you’re enjoying the weather on the Anatolian

I will be supporting Munich to hold again. And I’ll be trying to get Russia to back off your flank and protect himself against an Austrian stab that is coming.

Two bits of advice: #1 I suggest you tell Russia that Austria is coming for him. You really want Russia to move Sil back to Gal. You might also suggest to Russia that if he supports you to Denmark, you will then support Russia back to Sweden. I don’t know yet if it actually makes sense to do that, but you want Russia thinking that you are eager to work with him. He’ll be hoping for a reason to break off his attack on you at this point.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agent</th>
<th>Message</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Italy #2</td>
<td>Here is the move set I would suggest right now: Kiel Support Holland holding Holland Support Wales to Belgium (tell England you are going to order this support and he can take it or leave it) Munich Support Berlin holding Berlin Support Munich holding I think that both France and Russia are about to back off you, as they are both under fire at home. Just hold still, and soon you should be able to break out of this holding pattern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>God, I hope so! I’m attempting to make that deal with Russia now...and I’m talking with England re: Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>It’s none of my business, but if you do plan to take Denmark, I strongly recommend you wait until Fall. I think the most important thing for you right now is getting England fully committed against France. If that happens, taking Denmark later will be easy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>I think me and England are really on the same page at this point regarding France. I’m actually sort of running counter-intelligence for England (and my friends to the south, of course!) with Russia right now. England and I talked about Denmark too...and it seems like one or the other of Denmark or Belgium should work out for me this year and I’m fine with that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Great to hear. Thank you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Do you need me to disrupt Bur this year? I’ll need to seriously trust Russia if I’m going to risk not holding my eastern front, I think...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>I do think a move to Burgundy makes sense for you this turn, and I can’t imagine Russia attacking you here. He has a serious Austria problem. I suggest this: Mun - Bur Ruh - Bel Hol Support Ruh - Bel Ber - Kie Tell Russia that the last thing in the world you want to see is Austria run him over, and you’re willing to help keep Russia viable if necessary (you’re angling for Russia to disband his northern holdings this turn).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>And ask England nicely to support Ruh - Hol, with the explanation that you don’t plan to ask for Denmark back, but you think it would help you both to diminish France. (You’ll get Den back eventually, but you want England to think you don’t care about it).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Thanks, I’ll work on these. ...Why didn’t you scooch into the Aegean behind Austria? You could have defended or even held Bulgaria this turn?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>England and I were talking about your moves for this season–what do you think of convoying Pie into Spa, supporting this with Wes, and then moving Tyr into Pie?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This leaves Marseilles open for Bur to fall into if France goes that route, which gives me an opening into Bur</td>
<td>That’s not bad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was kind of thinking I should pick one or the other of Marseilles or Spain to attack and not tell a soul which one I’m going after.</td>
<td>I do think you’re best off moving to Burgundy. And there is some chance that we fail this turn. But I think we just take a guess and hope for the best. We’ll get him next turn if not this one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you really think it’s important to coordinate?</td>
<td>Do you really think it’s important to coordinate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okay—sorry for being nosy! I will try for bur on the off chance it shakes out that way</td>
<td>Nah, you're not being nosy at all. I mean, come on, we both know that I have no problem sticking my nose where it doesn’t belong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marked as true</td>
<td>I like to coordinate, but on these sort of 50/50 guesses, I kind of like to keep it secret so that if it doesn’t go well, I have nobody to blame but myself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha!</td>
<td>Ha!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well, are you willing to humor my question about the Aegean, anyway?</td>
<td>Ha! So sorry!! I meant that for France!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No sorry I meant in hindsight—like this past turn you should have moved to Aeg so that this current turn, when Austria takes Rumania (from Bulgaria), you’d be there to cover Bulgaria so it couldn’t get scooped by the Black sea, and potentially you’d just get to take it.</td>
<td>You are my favorite.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not a bad point. I agree.</td>
<td>Not a bad point. I agree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hmmmm, kind of a pointless lie if you ask me, but I won’t hold it against you. You’re in a tough spot.</td>
<td>Hmmmm, kind of a pointless lie if you ask me, but I won’t hold it against you. You’re in a tough spot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>um what lie? I did exactly the moves you suggested!</td>
<td>Ha! So sorry!! I meant that for France!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You are my favorite.</td>
<td>You are my favorite.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marked as lie because clearly Austria is your favorite. Speaking of, I assume that your seizing Trieste was mutually agreed upon?</td>
<td>Marked as lie because clearly Austria is your favorite. Speaking of, I assume that your seizing Trieste was mutually agreed upon?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes — agreed upon.</td>
<td>Yes — agreed upon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That’s not what Austria said to England...</td>
<td>That’s not what Austria said to England...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hmmm, okay. Well, let’s just keep that between you and me then.</td>
<td>Hmmm, okay. Well, let’s just keep that between you and me then.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
80 Germany You know Italy, I think we *do* need to coordinate your move this time–England and I have a shot at either Bur or Mao if one of Marseilles or Spain can be left open for France to fall into. This will improve all of our chances of crushing France quickly.

81 Italy Okay, I can dig it. What do you want me to do?

82 Germany Let me confer with England and get back to you. Glad to hear that though!

83 Italy So...any thoughts on how to approach this?

84 Germany It looks like England’s not willing to try for MAO if it means possibly losing the channel. However, they’ll bring the NWG fleet around to try for MAO next year. So if you could keep Marseilles open, it will help me to try and take Burgundy this turn.

85 Italy If I leave Marseilles open, would you kindly use Burgundy in the Fall to help me take Marseilles? (Likely that means ordering Burgundy to Gascony to cut support)

86 Germany Will do.

87 Germany Okay, so I still have a teensy little bone to pick with you: on the off-chance that Austria wasn’t lying and you *did* take Trieste unexpectedly, I sort of worry that I might be next. Are you willing to tell me what your plans are for the Tri unit, or at least to warn me before any move into Tyrolia?

88 Italy Sure. But, you’ll see from my moves this turn that Austria is lying to you.

89 Italy I currently have Tri - Tyrolia. I like the unit there because it sets up an attack on Austria if I ever want to go that route (build A Ven and go east). Do you want me to keep Tyrolia clear?

90 Italy I’ll add — I would never attack Germany as Italy. Setting myself as a giant column like that is just not defensible. It would be a terrible move.

91 Germany Not when that column is not-so-giant and in a turf war with France.

92 Germany oh you mean setting *yourself* Truth

93 Germany But you could easily pick off, say, Munich and not be a "giant column"

94 Italy I mean this sincerely: any Germany who does that is a terrible player. Why would I do that? I would need 2-3 units to hold one center. That is a net negative. And all of your units are doing things that are good for me in containing your neighbors. I’ve been working hard in this game for you to succeed and knock back France and England. I can say with 100% certainty: I’m not going to attack you. I’m going to keep helping you as much as I can.
95 Italy That said, if you want me NOT to move to Tyrolia, I won’t move there.

96 Germany Nah, I just needed some reassurance :) Your logic is undeniable — enjoy your stay in tyr!

97 Germany *undeniable? That looks better

98 Italy I mean it sincerely. I think that England will want to coax me to attack you with him after France falls, but I’d much rather work with you against England. But first thing’s first — let’s get rid of France.

99 Germany Agreed

100 Germany (On the france part)

101 Germany Sorry I won’t be able to cut off Gascony this turn...I probably should have just told you my moves; you could have advised me that supporting Mun-Bur was more important than Kie-Ruh

102 Italy No worries. We’ll crack this but eventually. Here is my suggestion for this turn: Kie - Den Hol S Bel holding Bel S Ruh - Bur Mun S Ruh - Bur Ruh - Bur

103 Italy I think you should suggest to England that he gets Sweden and St Petersburg, while you get Denmark back. That’s only fair, as you have been a loyal ally in the fight against France and you plan to continue to do that.

104 Germany The moves I had already planned differ in one respect: I thought it would be worth the risk to try moving Hol-Bel and therefore move Bel-Bur. Even if me and France are high-fiving in Bel for a few seasons it’s still mine, and it’s not like Holland has anything better to do while I’m still allies with England.

...The only reason I’m reluctant to make that agreement with England is that—while I think *you* and I have a good relationship—I really have not talked with Austria much at all, and I’m the next logical target for them when Russia’s gone. And anything that’s bad for Russia right now is good for Austria.

105 Italy Hmmmm, I’m just not sure you should trust England enough right now to leave Holland open and Belgium essentially unguarded.

France is a really good player, and he is no doubt working hard to get England to turn on you. My personal take is that you are better off being a bit more conservative until you have Denmark back and England has moved another fleet towards France. But I can see it either way.
106 Italy With regard to Russia, talk it through with England. What you don’t want is England taking out Russia and giving you nothing. So, if England agrees to let Russia be for a while, then your plan sounds good. But if England is going to take Sweden, you really should get Denmark back. (I’m my view)

107 Germany Okay you’ve convinced me: it’s worth figuring out what E’s plans are for Russia at least. And you’re almost certainly right, from a rational perspective, about leaving Holland/Belgium vulnerable to England. But I think England really is counting on my assistance in taking France, and because of that and other non-quantifiable reasons I trust them.

108 Italy Excellent. Obviously you have a much better feel for your relationship with England than I do. Just know that France is persuasive, and I’m sure that’s what he’s working on. He stopped talking to me, so I bet he’s trying to turn England. Just keep reassuring England that you want to work with him long-term so he doesn’t succumb to the Dark Side.

109 Italy Hi Germany — well, I think we’re getting to a critical point in the game here. France held out a long time, but he’s much less of a threat now. I think the critical issue, for you, is England. I have some thoughts on the matter, and some information, but I’d like to feel confident that you and I will keep anything we say between us. I think of you as the one person who has been honest with me on every turn. You even tell me the truth when it’s bad news, or when you don’t completely trust me, and I like that.

110 Germany Okay, Italy. I won’t share any of this conversation. But in the interest of continued full disclosure, here’s what I think: England is a greater threat to *me* on the map, but *you* have a greater chance of soloing this game quickly, or pair-winning with Austria even sooner. And if I continue to collaborate with England, we at least have a chance of slowing that down. So I’m in sort of a conflicted spot.

111 Italy This is why I like you. The full disclosure part. You tell me the truth even when the news isn’t great.

112 Italy My thoughts on the “Germany/England forever so that at least we can stop the solo” strategy: (1) It’s quite early to be talking about solos. I am at 8, and Austria could take 3 from me any time, quite easily. (2) I don’t think England is thinking that way. I think he’s thinking that a dominant power will emerge in the north, and one will emerge in the south. And he’s like to be that dominant power.
| 113 Italy | England's pieces are not positioned well if he's trying to attack France or contain Italy. He keeps Denmark guarded, and North Sea filled. He is not playing like he intends to stick with you, even though I'm sure he's telling you that. | Truth | Truth |
| 114 Italy | You're right that you don't want to start a war with England right now. But, you must stick up for yourself, because nobody else will do that if you don't. | Truth | Truth |
| 115 Italy | If I were you, this is what I would do: (1) keep warning England about the dangers of Italy getting too big and insist that England moves his fleets towards MAO (Channel to Irish, Norwegian to NAO, North Channel), (2) insist on taking Denmark back. | Truth | Truth |
| 116 Italy | I would say something like this: England, I'm with you my friend, but we're passed the stage of you needing to keep me under lock and key. I need to take Denmark back. I'm happy to support you to Brest to keep you growing, or you can grab Sweden. You have plenty of options other than keeping your ally's center, but if you really want to be my ally long-term, you've got to show me that. | Truth | Truth |
| 117 Italy | I am hearing from England signs that he may be thinking of attacking you soon. And I think you actually avoid that better by being strong and sticking up for yourself rather than being accommodating and letting him do whatever he wants to do. | Truth | Truth |
| 118 Germany | Well, both you and France have now pointed out that England is strategically not in a good place to be my ally right now, and you are correct. I'll be more cautious with my northern border, but I made a pretty strong argument for denmark this past turn and it fell on deaf ears. | Truth | Truth |
| 119 Germany | ...which probably also should have been a sign for me | Truth | Truth |
| 120 Italy | Well, if you want, you could just take Denmark this next year and I don’t think England is in a position to retaliate. | Truth | Truth |
| 121 Germany | Probably not...has France been talking with you at all about their sunsetting strategy? They've indicated a willingness to work with you and me and a desire to see England get as few dots as possible | Truth | Truth |
| 122 Italy | He did say that to me too. Though, France has a long history of lying to me, so I really don’t trust him. | Truth | Truth |
| 123 Germany | Well France has actually been pretty honest with me, and I at least am certain that they wouldn’t betray me to England. So, I’m considering working with F to sabotage (or potentially full-on backstab) England this turn, which would have the side-effect of maybe taking some attention away from the south for you anyway. | Truth | Truth |
| 124 Germany | (and I’d be interested to hear your thoughts on this if you’re in the mood to give out free advice) | Truth | Truth |
Italy

Hi Germany — sorry for the delay. Well...I think it’s really important that you get a build this turn either way. I don’t think England will get a build this turn, so if I were you I’d probably take Paris, build a fleet, and move on England after that.

But it likely depends on how communication is going with England. If he’ll give you back Denmark, that might change the equation.

I am waiting on England to make a decision about that—they claim to be thinking about it.

England told me you said I was plotting with France. It makes sense you’d want to pit us against each other.

Hey — tried to send you a message earlier but not was down. England was telling me that you’re saying that I told you that England is plotting against you. The problem with telling England that is that he will stop giving me useful info.

Truly, I don’t want you and England to fight. I am not trying to break you up. I suggested that you take Paris! I want you guys to work together with me against France.

You don’t want us to fight, yet you betrayed both of our confidence with you in a way that makes us distrust each other?

I really don’t think that’s a fair description. You guys both wanted to attack each other. I encouraged you both to keep working together.

Just as long as it suits you. Are you going to give England Mao?

Hmmm, should I be reading that as angry sarcastic with dagger eyes? (I’m not sure if I’m getting your tone right)

We’re friends, right? I believe that every single message I’ve sent you all game has been truth, and I’ve gone out of my way to give you candid advice. Are we still friends?

Regarding MAO — I don’t know. What do you want me to do? I don’t have any set plan.
137 Germany  Yep, there’s some sarcasm there. Looking back at your messages, I still don’t read them as encouraging collaboration. And if you wanted us to be friends, you could have done that without betraying me to England by simply saying in your candid way “I don’t think you should do that for such and such reason”. But you chose to increase E’s distrust of me. So I think you might be full of gnocchi and crap.
My trust in you is a bit shaken but I still think we can have a working partnership with a bit more caution on my end. It would be my preference that you hold Mao, on the assumption that if it came down to a choice between partnering with me or England, you’d choose me. If that’s not the case, then as the filling of an England-Italy sandwich I’m in no position to retaliate anyway.

138 Italy  Well, again, I like that you’re honest with me, even when the news is bad.

139 Italy  I have to say that I’m surprised that you feel that I’ve betrayed your trust. I have been feeling like maybe I’ve been TOO helpful to you, and been a bit over the top in offering advice, etc., but it seems like I’ve misread the situation.

140 Germany  No, it’s completely true that you’ve been too helpful, and I’m really really grateful for it because I’ve been able to learn so much from this game. But it’s also true that you didn’t have to tell England what you did, and all you stood to gain from it was that it shook my and E’s trust in each other.

141 Italy  But I understand what you’re saying, and I much prefer to have a heart to heart like this, a frank airing of grievances, rather than being surprised by unkind moves on the board. https://youtu.be/xoirV6BbjOg

142 Germany  Was not expecting seinfeld today and it was a pleasant surprise

143 Italy  :)  

144 Italy  Here’s the deal: I like you better than England.

145 Italy  I’m not sure how the next couple of turns are going to shake out. But I like that you tell me when you’re angry with me. I know that may seem like a small thing, but it’s just rare in Diplomacy. You get so many fake smiles.

146 Italy  So, if it comes down to you or him, I’m choosing you. And I’ll work to do a better job of keeping your confidence. I certainly understand how important that is, as I hate it when people o that same thing to me.

147 Italy  So no more playing mediator for me.

148 Germany  Okay. Is it true that you want the channel?

149 Germany  And are you planning to keep Vienna?
| Italy | I am not planning to keep Vienna. And yeah I’ve asked France for support to the Channel. Do you think he’s on board? | Truth | Truth |
| Germany | I’m not sure. Is *England* on board? Is this something England can know about? | Truth | None |
| Italy | No, do you think France will Support me to the Channel? | Truth | Truth |
| Germany | France has asked my opinion on it, and I haven’t given it yet. To my estimation things look a lot better for me if you don’t end up there: I don’t want to see England in Mao, and I don’t want to see you snagging pieces of the north. | Truth | Truth |
| Italy | Okay, well, here is my thinking. Tell France whatever you want to make him happy. Then tell me how you really feel. And if you don’t want me to go there, I won’t go there. | Truth | Truth |
| Germany | If I hadn’t asked you about it, would that have just been another surprise, too? | Truth | Truth |
| Italy | Absolutely. You and I have discussed our moves and been honest with each other every turn. But we have not been sharing all our moves or pre-clearing all of our moves. So that would have Ben a surprise in the same way that your moves are a surprise to me. (I never tell you what to do or insist on knowing). | Truth | Truth |
| Italy | I kind of thought that you would have wanted me in the Channel because it commits me further against England, but I can understand what you’re saying now about wanting me to hang back. | Truth | Truth |
| Italy | But I don’t think there is anything wrong with me contemplating moves without telling you all of them. You asked me about it, and I told you the truth. | Lie | Truth |
| Germany | I do think that this move is a breach of general expectation, which is the kind of thing I’d like to know about. And it’s also the kind of thing I’ve shared with you: case in point, my desire to stab England. | Truth | Truth |
| Italy | Okay. Understood. | Truth | Truth |
| Germany | Is there anything I could gain from seeing you in the channel? Would you support me taking Nth, and potentially seizing the island? | Truth | Truth |
| Germany | Here’s what I’m thinking: I would be on board with you taking the channel (and I’d give France the green light to go ahead with it) if you would agree to bump Nao out of Mao using Wes, and if you’d be open to supporting some anti-English aggression while holding the channel so that I can get on equal footing with you, dot-wise. If you don’t want to agree to those terms, that’s okay, but I would strongly prefer not to see you in the channel in that case. | Truth | Truth |
163 Italy  I’m going to be out of pocket this weekend, so let’s talk this through more on Monday. Generally, I agree that I’ll either stay out of the Channel or agree to your terms for entering there.  

164 Germany  If you decide to stay out of the channel, I have a deal that I like with England in the works. For that deal to go through, you’d have to agree to move Mao into Portugal to let England take Mao. Would you be amenable to that?  

165 Germany  (If this second offer is more to think about than a no-brainer, you can just mull it over and let me know Monday)  

166 Italy  So, here is my concern with the England offer: If I’m taking Portugal, why do we want England in MAO? And why would he want to go to MAO? I’m not sure I understand that one. Can you explain?  

167 Germany  Well, when I initially proposed the deal I had forgotten that Portugal was promised to England. Then England agreed to it on the condition that you would confirm that move, so I figured E thought you would just move out of there next year? But now that I think about it, it’s probably worth asking England why they’d agree to that.  

168 Italy  I’d prefer that you not tell England I am considering moving to the Channel. I don’t think he would like that.  

169 Italy  I don’t really want to discuss this stuff with England at all.  

170 Germany  Well, England changed their mind about the plan I offered anyway. So, are you taking the channel?  

171 Italy  No, I’m not taking the Channel.  

172 Germany  Okay was that a recent decision? Because like an hour ago France said they were supporting you into the channel  

173 Italy  Well, when I tell you what I plan to do, do you turn around and tell France? This makes me uncomfortable speaking with you.  

174 Germany  I haven’t spoken to France since then. I didn’t realize you were giving the two of us different information on this particular subject. But I don’t think I’ve revealed anything to them about what you plan to do. Mostly because you haven’t told me.  

175 Italy  Well, I have been honest with both you and France. You told me that I need to promise you a set of things in order to take the Channel. I felt like it was more than I could be sure of doing, so I am not entering the Channel. I won’t go there without your permission.  

176 Germany  I appreciate that. And I’ll keep the remainder of this conversation between us unless I hear otherwise. Have you just recently made an agreement with England?
177 Germany  I heard as much but I want to verify the contents of that agreement with you

178 Germany  Btw, France just said that they submitted the orders to support you into the channel.

179 Italy  I don’t have an agreement with England, but he is asking me about my moves and trying to get my help.

180 Germany  Okay–then England is lying to me, saying that you’re helping support Eng-Brest.

181 Italy  Ha! Yeah, fat chance.

182 Germany  ...but did you lie to England about that? Or can I say to England that I don’t think you’ll actually provide that support?

183 Italy  What is Paris up to?

184 Italy  I suggest you just not tell England anything about my moves.

185 Italy  Do you want me to support England to Brest?

186 Italy  I guess I’m not sure what your goals are here.

187 Italy  I just kind of feel like you’re grilling me with a lot of questions, but not telling me what you’re doing or what you want from me.

188 Germany  *If* you support Eng-Brest, England has agreed to vacate Denmark for me. If you don’t, I won’t get in the way of your channel thing. Any other questions?

189 Germany  I have no sense of what you want or what your plan is, but I thought I’d been pretty clear: I want Denmark. I am reluctant to see you in the Channel if England remains powerful, but happy to see you there if they are weakened.

190 Italy  Can’t you just force Denmark?

191 Germany  Not without risking a swipe of Belgium

192 Germany  And why force when you don’t have to

193 Italy  Okay, I’ll support England to Brest. You take Denmark.

194 Italy  And you and I should be in position to take out England next year.

195 Germany  Splendid!

196 Germany  Glad everything worked out

197 Italy  Thumbs up!

198 Italy  Congratulations on retaking Denmark and getting two builds. You are playing really well right now. Respect.

199 Germany  Congrats on having double-digit dots! I have some thoughts about taking out England, if you want to go full-stab this season...

200 Italy  I think I do!

201 Italy  What are you thinking?
<p>| 202 Germany | One option is to take the channel, another is to take Brest. Between you, me, and Picardy we can manage either, but it’s a question of which takes priority. If we chose Brest, I could also take a stab at seizing Nth this season, then we could try for the channel in fall. Or we could do channel first, Brest second. | Truth | Truth |
| 203 Italy | Yeah, that is all along the lines of what I’m thinking. How demanding does France sound right now? Does he want to be the one who takes Brest? | Truth | Truth |
| 204 Germany | Haven’t asked. But in general not demanding. | Truth | Truth |
| 205 Italy | Good! Still, I think we should show him some good faith by supporting him to Brest in Spring. We can decide in Fall whether it makes more sense for you to take it, but I think we want to keep France hungry. | Lie | Truth |
| 206 Italy | I would suggest something like this to ensure the English fleet is disbanded: Pic - Bre MAO - Channel Par S Pic - Bre | Lie | Truth |
| 207 Italy | And Spa - Gas to cut off that retreat. | Truth | Truth |
| 208 Italy | You can take the North Sea on the same move and set up a convoy to the English mainland. Checkmate. | Truth | Truth |
| 209 Germany | Okay, I like the plan! I’ve asked France if they’re willing to move to Brest supported by me. | Truth | Truth |
| 210 Germany | Aren’t you concerned about England taking Mao? I’d sooner just have you pile on support into Bre so that Wes can support Mao holding | Truth | Truth |
| 211 Italy | That’s a good point, but the problem with that approach is that Brest is not guaranteed. If England cute MAO and supports with the Channel, the attack fails. I think we are better off ensuring that the Brest fleet is disbanded. If we disband that fleet and take North Sea, an English fleet in MAO really just spreads him out and allows you to take the island faster. It’s not like he can get Portugal or Spain. | Truth | Truth |
| 212 Germany | Okay, but that means I’d prefer to take Brest myself this Spring, if France is okay with it. | Truth | Truth |
| 213 Italy | I think that we should offer France Brest in Spring. That ensures that he is with us. Then, if conditions are right in the Fall, I can support you into Brest. But...England can offer France Belgium, and I think he is sure to take that if we’re not even offering him a center, right? | Lie | Truth |
| 214 Italy | Better to keep France feeling like we’re going to keep him in the game. If you need the build in Fall, it’s easy for me to support you there. | Lie | Truth |</p>
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<tr>
<td>215 Germany</td>
<td>I guess I’m just wondering from France’s perspective why they’d <em>want</em> to stay in the game. Isn’t it possible they’d rather move on with their life? That’s not rhetorical, I’m wondering what your perspective is as a veteran player.</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Truth</td>
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<td>216 Italy</td>
<td>Here is my take: If France just wanted to go down in a blaze of glory and say “eff you” to England, he would have kept Irish Sea. He kept Pic, which is next to his home center, and gives him a chance to negotiate with both you and England.</td>
<td>Lie</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>217 Italy</td>
<td>I think that means he is motivated to keep trying. And if he believes he can get Brest, he could legitimately get back to his feet. I know that’s what I’d be trying to do in his position.</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Truth</td>
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<tr>
<td>218 Italy</td>
<td>As the poker saying goes: “a chip and a chair.” So long as you have one chip left, and you’re still in the tournament, you can always come back to win.</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Truth</td>
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<tr>
<td>219 Italy</td>
<td>Thoughts?</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Truth</td>
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<tr>
<td>220 Germany</td>
<td>I think that makes sense. Are you talking with England at all?</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Truth</td>
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<td>221 Italy</td>
<td>I’m pretty wary of England right now. He asked me what I want to do, but I feel like he’s trying to get me to leave MAO open. That’s not terrible news, as it suggests that he won’t expect your move to North Sea.</td>
<td>Lie</td>
<td>Truth</td>
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<tr>
<td>222 Italy</td>
<td>As long as he doesn’t move NAO to Norwegian, you’ve got a guaranteed supply center.</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>223 Germany</td>
<td>Well E’d have to be a right dolt not to retreat to NWG. And right now they’re talking to me about supporting a move from Bre to Gas (the better for the two of us to stab you).</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Truth</td>
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<tr>
<td>224 Germany</td>
<td>What i mean is, there’s a good chance that Mao is safe if I “agree” to that deal</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>225 Germany</td>
<td>Oh nevermind–they’re not going to convoy into Brest. So actually this pretty much guarantees that Eng and Nao will try for Mao.</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Truth</td>
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<tr>
<td>226 Italy</td>
<td>Ahhh, sneaky Devil! Thank you for letting me know.</td>
<td>Lie</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>227 Italy</td>
<td>I still like our plan.</td>
<td>Lie</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>228 Italy</td>
<td>I need to run for a bit. I’ll be around in a few hours.</td>
<td>Lie</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>229 Germany</td>
<td>I think that knowing this, you should do as I suggest and not poke Eng. Just hold and let Wes support. I am 94% sure I can trust England to do as they say on this one.</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Truth</td>
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<tr>
<td>230 Italy</td>
<td>Okay. Should I support Pic to Bre?</td>
<td>Lie</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>231 Germany</td>
<td>yes please. It’ll do us good with France too if we both support.</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>232 Italy</td>
<td>Thumbs up!</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>233 Germany</td>
<td>Actually, you should use Mao to support Spa-Gas, since we know that Brest is moving there. It will be beneficial to have you there if we decide to oust France from Bre in fall</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
234 Italy  Consider it done. 
235 Italy  Hmmmm, heading anything from England?  
236 Italy  I’d love to talk if you’re there. I’m getting the impression that England may actually be moving on you, and I think I have a good counter, but I also still think we should support the attack on Brest and take North Sea. 
237 Italy  I definitely think you should keep your moves the same. 
238 Italy  Nice! Get’em! He WAS moving on you. But we should be able to take about 3 off of him now. Very nice turn. 
239 Germany  Sorry; I was asleep by 9 last night why the move to Nao? Wouldn’t IRI be the more anti-England choice? With the move to Picardy and assuming a retreat to SKA, it looks like England has me pretty powerless this turn. 
240 Germany  So do you, it seems, if you have some kind of deal with Russia about Munich. 
241 Italy  Good morning. Just responding to your messages above. I think NAO and Irish are equally anti-English. They both give me a clear lane to attack Liverpool. I wasn’t sure if either one would be left open, but I took a gamble and it paid off. 
242 Italy  Re your move this turn, I don’t think you’re powerless. You should get a build I think and if not, you should be in position to smash England. 
243 Italy  I don’t have a deal regarding Munich, Germany. Frankly, I thought you would be a bit more joyful towards me. By attacking England, I have committed completely to working as your partner. 
244 Germany  I suppose you’re right. Initially I was thinking IRI also gives you channel access, but NWG access may be just as useful. Well when you control half a continent (and even more when you consider your influence over me, Austria, and who knows who else!), there’s no such thing as complete commitment. I’m not so naive as to think your allegiance with me is going to last beyond its usefulness, and with two fleets on the British isle that time is fast approaching. To be clear, I’m still giving you the truth and I still want to work with you. But you should really stop acting surprised when I’m slightly paranoid that a soon-to-be-dozen-dot-holder is gearing up to stab me
245 Italy Well, I dunno, it sounds like I should stab you. Is that what you're trying to tell me?
I like you. I like how hard you've worked in this game to rebound from a difficult start. I like that you e told me the truth, even when the news was bad. I like that you tell me when you don't trust me. I have literally never told you a lie in this game, and I don't intend to start now. Last turn I burned my bridge with England beyond repair. If you don't want to work with me now, that's really disappointing.

246 Germany like I said, I *do* want to work with you. However, remember that thing I said about general expectations and being warned when they're broken? Tyrolia is one of them and I think you knew that. And England *also* told me they've never told me a lie; I'm starting to think that's Diplomacy-speak for "when convenient, I've used careful wording and half-truths to deceive you even when everything I said was technically true". It would help me to know that you see me being a benefit to you beyond taking out England. A natural next move for us would be to take out Russia, and in that arena I have a positional advantage over you. Especially if I get two builds this turn, I'll be able to sneak behind the troops in Bohemia/Galicia and help you break through.

247 Italy Yes — here is how I expect and hope the game will play out: the two of us finish off England and France, while drifting towards the east a bit. With the builds we get this year, we essentially blitzkrieg the East. I have more units than you, but you have no opposition at all in the north, and can take Scandinavia, War and Mos without any trouble.

248 Italy I think that, in about two years, you and I will both be on about 14 centers, with the remnants of Russia and Austria between us, and we can decide how we want to resolve it. I'd be happy to agree to a small draw, or to shoot for a 17-17 two-way draw position, whichever you prefer.

249 Germany Well, I like the sound of all of that. In fact, it sounds ideal: there's something poetic about the complete beginner and the expert (you've probably heard by now that you got doxxed) sharing a victory. I ask for a concession: As a show of good will, would you be willing to take only one of Liverpool or Portugal this year? (I know the Portugal request seems weird, but I like keeping France around and unless I'm mistaken they like me better than you )

250 Italy Yes. I wasn't planning to take Portugal anyway.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Italy</th>
<th>I think it makes sense here for you to land an army in the English island while you can. Now that his army is off the island, he’s toast as soon as you do that.</th>
<th>Lie</th>
<th>Truth</th>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>England’s just vindictive enough to try and stab Belgium with England and Picardy, though. I was planning on keeping holland around as support.</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Truth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>*by England I of course mean Eng</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Truth</td>
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<td>Italy</td>
<td>I suggest the following: Gas - Liv (via convoy) Spa S MAO holding Mar hold Tyr - Tri Hol - Yor (via convoy) Bur S Bel S North HEL S North Mun - Boh Par - Pic (to cut any potential support)</td>
<td>Lie</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>England cannot take Belgium with those moves.</td>
<td>Lie</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Or I could move my fleet into Liverpool and use Gas to support Bre. I’m happy either way.</td>
<td>Lie</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>I tried a double convoy in the sandbox once and it didn’t work! What is this witchcraft??</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Truth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Here are the orders needed to do a convoy! Holland move to Yorkshire North Sea convoy Holland to Yorkshire. It is not a “double convoy” as you only need one fleet to make it happen. But if your fleet in North Sea is dislodged, the convoy will not go through. That is why I would suggest that HELG supports North Sea holding and Belgium supports North Sea holding.</td>
<td>Lie</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>No–I mean the one <em>you</em> were planning: Gascony to Liverpool</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>It’s a double convoy because you’re convoying through Mao <em>and</em> Nao</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Ah, the orders there would be: Gascony - Liv MAO Convoy Gas - Liv NAO Convoy Gas - Liv</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>So, I’ll move the fleet to Liverpool. And you want MAO to support Paris to Brest?</td>
<td>Lie</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Or wait, MAO supports Brest to Channel, and Gas supports Paris - Brest, right?</td>
<td>Lie</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>yeah. I tried that once in the sandbox (or the equivalent: back when you had fleets in Lyo and Wes I tried a convoy from Pie to Naf). But I think I messed up the commands to the fleets. And yes the most recent message is correct. Those two things and Nao-Lvp</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Lie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>266</td>
<td>Okay, confirmed. So I’ve got in: NAO - Liv MAO S Bre - Channel Gas S Par - Bre Spa - WES Mar S Gas holding Tyrolia - Trieste Sound right?</td>
<td>It does. But If Tyr was bound for trieste anyway, why did you detour through Tyr at all? Why not just move to trieste last turn??</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>267</td>
<td>Austria would not have liked it.</td>
<td>Austria would not have liked it.</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>268</td>
<td>And he doesn’t know that it’s headed back there now (please don’t tell)</td>
<td>Understood. Me and Austria don’t talk anyway. Also, do you have any sense of what England is planning to do?</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>269</td>
<td>Ha! No I don’t. I’d imagine he is coming for me. But I don’t know that.</td>
<td>If I were him, I’d defend Edi and London.</td>
<td>Lie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>270</td>
<td>So you haven’t been talking to England at all? I was sort of hoping you would know more, maybe help us take better advantage of their plans.</td>
<td>So you haven’t been talking to England at all? I was sort of hoping you would know more, maybe help us take better advantage of their plans.</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>271</td>
<td>Ha! No I don’t. I’d imagine he is coming for me. But I don’t know that.</td>
<td>Understood. Me and Austria don’t talk anyway. Also, do you have any sense of what England is planning to do?</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>272</td>
<td>If I were him, I’d defend Edi and London.</td>
<td>If I were him, I’d defend Edi and London.</td>
<td>Lie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>273</td>
<td>So you haven’t been talking to England at all? I was sort of hoping you would know more, maybe help us take better advantage of their plans.</td>
<td>So you haven’t been talking to England at all? I was sort of hoping you would know more, maybe help us take better advantage of their plans.</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>274</td>
<td>Anyway, my moves are: Par-Bre Bel s Bre-Eng Hol s Bel holding And the rest within expected parameters. Correct?</td>
<td>Anyway, my moves are: Par-Bre Bel s Bre-Eng Hol s Bel holding And the rest within expected parameters. Correct?</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>275</td>
<td>England has not said anything of substance to me. He was gracious about my move, but he won’t trust me again, and I would not trust anything he might say at this point. I haven’t asked him about his moves and he hasn’t told me.</td>
<td>England has not said anything of substance to me. He was gracious about my move, but he won’t trust me again, and I would not trust anything he might say at this point. I haven’t asked him about his moves and he hasn’t told me.</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>276</td>
<td>I thought you would Convoy Holland to Yorkshire and support Belgium from Burgundy. Also, can you please order Mun to Boh to cut support and allow me to hold Vienna while moving Tyrolia to Trieste?</td>
<td>I thought you would Convoy Holland to Yorkshire and support Belgium from Burgundy. Also, can you please order Mun to Boh to cut support and allow me to hold Vienna while moving Tyrolia to Trieste?</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>277</td>
<td><em>told</em> you I’m not risking that convoy <em>and</em> that instead Bel is supporting France into the Channel (which will heretofore be called the French Channel). And could I persuade you to move to IRI instead of taking Liverpool in exchange for the requested cut?</td>
<td><em>told</em> you I’m not risking that convoy <em>and</em> that instead Bel is supporting France into the Channel (which will heretofore be called the French Channel). And could I persuade you to move to IRI instead of taking Liverpool in exchange for the requested cut?</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>278</td>
<td>Sorry, what is the requested cut? I understand that you don’t want me to take Liverpool or Portugal. What are you offering to me? (I don’t mean to be difficult, I just want to be sure I understand).</td>
<td>Sorry, what is the requested cut? I understand that you don’t want me to take Liverpool or Portugal. What are you offering to me? (I don’t mean to be difficult, I just want to be sure I understand).</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>279</td>
<td>Ah, you must mean Munich to Boh.</td>
<td>Ah, you must mean Munich to Boh.</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>280</td>
<td>Asking me to avoid taking Por and Liv is asking a lot. I want France to survive here, but I also want England taking units off the board, and I feel like you should too, right?</td>
<td>Asking me to avoid taking Por and Liv is asking a lot. I want France to survive here, but I also want England taking units off the board, and I feel like you should too, right?</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>281</td>
<td>I do. But I also want those dots for myself, of course. And there’s still the nonzero chance that you’ve arranged with Boh to take Munich for yourself, so I’m taking a serious risk</td>
<td>I do. But I also want those dots for myself, of course. And there’s still the nonzero chance that you’ve arranged with Boh to take Munich for yourself, so I’m taking a serious risk</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>I will avoid taking Portugal, vacate Tyrolia, and support you to Brest. I feel like I’m offering quite a lot in exchange for one cut support. And cutting that support does not put you in greater peril. If I had a deal with Russia for Munich (I don’t) I could cut Burgundy from Marseilles and support Russia to Munich. Moving Mun to Boh to cut support is costless.</td>
<td>Lie</td>
<td>Truth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>You’re right. I just thought I’d put my best argument forward. I’ll do the cut. But I ask for something costless in exchange, and I really, really want it to stay just between us, ok?</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Understood and agreed.</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>And I have no problem with you asking for more than you’re willing to settle for. That’s smart, and I do the same thing sometimes. If you don’t stick up for yourself, nobody else will.</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>I <em>know</em> there’s more to your relationship with England than you’re telling me. The last message England sent to me hinted that if <em>I</em> wasn’t willing to work with them–and I haven’t said anything to them since–that maybe <em>you</em> would. And if England were to reach out to you, you’re too smart to just snub them. There’s advantage to be gained–either for both of us or just for yourself–from talking to them. The only reason I stopped was because I knew my word would be mud to them anyway. Earlier I was hoping you’d give me the truth about what you knew, and about what they might know. But you didn’t and that both disappoints and scares me. So I’m asking that you give me just a modicum of honesty here: what do you know? what does England know?</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>I give you my word: I don’t know what England is going to do and I haven’t asked.</td>
<td>Lie</td>
<td>Lie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>He is still jovial with me and respectful. He has asked me to critique his play and to give him advice. But I do not know his moves, and I really don’t think he would tell me them if I asked. It certainly would not be info I could trust free I just lied to him about mine.</td>
<td>Lie</td>
<td>Truth</td>
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</table>
289 Germany  But England’s desperate. Better to talk with *some-one* than just go in blind. And I doubt they’d turn to Russia or France because neither is really close enough/powerful enough to give real help. And there’s precedent for you negotiating with someone even as you stab them: France.

...and here’s the real accusation: for all your pretty words about a shared victory between you and me, you’ve been sneaky and you’ve always pitted me and England against each other to your benefit. My real fear here is that knowing my moves, and with a desperate, jovial England seeking your advice, it would be so *easy* to just feed England enough info to keep me weak while you chow down on the Island.

I know this from experience: back when you were doing 50/50 shots in the south of France, I did everything I could to find out what you were planning and feed it to France. This was merely a time-buying measure, since France was outmatched and I would eventually run out of pretenses to extract your move. But I wanted to gain more dots before you took over. And I assume others are like me, hence I suspect you now.

I’m offering this confession in hopes that you’ll do the same. So just come clean and let’s approach this thing as equals?

290 Italy  I am in my car, off to pick-up my kids from school. This deserves a proper response, so please give me some time.

291 Germany  Abandon the children this is important

292 Italy  So, I’m going to speak frankly here. I am rarely offended in a Diplomacy game, and I rarely say so when I am, but this message offends me. I’m trying to think about why I’m having such a strong reaction to it. I think it’s because you’re painting a picture of the game (both your actions and mine) which are totally different than my own perspective. (Continuing)

293 Italy  From my perspective, you were on the ropes early. France and England were teaming up on you. You lost Denmark and France had Holland and Munich surrounded. You were in serious peril.

I seriously went to extreme effort to keep you in the game. I spent hours talking with England and encouraging him to turn around and go the other way. I completely ended my eastern campaign and spent two seasons just making the voyage over to France so that he didn’t have the bandwidth to continue his attack. I have vouched for you with Austria and Russia many times. I have supported Munich. And I have NEVER attacked you, even when people have asked me to do so and pledged to support me.
294 Italy I have been honest with you, I have worked hard for your success, and I’ve made a lot of proposals to you in which you gain centers; not me. Maybe I am just a bad ally, but I’m not sure I remember an alliance in which I have done more to help my ally. Truly.

295 Italy And to hear that (1) You think I’ve been selfish and (2) You’ve been sabotaging me all along, that just doesn’t sit well with me.

296 Italy I have rarely asked for your help, and I’ve offered my help freely. I’ve provided my sincere best efforts to help you with tactics, and I have never sabotaged you. Not once.

297 Italy And if I’m totally honest with you, I could solo this game if I felt like lying to everyone and grabbing dots. I think I’ve got you all beat tactically. I just have more experience. But that’s not been my intent.

298 Italy I’ve spent hours today talking with England about how best to play Diplomacy. I’ve tried to give him some honest advice because he asked for it. But I don’t know his moves, I haven’t asked for them, and I’m not going to take advantage of that relationship to try to stab you. It legitimately did not cross my mind until you accused me of doing it.

299 Italy So, I’m frustrated by this accusation.

300 Germany And I appreciate all you’ve done for me, really I do. But “completely ending your eastern campaign” is not something you did for me; your alliance with Austria dictated that. I felt bad for betraying you while I was doing it, but even then I knew it was the only way to keep the game going in the face of your and Austria’s might. And it wasn’t “all along”, it was a few turns at best so that the rest of us would have a shot at you and Austria not pair-winning right out of the gate. And the only thing that keeps me from thinking you’re not gonna do just that on the next move anyway is my belief that you really do want the victory all to yourself, which is still consistent with everything you’ve done for me. Propping up a weak player at the expense of stronger ones is a classic tactic. (Continuing)

301 Germany And so, by the way, is trying to shame someone for raising extremely legitimate concerns. Whenever I bring up suspicion of you, you’re quick to remind me how much you’ve done for me to put me on the defensive and make me feel indebted. Well frankly that reeks of dishonesty. I never asked you to do those things.
302 Germany If you no longer trust me, so be it. I knew that was a risk when I made my confession. But i’d rather have a partnership based on mutual honesty. That’s another reason I confessed—you ought to know that my game philosophy (new as it is) is to trust the map and to trust history first and foremost. The parts of your history that I’ve seen indicate that you’re no saint, no matter what you may have done for me. And when the map shows that one player is clearly dominating and that player is you, you are being deeply naive if you think everyone else is just going to roll over and let you get away with it.

303 Italy No, all thumbs up from me. If I were lying to you, I’d smile and say “that sounds great.” I’m honest with you because I sincerely thought of us as partners.

304 Germany Oh but you’re *not*! You agreed to warn me of unexpected moves, then didn’t. When I brought this up you ignored it and misdirected me in hopes I’d forget. You’ve revealed things to England without my permission, and then made up a story about it after the fact! And you can’t be a real partner with someone who is depending on your good graces to survive. That’s not a partnership. We could never be real partners unless we had some notion of equality, and I’m outmatched in both skill and numbers. You and Austria, however, were until recently a perfect example of a true partnership. Dot-parity, coordinated attacks, really beautiful work. So don’t act as if you don’t know this to be true. We were never a partnership of that kind.

305 Italy Well, this is very disappointing to me, and I obviously disagree with the way you are characterizing me and this game. I have a reputation in this hobby for being sincere. Not for being duplicitous. It has always served me well. If you feel that way, then me continuing to explain myself isn’t going to change your mind. If you don’t want to work with me, then I can understand that. Let’s consider our deals and commitments to be void, and let’s play our games separately. If you have any deal you’d like to propose, I’ll consider them, but I won’t continue to try to help your game if you think I’m not sincerely trying to be helpful.

306 Italy Well, this game just got less fun.

307 Germany for you, maybe.
308 Italy Sent to Germany, England, Austria, Russia: So, England, Germany, Russia, y’all played a great turn last turn. You got me to stab my long-time ally and you ended our pretty excellent 7-year run as an alliance. Russia told me he was with me if I stab Austria. England told me he wanted me to solo so long as I would “teach him” and help his along to second place. Then y’all pulled the rug out from under me. It was clever and effective. (End Part 1)

309 Italy (Part 2) At this stage, my excitement about the game has diminished quite a bit. And of course I’m happy to play on and take my lumps for falling for “Hey, I really want you to solo, just help me place second,” but if you guys just want to call it a five-way draw among us and grab a beer together, while reviewing the statistics, that’s really my preference.

I am outnumbered and I obviously can’t solo. And I’m sure some of you in the north are eager to send everyone else flying my way, but I expect Russia and England to be careful, and so I’m not sure there is much room to move forward without simply tipping the board to Germany’s favor.

I propose that we draw and hug it out.

310 Germany I’m down for a five-way draw.

...and by the way, England was copy-pasting to me the most incriminating messages you sent them. So I knew you were giving England my moves. I do have a certain begrudging respect for you ability to deny, though

311 Italy Well, England is telling me he is happy to see me solo and wants second place...so, should I say “no”? I guess I should have. I was happy the way the game was going before all that.

312 Germany Don’t try and pin *your* greed and deceit on England! At least *own* it when you’re ruthless

313 Italy You have been given an apple laced with poison. England’s only move there was to make you hate me, and he did his job well.

You should not let your view of me be defined by someone who has an incentive to make you never speak to me again. We can talk about it more after the game, but I had every intention of continuing to work with you, and I would have done that until England made his play.
<p>| | | | | | |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>314 Germany</td>
<td>I have no doubt you would have continued to work with me, but I take issue with someone who can be asked point-blank if they’re sharing moves with another player and lie to my face. If you’d come clean, and explained how what you were doing actually <em>helped</em> me, somehow, we could have worked together. But you would rather have had me in the dark and that’s not sustainable in a partnership.</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>315 Italy</td>
<td>I was trying to play both sides, and England was lying to me, and forwarding my press to try to incriminate me. So, yes, I lied, and so did England. I apologize.</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>316 Italy</td>
<td>Will you please either vote to draw, or let us know that you’d like to play this one out? I am finding it difficult to motivate myself to speak with anyone if the game is just going to draw shortly. Thoughts?</td>
<td>Lie</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>317 Germany</td>
<td>I did vote to 5-way draw! And I did so again for this season. So it’s not me who’s keeping this game alive</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>318 Italy</td>
<td>Well, as we approach the end of the academic study portion of the game, let me say once, with the truth detector activated, that I really enjoyed playing with you and thought you played really well.</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>319 Italy</td>
<td>Was it really your first game? You definitely played like a seasoned vet.</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>320 Germany</td>
<td>I really enjoyed playing with you, too! And yes, it really was my first game. Thanks for all your help and advice</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Table 9: This is a full game transcript of a game between Germany and Italy. Occasional messages that did not receive a Suspected Lie annotation by the receiver are annotated as None.