



## BENJAMIN FRANKLIN'S HISTORICAL ROLE IN US DIPLOMACY

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**Introduction:** Benjamin Franklin, the most distinguished scientific and literary American of the colonial era, was the first American diplomat. Franklin served from 1776 to 1778 on a commission to France charged with the critical task of gaining French support for American independence. Franklin played a key role in negotiating peace terms, securing US independence and territorial rights. Franklin secured favorable terms for the US, including recognition of its independence and boundaries extending to the Mississippi River. Franklin's diplomatic skills helped build alliances with France and Spain, strengthening the US position in negotiations with Britain.

Franklin negotiated the Treaty of Alliance with France in 1778, securing crucial military and financial support for the American Revolution. Franklin's diplomatic skills and reputation as a founding father helped to secure international recognition for the newly formed United States. Franklin played a key role in negotiating the Treaty of Paris in 1783, which officially ended the American Revolution and established US independence.

In 1757, Franklin was sent to England to represent Pennsylvania's interests, marking the start of his diplomatic career. Franklin's diplomatic efforts in England included advocating for colonial rights and negotiating trade agreements beneficial to the American colonies. Franklin's diplomatic mission to England laid the groundwork for future diplomatic efforts that ultimately led to American independence from British rule. Franklin played a crucial role in negotiating the terms of the treaty, leveraging his diplomatic skills to secure favorable terms for the US.

The Treaty of Peace and Friendship with Morocco established trade relations, protection of American ships, and mutual respect between the two nations. Franklin's contributions to this treaty laid the foundation for future diplomatic relations between the US and Morocco, shaping the course of international diplomacy. Franklin became an active abolitionist in the 1760s, co-founding the first anti-slavery society in America.

As a diplomat in France, Franklin urged European powers to end the transatlantic slave trade and abolish slavery. Franklin's writings and speeches





against slavery inspired future abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass. The natural enemy of England in the 1700s was France. The two nations had fought four wars in the past eighty years, and, with the right diplomacy and a little luck, American leaders hoped there would be a fifth. Due to the high regard in which Benjamin Franklin was held, Congress sent him to France in December 1776 to join fellow ambassadors Silas Deane and Arthur Lee to negotiate a treaty with that country.

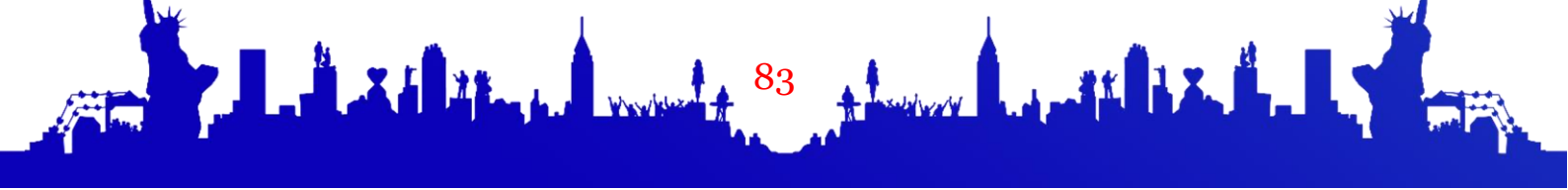
In the early 1950's the United States published ten volumes of the United States Foreign Affairs during the Revolution, and the major part of the ten volumes covers the work of Franklin.

Franklin knew French politicians too well, and he resolved such conditions should not result. Franklin was courageous, bold and had a definite sense of vision plans in diplomacy. consequently, he met the leaders of the British commission and secured a separate treaty with them. He secured just what he wanted for his country; namely, the absolute independence of the United States, recognition of it as a distinctive government, and at the same time the exact boundaries of the United States were generally established. Some of the American members were fearful lest all plans should be ruined, but not so Franklin.

Franklin's diplomatic skills were crucial in securing Spain's agreement to open the Mississippi River to American trade in the Treaty of San Lorenzo. Franklin played a key role in defining the boundaries between Spanish Florida and the United States, ensuring peace and stability in the region. The Treaty of San Lorenzo marked a significant diplomatic success for the young United States, establishing its position as a respected nation in international affairs. Franklin played a crucial role in negotiating terms that recognized American independence and established boundaries with Britain.

Through his diplomatic efforts, Franklin gained support from France and Spain, which were crucial in pressuring Britain to agree to peace terms. Franklin's success in the Treaty of Paris set a precedent for American diplomacy and established the US as a legitimate player in international affairs. Franklin's diplomatic efforts in the Treaty of Paris laid the foundation for future diplomatic strategies and the development of American foreign policy.

**Conclusion:** Benjamin Franklin's negotiation of the Treaty of Paris in 1783 secured independence for the US and established him as a key diplomat. Franklin's skillful diplomacy cultivated a strong alliance with France, crucial in securing support during the American Revolutionary War. Franklin played a





pivotal role in negotiating the Treaty of Alliance with France, which provided military aid and naval support to the US. Franklin's diplomatic mission to Britain in 1767 helped to ease tensions and build a foundation for future diplomatic relations.

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