

America's First Public Diplomat

One Thing that he recommends to be done before we push our Points in Parliament, viz. removing the Prejudices that Art and Accident have spread among the People of this Country [England] against us, and obtaining for us the good Opinion of the Bulk of Mankind without Doors; I hope we have in our Power to do, by Means of a Work now near ready for the Press, calculated to engage the Attention of many Readers, and at the same time efface the bad Impressions receiv'd of us: But it is thought best not to publish it till a little before the next Session of Parliament.

Benjamin Franklin to Thomas Leech and Assembly Committee of Correspondence, London, June 10, 1758¹

This chapter explores how foreign public engagement was used by Benjamin Franklin during the American Revolution to not only obtain foreign aid and support, but also explain to the world who and what America was as a nation. Over the objections of the other commissioners and the Continental Congress, Franklin engaged with the French public perhaps more than the French government, especially in his first year as commissioner.² In light of the geopolitical positions of America and France between the end of 1776–1778, Franklin's efforts to engage the French public were crucial to the success of the American Revolution. As American commissioner to France, Franklin engaged with the public to secure private support and aid, to counter British misinformation and

anti-Americanism, to entice European businesses to invest in American trade, and to convince the French public that the American colonies were a separate, sovereign, independent nation.

In examining the correspondences of Benjamin Franklin, along with the accounts of his fellow commissioners and other members of the Continental Congress,³ several patterns emerge which are significant to understanding Franklin's efforts to engage the public of France. Firstly, the American commissioners and the Continental Congress regularly sought current, truthful information in order to counter British misinformation, to give the public accurate information about America. Secondly, Franklin and even Arthur Lee were keenly aware of America's image in the eyes of Europeans. Franklin was attentive to the exigencies of explaining America's character to a world which previously identified the people living in the colonies as English. Thirdly, Franklin consistently distinguished between the opinion of the French government and the French public in his reports to personal acquaintances and to the CSC. All this not only suggests an awareness of the importance of foreign public opinion, but also points to the crucial role the foreign public would play in America's search for foreign assistance.

To Franklin, countries were people—not a government, people to be understood, befriended, and wooed,⁴ and this was reflected in his practice of diplomacy, especially when contrasted with his fellow commissioners' *diplomatic manner*. Franklin immersed himself in French society by interacting with the intelligentsia and bourgeoisie in various Parisian salons and through his continuing interest in natural science. Much to John Adams's dismay, Franklin spent more time at dinner, at the theater, and at the Paris Academy than he did managing the mission books or engendering himself to the French government.⁵

One of Franklin's most pressing duties upon arriving in France was to explain the nature and character of America as a nation separate from England, convincing the French public of America's strength and resilience in the face of repeated military defeats. While at the same time, Franklin tried to finagle French support through the government without making America seem too weak or too strong, patiently waiting for the moment when the French government would be willing and able to sign a treaty with America and join the fight against Britain.

To illustrate the role foreign public engagement played during the American Revolution, this chapter will examine with some detail how

Franklin employed four core elements of public diplomacy to engage the French public: *listening*, *exchange diplomacy*, *international broadcasting*, and *advocacy*, using the framework outlined in Chap. 1. Before considering this, Franklin's engagement with the French public will be put into the context of the period, with a summary of the Continental Congress's foreign policy as Franklin left for France and France's policy toward the American colonies in 1776.

INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION OF BRITISH AMERICA AND THE NEW WORLD

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, negative perceptions of the American colonies and the land itself were widespread in Europe. The early hopes of a prosperous new land had dissipated by the mid-seventeenth century.⁶ Disappointed hopes fed prejudiced and flawed perceptions about the colonists and the land of the American colonies. The citizens of American colonies were likely aware of European distaste for the New World and its inhabitants: a savage, inhospitable land full of convicts, indentured servants, and uncivilized people.⁷ Prior to the Revolutionary War, Americans did not concern themselves too much with countering these sentiments. Benjamin Franklin did make some early efforts to counter misperceptions about the land, flora and fauna, and the people of America, which can be found in his correspondences between various scientists of the day, who in turn published their conversations for a wider audience.⁸

A more concerted effort to counter the negative perceptions toward America developed when the American colonies considered independence from Britain and sought French aid. The Continental Congress hoped to arrange a trade treaty with France and other nations, but given the European and British public opinion at the time, colonial leaders needed to counter many misperceptions before they would be able to entice anyone to trade with the fledgling nation. "In order to obtain assistance and credits for the United States, the American envoys had to prove that America was a 'good risk'..."⁹

In addition to the external impressions of the New World, the late seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth century brought many changes to European societies which are relevant to understanding American foreign public engagement in the context of the period. Ever since the

Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, establishing the legal concept of the sovereign nation-state, the theory and practice of diplomacy was still evolving by the mid-eighteenth century.¹⁰ Before the end of the seventeenth century, several tracts on the theory of diplomacy or the laws governing nations were published, read, and debated among political leaders and jurists. At the time of the American Revolution, Emer de Vattel's *Law of Nations* was the latest publication on the subject and the most popular.¹¹ Relevant to the understanding of American perspectives toward diplomacy, it is important and significant to consider not only the still evolving practice of diplomacy, but also that these seventeenth-century and eighteenth-century diplomatic and international law theorists wrote a great deal about the responsibilities of the state to the people. As previously mentioned in Chap. 1, these ideas coincided well with America's own liberal, democratic ideas regarding the relationship between nations as well as a nation and the people.

Around the same time that geopolitical relationships were changing, the introduction of the print press caused changes in the public's relationship to the state. The print press combined with the legal relaxation of printing and censorship laws in England and parts of Continental Europe marked the advent of newspapers. The popularity and demand of newspapers ostensibly led to a more literate and informed public which in turn gave rise to political parties and the importance of public opinion to government leaders.¹² The public indirectly and directly asserted more influence over the government, giving rise in the mid-seventeenth century to the expression "politics without doors," among the English. According to Benjamin Carp, the term referred to extra-parliamentary activity occurring outside the closed doors of Parliament, since up through the end of the seventeenth century most of Parliament's business remained secret—"indoors." Subsequently, as people felt more freedom to discuss political opinions publicly, the idea grew that the politics of the people without doors could counter the fixed, secretive politics of Parliament.¹³ As the opening quote of this chapter demonstrates, before attempting to persuade those in government, Franklin was given council by an unnamed lawyer to first persuade the people "without doors"—referring to the general public. America needed to attend to the world's opinions of their nation and citizens if they were to get any foreign aid or investment.

DIPLOMACY & FOREIGN RELATIONS OF REVOLUTION

America's move toward independence and foreign assistance occurred with starts and stops, and moves and countermoves. When the Continental Congress convened in Philadelphia in 1774, the main objective was to present the colonies' complaints about England's policies toward America as a united voice. The Congress eventually agreed to pursue a policy combining economic warfare and long-distance diplomacy. Petitions were drafted to King George III and Parliament enumerating colonial grievances relating to taxes levied on imported British manufactures (paper, tea, etc.); the stationing and quartering of troops within certain colonies; as well as the disbandment of colonial assemblies. On September 27, 1774, the Continental Congress passed a measure to stop the importation and consumption of British manufactured goods as well as to stop exportation of American goods to Britain.¹⁴ The representatives believed the loss of American trade would drastically cripple the British economy and force Parliament to negotiate. The closure of American ports did not impact the British economy enough to force Parliament to negotiate with the colonists, though the lack of trade did hurt the colonies' economy and access to much-needed manufactured goods.¹⁵

In October of 1774, petitions were drafted and published in the papers addressing the publics of Canada and Great Britain.¹⁶ The petitions attempted to explain the colonies' position to people of Britain and Canada. Previous petitions to the Parliament¹⁷ and King George were ignored.¹⁸ Further angering the colonies and the representatives of the Congress, King George issued a "rebellion proclamation" on August 23, 1775. The proclamation not only cut off communications between the colonies and the British, but also accused the colonies of performing sovereign activities of the state such as obstructing commerce, preparing and making war, as well as refusing to uphold the laws of England.

In need of supplies for the Continental Army as well as money, the Continental Congress formed the Secret Committee on September 18, 1775.¹⁹ The committee was to arrange covert contracts with merchants willing to risk shipping and selling guns, ammunition, and other supplies to the colonies. More than 2 months later, the Congress formed another committee on November 29, 1775, the Committee of Secret Correspondence (CSC), to contact America's "friends" in Great Britain, Ireland, and other parts of the world.²⁰ Most of the foreign contacts the

committee corresponded with were Franklin's contacts from his time in England and Europe serving as a colonial agent.²¹ Upon creating the CSC, Franklin contacted an old friend, Charles Guillame Frédéric Dumas, who worked as an editor and publisher in The Hague. Dumas met Franklin when he visited Europe in 1766, and both shared an affinity for the printing business. Franklin immediately engaged Dumas to sound out who might be willing to assist the American colonies against the British:

But we wish to know whether any one of them [European countries], from principles of humanity, is disposed magnanimously to step in for the relief of an oppressed people, or whether if, as it seems likely to happen, we should be obliged to break off all connection with Britain, and declare ourselves an independent people, there is any state or power in Europe, who would be willing to enter into an alliance with us for the benefit of our commerce, which amounted, before the war, to near seven millions sterling per annum, and must continually increase, as our people increase most rapidly. Confiding, my dear friend, in your good will to us and our cause, and in your sagacity and abilities for business, the committee of congress, appointed for the purpose of establishing and conducting a correspondence with our friends in Europe, of which committee I have the honour to be a member, have directed me to request of you, that as you are situated at the Hague, where ambassadors from all the courts reside, you would make use of the opportunity that situation affords you, of discovering, if possible, the disposition of the several courts with respect to such assistance or alliance, if we should apply for the one, or propose the other.²²

Dumas would act as an agent for the Continental Congress throughout the duration of the war, performing various duties, primarily disseminating news and information about the US colonies and the war throughout Europe as will be discussed further in this chapter.

The functions of these two committees, the Secret Committee and the Committee of Secret Correspondence, were rather different: the Secret Committee essentially administered what would today be considered to be a covert action program between America and France; and the CSC acted as a diplomatic and an intelligence organization.²³ Benjamin Franklin served on both committees prior to being nominated as a commissioner to France.²⁴

Early in 1776, some members of the Congress recognized the need for foreign assistance. Based on Britain's relations with other European nations, the only country which might consider assisting the colonies in their fight against England was France. However, tied to the issue of acquiring foreign support, the Congress faced the decision to officially declare the colonies independent from Britain. Both independence and entering into a formal agreement with a foreign nation for assistance were seriously contentious ideas within the Continental Congress.²⁵ "There was, however, still a majority of members who were either determined against all measure preparatory to independence, or yet too timorous and wavering to venture on any decisive steps."²⁶ The debate of whether to open ports to all nations as well as the issue of declaring independence from Britain went on from February through June finally concluding with the formation of committees to prepare a plan of treaties for use with foreign nations as well as a draft declaration of independence.²⁷

On July 18, 1776, the committee chosen to draft a model treaty presented their report to the Congress.²⁸ The committee and the treaty emphasized that any formal agreement with another nation would be non-political, and non-military. The treaty would simply facilitate equal, free trade between America and another nation. The treaty and instructions to the elected commissioners to France were not finalized until September 24, 1776.²⁹ As Stacy Schiff notes, Congress's instructions simply asked "...that the Treaty should be concluded and... instructed *to use every means in your Power* for concluding it conformable to the plan you have received"³⁰; how this was to be achieved was left to commissioners.

FRENCH POSITION TOWARD BRITISH COLONIES

In 1764, just a year after the Treaty of Paris, the then French foreign minister, Étienne François de Choiseul, sent observers to the American colonies to determine whether a rebellion against the British stirred.³¹ Clearly, the French wished for an opportunity to reverse the damage of their defeat in the Seven Years' War. However, when the American colonies did eventually begin to buck against British rule, France was not prepared—financially or militarily.³² The arrival of American agents in 1775 and 1776 to France forced French foreign minister, Charles Gravier, Comte de Vergennes, to tread very carefully. The country

could not risk open war with Britain. In addition, due to the family alliance between France and Spain, any support to the American colonies would need to be discussed with and agreed to by the Spanish court.³³

In 1775, Vergennes sent his own agent to the American colonies to observe as well as to indicate to the colonies France's own position of support for the colonies' independence from Britain. After hearing from his own agent, along with the persistence of Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais,³⁴ a French dramatist, Vergennes drafted a report suggesting a course for French policy in 1776 which recommended military preparations be undertaken by both France and Spain against any potential British attack; provide friendly assurances to the British, deceiving the government as to France's intentions toward the American colonies; and providing secret support to the American colonies *without any treaty until their independence is firmly established*.³⁵ Vergennes's plan was adopted by the King's Council, leading to a royal command in April 1776 to rebuild the French navy. To the third point, another report was drafted outlining Beaumarchais's 1775 proposal to encourage the American Revolution through covert assistance masked as private commercial contracts.³⁶

France's policy stance toward the American colonies was eventually communicated to the members of the CSC. On October 1, 1776, Thomas Story, an American agent working in England, sent an intelligence report to the committee which was received by Robert Morris and Franklin, being the only committee members present. The report relayed information about Arthur Lee's private conversation with the French ambassador in London who communicated that France was in no position to enter into a war with England and would not be in a position to do so in the near future. The most France could do for America was to provide a secret lump sum of cash which would be transferred from a bank in Holland to St. Eustatius under the name Hortalez. Robert Morris and Franklin made two important decisions based on this report. First, the information would not be reported to the whole Congress out of concerns of secrecy.³⁷ Second, aware that "altho [*sic*] disposed to support us in our Contest with them, *we therefore think it our duty to Cultivate their favourable disposition toward us, draw from them all the support we can and in the end their private Aid*

must assist us to establish Peace or inevitably draw them in as Parties to the War."³⁸

This foreshadows the approach which Franklin would adopt in order to get French support. In light of France's diplomatic, military, and financial limitations at the time, the only way America could hope to get supplies and support would be with private aid by members of the French public in business and trade willing to risk a possible confrontation with the British navy with an unknown trading partner.

Based on reports sent to the CSC from Franklin, he was acutely aware of the French government's inability and unwillingness to engage in any diplomatic arrangement: "The Cry of this Nation is for us; but the Court it is thought views an approaching War with Reluctance."³⁹ France already took a great risk by allowing the American commissioners to remain in France. The British Ambassador Lord Stormont complained regularly to Vergennes about the Americans' presence and demanded to know what business they had in Paris.⁴⁰ Vergennes stalled and feigned ignorance regarding the American commissioners' mission, despite already arranging a secret meeting between the commissioners and his undersecretary, Conrad-Alexandre Gérard.⁴¹

In the meantime, Franklin and the other commissioners worked to get support and supplies where they could. King Louis XVI and Vergennes allowed American merchant ships to use French ports, as long as all treaty agreements relating to war contraband were honored.⁴² Franklin and his grandnephew, Jonathan Williams, not only arranged for contracts with French and European merchants for weapons, arming of ships, and material for uniforms, but also directed American privateering operations in accordance with the Secret Committee. These contracts were made through Franklin's own personal contacts which he developed throughout the spring of 1777.

Thus began what would be a tense year of waiting: waiting for France's naval forces to be readied for war; waiting for possible British attack; waiting for a definitive sign of resolve from America; and waiting for a firm commitment from Spain. All these factors made the possibility of a formal treaty between America and France in 1776 seem very unlikely to ever occur, hence obtaining private aid and access to supplies was essential to the United States' ability to continue their fight for independence.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN LISTENS

In light of the situation in the America colonies faced at the end of 1776, when Benjamin Franklin left for France, the only logical course of American diplomacy was to include foreign public engagement alongside more formal and even secretive diplomacy with the French government. Furthermore, in consideration of the American character at the time, the fact that American leaders engaged the public of other nations is unsurprising. Previous attempts to engage with British leaders were ignored, leaving no other option than appealing to the public. America was in many respects already a democratic nation, where the government structures served the public's interests and answered to the public, extending this practice of the state's relationship with the people beyond domestic boundaries was not incongruous. The Continental Congress published much of their proceedings in the papers to guarantee transparency. Franklin would later ensure these proceedings were also published in European papers to bolster the legitimacy of America in the eyes of Europe.

As already noted, Franklin's diplomatic approach differed from the other American commissioners; many of Franklin's characteristics or methods as a diplomat are noted by his French acquaintances and fellow commissioners which included listening. "In prattling Paris,... Franklin did something extraordinary. He listened."⁴³ John Adams and Franklin's friends in France all remarked on his capacity to listen, and how his ability to listen garnered him further respect and popularity among the French.⁴⁴ Franklin consistently demonstrated his desire to listen, made an effort to listen, and then used what he heard to achieve the objectives of his mission in France.

The last time he visited France as a colonial agent, he dressed as an Englishman; however, when Franklin landed in France in December of 1776, he dressed simply in what the French presumed was either the garb of a Quaker or an American frontiersman.⁴⁵ He wrote several letters noting the simplicity of his attire and his reluctance to assume a public character to Silas Deane, John Hancock, the CSC, and Mary Hewson. He acquainted "no one here [France] with this Commission, continuing incog. [*sic*] as to my publick [*sic*] Character; because not being sufficiently acquainted with the Disposition and the present Circumstances of this Court, relative to our Contest with GB [*sic*]. I cannot Judge whether it would be agreeable [*sic*] to her at this time to receive publicly

[*sic*] Ministers from the Congress as such, and I think we should not embarrass [*sic*] her...on the one hand, nor subject ourselves to the Hazard of a disgraceful Refusal on the other.”⁴⁶ This demonstrates Franklin’s intent to listen before attempting to attain any of the official objectives he was charged with by the Continental Congress. He was aware that his very presence could embarrass the French government and that a refusal to recognize him in his official capacity by the French court would humiliate America in the eyes of the world.

As many historians have noted,⁴⁷ “Franklin had a flair for feeling public opinion, and for approaching it.”⁴⁸ Franklin was not just aware of the importance of public opinion in relation to his mission, but also made time to gather the opinion of the public and tried to listen. Much to the consternation of Adams, Franklin’s first concern seemed to be engaging the French public rather than keeping the mission books straight and making daily trips to Versailles to interact with other diplomats. In Adams’s autobiography, he gave a detailed account of Franklin’s usual schedule as an American commissioner:

It was late when he breakfasted, and as soon as Breakfast was over, a crowd of Carriges [*sic*] came to his Levee or if you like the term better to his Lodgings, with all Sorts of People; some Phylosophers [*sic*], Accademicians [*sic*] and Economists; some of his small tribe of humble friends in the literary [*sic*] Way whom he employed to translate some of his ancient Compositions, such as his Bonhomme Richard ...; but by far the greater part were Women and Children, come to have the honour to see the great Franklin, and to have the pleasure of telling Stories about his Simplicity, his bald head and scattering strait [*sic*] hairs, among their Acquaintances. These Visitors occupied all the time, commonly, till it was time to dress to go to Dinner. He was invited to dine abroad every day and never declined unless when We had invited Company to dine with Us. I was always invited with him, till I found it necessary to send Apologies, that I might have some time to study the french [*sic*] Language and do the Business of the mission.⁴⁹

This description by Adams of Franklin’s activities as America’s commissioner indicates that Franklin spent a great deal of his time listening to the French public. Franklin made time for everyone, including reading and responding to hundreds of letters he received seeking advice or favors.⁵⁰

In addition to making time for callers at Hotel de Valentinois where Franklin resided in Passy, Benjamin Franklin also made time to visit various salons. In eighteenth-century France, the best place to listen to the people was in the cafes and salons.⁵¹ Franklin was such a celebrity among the French and well-known among the Republic of Letters in France, that he gained access to several influential salons, including Marie-Louise-Nicole-Elisabeth de La Rochefoucauld Duchesse de Enville,⁵² Madame Anne-Catherine de Ligniville d’Autricourt Helvétius,⁵³ and Anne Louise Boivin d’Hardancourt Brillon de Jouy^{54,55}. In these salons, he was introduced to Marie-Jean-Antoine-Nicolas Caritat Marquis de Condorcet and Antoine-Laurent Lavoisier, among other notable French intelligentsia and people with connections to the court.

In contrast, Adams noted that Arthur Lee made himself repulsive to the French “...by indiscreet speeches before servants and others, concerning the French nation and government—despising and cursing them.”⁵⁶ Adams too, struggled to make peace not only with Franklin’s preference for socializing with the people of France rather than handling mission business, but also Franklin’s widespread popularity among the French: “On Dr. Franklin the eyes of all Europe are fixed, as the most important character in American affairs, in Europe: neither Lee nor myself are looked upon of much consequence.”⁵⁷ Adams records little about French perceptions toward Silas Deane, but does say that he “seems to have made himself agreeable [*sic*] here to Persons of Importance and Influence, and has gone home in such Splendor [*sic*]...” suggesting that Deane engaged only with those who benefitted him personally.⁵⁸ In comparison with the other American commissioners, Franklin appears to be the only one who prioritized engaging with the French public, specifically listening to them.

Using what he heard, Franklin provided general indications regarding French public opinion to the Continental Congress. His reports to the Continental Congress regularly distinguished court opinion from the general public of France⁵⁹; even reporting to John Hancock, President of the Continental Congress, that America’s French supporters were disheartened by the reports in a French Gazette of British victories in the United States:

Our Friends in France have been a good deal dejected with the Gazette Accounts of Advantages obtain’d [*sic*] against us by the British Troops. I have help’d [*sic*] them here to recover their Spirits a little, by assuring them that we shall face the Enemy...⁶⁰

In addition to providing intelligence to the Congress about how negative press reports about the Revolution impacted French public opinion, Franklin also used public opinion to gauge his advocacy needs. Benjamin Franklin provided material to Continental papers to counter negative reports in the British and Continental press, in some cases, in response to concerns raised by American supporters in France and in Holland. Thus, Franklin used what he heard to manage the French environment to guide American policy and gauge further public engagement needs.

THE REPUBLIC OF LETTERS & EXCHANGE DIPLOMACY

In the years leading up to and throughout the American Revolution, another ongoing revolution persisted quietly in the background: the science revolution. Of note to the discussion of public diplomacy and exchange diplomacy particularly is the use of scientists, artists, and men of letters by European monarchs to further their nation's standing and influence abroad.

Monarchs and state bureaucracies were, in fact, interested in the possible gains associated with the development of science and technology as well as in the prestige of scholarship. Through the academies, they tried to organize the management of scientific research, which was considered a source of personal glory and national wealth.⁶¹

The connection various governments made between the use of science and the arts as a tool for improving prestige manifested itself in European cities where royal academies were established by state governments where "scientific activity assumed a stately character and was financed by administrations with practical goals in mind."⁶² A nation could project power and prestige through the Republic of Letters and national academies, drawing eminent artists, philosophers, and scientists of the period.

As a self-educated and self-trained scientist Franklin became a part of the eighteenth-century "republic of letters" and the network of scientists, philosophers, writers, and artists from all over Europe.

Networks of correspondence among men of science were also an essential tool for the emergence and social definition of a community of scholars devoted to the study of nature. They were the concrete side of the imaginary "Republic of Science," which can be seen as a system of person

relations, and in particular correspondence (*commerce de lettres*), between scholars who shared an interest in the study of nature.⁶³

Thus, the most significant and meaningful foreign public engagement occurred through Benjamin Franklin's work as a scientist and philosopher. Franklin's own curiosity coupled with the eventual acceptance of his electrical experiments garnered him many prestigious and influential contacts within the Republic of Letters. As Stacy Schiff notes, "Franklin's scientific career...played a vast role in his diplomatic one..."⁶⁴

Upon his retirement in 1748 from the printing business, Franklin put more time into his intellectual pursuits. In the past, he corresponded with members of the Royal Society in England to request publications of the latest experiments and discoveries in natural science. Franklin corresponded regularly with Royal Society members Joseph Priestley and Peter Collinson. These relationships Franklin fostered between members of the Royal Society spurred him to create the American Philosophical Society in 1743.

In the mid-eighteenth century, experiments with electricity were in vogue and peaked Franklin's interest; however, Franklin's knowledge and interest in electricity started when he made his first trip to England in 1725–1726.⁶⁵ Eventually, Franklin conducted his own experiments and wrote about the results. He passed his work onto his contacts in the Royal Society as well as others in Europe. Initially, his experiments did not receive much attention and were written off by some members of the Royal Society, but after the experiments were performed successfully in front of King Louis XV, Franklin's reputation rose throughout Europe.⁶⁶ Jean-Baptiste le Roy, a French scientist and member of the Paris Academy of Sciences, arranged to have Franklin's writings on his electrical experiments translated into Latin, Italian, and German, which furthered his fame as an international scientist.⁶⁷

With use of the Leyden Jar⁶⁸ for electrical experimentation, electricity experiments became a public form of entertainment in England and Europe. It is possible that even Franklin's own experiments were used to entertain crowds. Due to Franklin's experiments and the invention of the lightning rod, "he was the world-renowned tamer of lightning, the man who had disarmed the heavens, who had vanquished superstition with reason...He was America's first international celebrity."⁶⁹

Within the Republic of Letters, Franklin maintained correspondence with many men of science or men of letters from all over the world

with varying connections to national leaders. Initially, this collaboration served no other purpose for Franklin other than a genuine interest in the latest experiments, advances, and philosophies of the day. He enjoyed the intellectual exchange he shared with many of his correspondents in France and England as well as other parts of Europe. Later, these relationships between leading scientists and intellectuals from all over Europe would serve as a network of connections to obtain access to political leaders, to people with access to intelligence, and to people willing to provide aid to America.

Thus, Franklin's involvement in both the Royal Society and the Academy of Sciences is an example of exchange diplomacy—a core element of public diplomacy as understood today. Though Franklin's active involvement in the European scientific community did not initially have any political objective, when he became the commissioner to France his science did become politicized.⁷⁰

In many of his letters between other scientists and intellectuals, he exchanged not only his thoughts on various scientific ideas of the day, but also political information about the colonies and Britain. The correspondence between the Jan Ingenhousz⁷¹ and Franklin illustrates how exchange diplomacy allowed Franklin to explain America's relations with England and the future of the country. The two were connected through John Pringle, a Member of Parliament and the Royal Society. Ingenhousz wrote to Franklin frequently throughout 1776 and 1777. Writing to Franklin on November 15, 1776, Ingenhousz expressed confusion by the revolt as "You made me consider them as one nation... You told me more than once that no more distinction should be made between a man residing in England and one residing in North America, than between the inhabitants [*sic*] of London and cheffield [*sic*]." ⁷² Franklin explained in his reply on February 12, 1777, the reasons for the breach between the colonies and Britain, even adding the purpose of his mission to France.

I long laboured in England with great Zeal and Sincerity to prevent the Breach that has happened, and which is now so wide that no Endeavours of mine can possibly heal it... It would therefore be deceiving you, if I suffer'd [*sic*] you to remain in the Supposition you have taken up, that I am come hither to make Peace. I am in fact ordered hither by the Congress for a very different Purpose, viz. [*sic*] to procure such Aids from European Powers for enabling us to defend our Freedom and

Independence, as it is certainly their Interest to grant, as by that means the great and rapidly growing Trade of America will be open to them all, and not a Monopoly to Britain as heretofore; a Monopoly, that if she is suffer'd [*sic*] again to possess, will be such an Increase of her Strength by Sea, and if she can reduce us again to Submission, she will have thereby so great an Addition to her Strength by Sea and Land, as will together make her the most formidable Power the World has yet seen, and, from her natural Pride and Insolence in Prosperity, of all others the most intolerable.

You will excuse my writing Politicks [*sic*] to you, as your Letter has given me the Occasion. Much more pleasing would it be to me to discuss with you some Point of Philosophy...⁷³

The letter continues to further discuss Franklin's role in France as well as Ingenhousz's query about the dispute between which lightening rod, blunt or pointed should be used to protect gunpowder magazines. Two months later, Franklin writes again to Ingenhousz, further explaining the breach between America and Britain and noting in the same letter that "nothing new in the philosophical Way, or I should have a Pleasure in communicating it to you."⁷⁴

Ingenhousz was not the only man of science with whom Franklin readily provided information to regarding America's position and the nation's plans for the future. Franklin met regularly with French scientists and scholars, such as Antoine-Laurent Lavoisier, Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot, and Jean Baptiste le Roy,⁷⁵ to collaborate and perform the experiments of other scientists and discuss politics.⁷⁶ In addition, many of Franklin's British men of science continued to correspond with him using trusted couriers. This allowed for continued exchange on subjects relating to not only science and philosophy, but also politics. With Franklin's contacts in Britain, he tried to secure an exchange of prisoners and kept communications open for peace negotiations.

Hence, Franklin's exchange diplomacy afforded many opportunities which helped to further facilitate the most urgent needs of America—a sympathetic ear and people willing to offer assistance. Some of Franklin's contacts simply told him who might be willing to provide aid to America, others introduced him to people who wanted to help, and some became actively involved in providing aid to America, such as his friendship with Lavoisier. Lavoisier was the *inspecteur général des poudres et salpêtres* for the French government as well as a member of the *ferme*

générale.⁷⁷ His father-in-law, Jacques Paulze, was the Director of the Tobacco Department, a component of the *ferme générale*. Through these connections, Franklin opened negotiations with Paulze for a two million livre advance on American tobacco shipments to France as well as access to much-needed gunpowder supplies.⁷⁸ Franklin's exchange within the Republic of Letters also gave him the opportunity to represent America, dispelling rumors, and providing a truer portrait of America.

18TH CENTURY ADVOCACY

Once Franklin and the other commissioners arrived in France, they quickly learned that the British used the European press to downplay the war with the colonies, play-up their inevitable defeat, circulate rumors of reconciliation, accusing Americans of war atrocities, and to ridicule America's complaints against the British government.

When we reflect on the Character and Views of the Court of London, it ceases to be a Wonder, that the British Ambassador [*sic*], and all other British Agents, should employ every means, that tended to prevent European Powers, but France more especially, from giving America Aid in this War. Prospects of Accommodation, it is well known, would effectually prevent foreign Interference, and therefore, without one serious Design of accommodating on any other Principles, but the absolute Submission of America, *the delusive Idea of Conciliation hath been industriously suggested on both Sides the Water*, that, under colour of this dividing and aid-withholding Prospect, the vast British Force, sent to America, might have the fairest Chance of succeeding; *And this Policy hath in fact done considerable Injury to the United States...*⁷⁹

Aware of the impact such reports had on the French public as well as the French and European governments, Franklin and his colleagues regularly requested information from the CSC about the latest news from America in order to counter the information spread by the British:

We have had no Information of what passes in America but thro' [*sic*] England, and the Advices are for the most part such only as the Ministry chuse [*sic*] to publish. Our total Ignorance of the truth or Falsehood of Facts, when Questions are asked of us concerning them, *makes us appear small in the Eyes of the People here*, and is prejudicial to our Negotiations.⁸⁰

In this February 6, 1777, report to the CSC, the American commissioners requested current information regarding the course of the war. The repeated pleas for news about the progress of the war demonstrate the importance of providing accurate information to the European public.⁸¹ The commissioners did not resort to conjecturing about the current situation in America. In her book, *The Great Improvisation*, Stacy Schiff suggests Franklin overstated America's success to the French; however, based on the letters written by Franklin, there is nothing to suggest that he ever claimed American military success. He did tend to obscure the precariousness of America's situation in terms of money and military supplies, but he optimistically spoke of the inevitable success of America.

In addition, this report, as well as subsequent reports to the CSC, specifically highlight the negative effect such news had on not just the French government, but also the French public—the people who would invest in trade with America:

The want of intelligence from America, and the Impossibility of contradicting by that means *the false news spread here and all over Europe by the Enemy, has a bad Effect on the minds of many who would adventure in Trade to our Ports*, as well as on the Conduct of the several Governments of Europe.⁸²

Letters between both the commissioners in Paris and the Continental Congress repeatedly express concerns about how negative news would impact public perspectives toward the colonies and hurt commercial prospects, a major foreign policy objective for the young nation. On his way to Spain, Arthur Lee observed "...by the Papers, that Agents of the [British] Ministry are endeavoring to cover their cruelties on Long Island, by charging us with having wantonly hangd [*sic*] some hessian Prisoners previous to that transaction. This they are constantly repeating both in the foreign and domestic Gazettes, in order to establish it as historical fact."⁸³ He suggests to Franklin and Silas Deane that Congress should publish something to contradict this report. Lee hoped the nation's "name will be unblemished."⁸⁴

As Franklin indicated to the CSC in his reports, he needed facts to help counter British "false news" and to reverse the effect of such unfavorable news. Perhaps the most crucial tasks for the American commissioners were to establish United States' identity as a nation, distinct from England, and to bolster the nation's legitimacy in the eyes of potential

investors. To accomplish these objectives, Franklin *advocated* for the US by arranging for the Declaration of Independence, state constitutions, the Articles of Confederation, and articles from the American press to be translated. With the help of Charles Dumas in The Hague and Duchesse de Enville's son, Louis-Alexandre, duc de La Rochefoucauld, Franklin was able to translate US founding documents, publish them, and circulate them around France and Europe.⁸⁵

All Europe is for us. *Our Articles of Confederation being by our means translated and published here have given an Appearance of Consistence and Firmness to the American States and Government, that begins to make them considerable.*

The separate Constitutions of the several States are also translating and publishing here, *which afford abundance of Speculation to the Politicians of Europe.* And it is a very general Opinion that if we succeed in establishing our Liberties, we shall as soon as Peace is restored receive an immense Addition of Numbers and Wealth from Europe, by the Families who will come over to participate our Privileges and bring their Estates with them. Tyranny is so generally established in the rest of the World that the Prospect of an Asylum in America for those who love Liberty gives general Joy, and our Cause is esteem'd [*sic*] the Cause of all Mankind.⁸⁶

The objective was to not only counter the perception that the United States was weak, but also to demonstrate that a democratic republic was a solid government and unlikely to collapse into anarchy.

Furthermore, the translation of these documents served to illustrate America's identity as separate from England. Approximately 10 years before the start of the American Revolution, the American colonies stood loyally with Britain, fought, and professed their solidarity with their "mother country" in the Seven Years' War or French and Indian War. A war which put the American colonies in opposition to most of the world, the very same nations which America now sought trade and friendship. The commissioners also had to prove the steadfastness and unity of the colonies to continue to fight until Britain recognized their independence. The negative perceptions of America and Americans, coupled with the lack of information from home, made the commissioners' task to entice the French government to recognize the United States or to obtain private aid from French investors and businessmen all the more difficult.

Prior to Franklin's arrival, Vergennes set up a newsprint to counter British propaganda. The publication was entitled the *Affaires de l'Angleterre et de l'Amérique* and ran from 1776 through 1779. The *Affaires de l'Angleterre et de l'Amérique* is an early example of *international broadcasting*, though unusual. In this case, the paper was created by another foreign government, but Americans and French citizens put materials together for the paper. The newsprint had three primary objectives: to provide a narrative of events; to reprint information from other newspapers and pamphlets of particular interest; and to give inside political history and parliamentary proceedings of Great Britain.⁸⁷

Upon Franklin's arrival in France, he worked with the editors, Edemé-Jacques Genêt, Antoine Court de Gébelin, Jean Baptiste René Robinet, and others to provide material, and later, John Adams would also provide material.⁸⁸

Edited to a certain extent in a partisan manner, it was clearly intended to neutralize the accounts published by the ordinary French journals, who drew their news from the English press, and by giving the French people *accurate information* concerning the causes and progress of the war, *encourage them in their sympathy with the American cause*, and so add another lever to the forces that were action on the French government to make it recognize...[America's] independence.⁸⁹

The 1776 draft of the Articles of Confederation appeared in *Affaires* along with the Pennsylvania state constitution, Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, and later five state constitutions would also appear in 1777 and the Declaration of Independence.⁹⁰ "...[The] *Affaires de l'Angleterre et de l'Amérique* did constitute the most important publications of American political documents in France...and their number and variety indicate the breadth of the French audience they reached."⁹¹

Franklin also contributed original essays, usually under a pseudonym as he used to do when he worked as a printer.⁹² One contribution, of note, was an essay published on October 18, 1777, entitled "Comparison of Great Britain and America as to Credit" under the byline "Bankers Letter."⁹³ The essay outlines seven factors contributing to good credit and goes on to compare America's credit to Britain's, making a case for people to invest in America. The autumn of 1777 was a particularly tense period for both France and the American colonies with funds nearly depleted and Franklin's hesitancy to request additional

funds, “Franklin may have been trying to inject new enthusiasm in an old refrain” to support the colonies.⁹⁴

In addition to using the *Affaires de l'Angleterre et de l'Amérique* to advocate America as a stable nation and attractive trade partner, Franklin also used other popular European newsprints to reach audiences beyond France. As mentioned earlier, Dumas acted as an intelligence agent of sorts for the Continental Congress. He also helped to disseminate propaganda and other information about the colonies throughout Continental Europe. He wrote to Franklin that he was “...very connected for some time with the *Gazetteur françois Leiden*, that promotes long as he can [Americans]...” and “...has already ...inserted in its leaves several small items that I [Dumas] have provided, and who will insert others if I can provide [them]...”⁹⁵ This Dutch agent was well connected to the editor of the *Nouvelles extraordinaires de divers endroits*, popularly known as the *Gazette de Leyde*, Jean Luzac. Through Franklin's contacts in the Republic of Letters, Louis-Alexandre de La Rochefoucauld, helped to translate material for print in both the *Gazette de Leyde* and the *Affaires de l'Angleterre et de l'Amérique*.

In March of 1777, Dumas wrote to the commissioners in Paris and mentioned a connection to the editor of a French gazette published in Leiden. Dumas apparently already passed materials for the editor to publish, but the editor offered to publish more. “I strongly advise you, gentlemen, to take advantage of his good will by *giving me something ... (but more facts than political arguments)*, because [the] gazette is widespread, both in this country throughout Europe, is estimated as one of the most impartial.”⁹⁶ The *Gazette de Leyde* was a highly influential French paper during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The paper, though printed in Amsterdam, had a wide circulation in France (over 2000 subscribers in July 1778), despite government censorship and control over imported printed materials. Also of note, the Leiden paper was free from any government control or influence as opposed to its competitors (*la Gazette d'Amsterdam* or *la Gazette de France*), making it a fairly reliable news source throughout Europe.⁹⁷

Based on another letter from Dumas on May 23, 1777, Franklin apparently provided an article which compared George Washington's treatment of Hessian and British prisoners of war to British treatment of American prisoners of war, an effort to counter the claims made in the British press as reported by Arthur Lee.⁹⁸ The same piece was also featured in a Dutch newsprint, *Rotterdamshe Courant*. The editor, Reinier

Arrenberg, was a fervent supporter of American independence.⁹⁹ Another supporter of America living in Holland, Benjamin Sowden, reported back to Franklin regarding public reception of news items from America as well as acting as a courier for Franklin, delivering materials to Arrenberg from Franklin and newspapers from the American colonies.¹⁰⁰ This demonstrates the vital importance information played throughout the American Revolution, not just from an intelligence perspective. Information was needed to engage the French public to counter rumors or misinformation. The commissioners were without means to refute these reports. Some of Franklin's contacts, eager to support the American cause, begged him to provide information to dispel the negative reports coming from the British.¹⁰¹ Many of these contacts were long-time correspondents and friends of Franklin through the Republic of Letters. In place of current news, Franklin provided founding documents of the colonies and the United States to demonstrate the character and reliability of the fledgling nation.

THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

This chapter presents several interesting points with regard to not only the use of foreign public engagement preceding and during the American Revolution, but also the role of foreign public engagement as a mechanism of statecraft. First, as stated in the opening of the chapter, Benjamin Franklin was keenly aware of the importance of America's image in connection to what the representatives of the Continental Congress hoped to achieve in severing ties with England.¹⁰² The importance of the US image was twofold: commercial enticement and to *represent* the character of the nation. Both were crucial to the success of the Revolution and also tied to the future success of the nation. Franklin knew this and worked diligently, and sometimes at odds with the other commissioners and the Continental Congress, to attempt to minimize damage to the US colonies' image as well as build up confidence in the nation as a stable, secure investment.

Second and also connected with the importance of America's image, was the need for accurate, current information about the war and the progress of the Revolution. This is also an important point in connection with the general development of American foreign public engagement, as will be discussed further in Chaps. 5 and 7. The need to present the *truth* about America is a recurring strategy in American public diplomacy

throughout the Cold War. Countering inaccurate information disseminated by the British government was also connected to the importance of maintaining the image of the US. Later, this need for using truth to counter misinformation about America is used to differentiate between American foreign public engagement and enemy propaganda. In the eighteenth century, the use of lies to counter British inaccuracies about the colonies and the war was seen as being beneath the dignity of the colonies.

...therefore we conceive that the english [*sic*] papers are calculated to deter the french [*sic*] Merchants from beginning to taste the Sweets of our Trade. Their falshoods [*sic*] rightly understood are the Barometers of their fears, and in Proportion as the Political Atmosphere presses downward the Spirit of Fiction is obliged to rise. We wish it to be understood that we pay too much respect to the wisdom of the French Cabinet to suppose they can be influenced by such efforts of visible despair, and *that we have too much reverence for the Honor of the American Congress to prostitute its authority by filling our own News papers [*sic*], with the same kind of invented Tales which characterize the London Gazette.*¹⁰³

The desire for accurate, current information was often inhibited by the limitations of communication technology at the time. The American colonies suffered from the lack of a navy or even a merchant fleet robust enough to carry messages between France and America. Ironically, despite advances in communication technology, the requirement for access to truthful information in a timely manner does not dissipate over the course of this study. This remains a recurring problem. Yet, the emphasis on truth and the strong desire to *represent* the US to foreign publics is a recurring idea as American foreign public engagement evolves and ties in with the issue of conceptualizing public diplomacy. The nation's political values, influenced by eighteenth-century liberal ideas, dictated only the truth should be used to represent and explain the new nation.

Another remarkable finding in this case is the attention and value placed on public opinion, particularly by Benjamin Franklin, but also by the other commissioners and the Continental Congress. All the more so, given the sociopolitical environment of eighteenth-century France. Despite the French government's control over the press, a robust domestic police (pseudo-intelligence) service, and professed faith in

absolute monarchy, Benjamin Franklin and the Continental Congress did not seem to be deterred by these considerations. Engaging with foreign publics was taken as a pragmatic, natural course. The Congress was not only eager to know political developments in Europe, but also desired to know what the people of Europe thought about the United States.

We have Nothing further to add at present, but to request, that you will omit no good Opportunity of informing us, how you succeed in your Mission, what Events take place in Europe, by which these States may be affected, and that you contrive us in regular Succession some of the best London, French, and Dutch Newspapers, with any valuable political Publications, that may concern North America.¹⁰⁴

Franklin was careful to differentiate between public opinion and government opinion in each of his letters to either the Continental Congress or even in personal letters. This was important, as the Congress continually pressured the commissioners to get France to recognize the American colonies as an independent nation, to enter into a trade treaty, and to provide the colonies substantial loans. As Franklin was well aware, this was impossible for the French government to do. Such actions would have meant war with England, for which France was neither militarily nor monetarily prepared to engage, as Franklin wrote to another member of the Royal Society in May 1777: “*The People of this Country* are almost unanimously in our favour. *The Government* has its reasons for postponing a War, but is making daily the most diligent Preparations; wherein Spain goes hand in hand.”¹⁰⁵ The distinction between public opinion and government sentiment as well as the concern and care for public opinion is reflective of the liberal, democratic values expressed by the founders of the United States, and also foreshadows future calls for a democratic diplomacy, a diplomacy between the US government and the people of other nations, rather than other governments. The correlation between American political values and foreign public engagement helps to conceptualize public diplomacy, an idea developed further in the course of this study. Unfortunately, as the proceeding case demonstrates, the US government adopted a more “traditional” diplomatic practice. However, private American entities continued to engage with the people of other nations, as this study will reveal.

In addition to these key findings, this case sets out methods of engagement, which will be used again in forthcoming cases. The need to listen, to collect information about the people was more important to Franklin than interacting with the French government regularly. *Educational exchanges* played a vast role in not only telling people about the character of the US, but the contacts Franklin made through the Republic of Letters were instrumental to the American Revolution's success. Philosophers, artists, poets, musicians, and printers throughout Europe offered their assistance to Franklin in varying ways. Often these contacts acted as couriers for letters and news from the colonies; sometimes these contacts offered access to people in government or much-needed supplies. For Franklin, engaging the French public was the only means of obtaining what the United States needed: ready money and supplies. Most of the contacts who Franklin regularly interacted and corresponded with during his time in France provided some conduit for him to obtain these items. Lavoisier, Le Roy, Dumas, Jacques-Donatien Le Ray de Chaumont (Franklin's landlord), and others were all connected to Franklin's work as an eminent scientist and respected philosopher as well as having connections to the *ferme générale* and the French government. Chaumont and Le Roy helped Franklin establish connections with European merchants willing to ship uniforms and weapons to French ports and onward to America.¹⁰⁶

These same contacts were also instrumental to US *advocacy* and *international broadcasting*. With the help of Dumas, Arrenberg, and La Rochefoucauld, Franklin was able to take founding documents of the United States and use them to supplement current news from the colonies. This technique of using official documents and officials' words to advocate the US position, in place of or alongside current news, is utilized in the course of American foreign public engagement in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The foreign public engagement of Benjamin Franklin sets the foundation for the future development of American public diplomacy as a tool of statecraft.

Proceeding cases will build upon and echo some of the issues highlighted in this chapter. Patterns emerge in this case and continue to run through the following five chapters. One major theme, communication, manifests in three different ways in this study: First, communication problems impacting the correspondence between US representatives abroad and policymakers in the US due to limited communication technology; second, the unwillingness of US leaders to heed reports

from those serving abroad; and third, the awareness by US leaders and private citizens of the need to communicate with people abroad to preserve the reputation of America around the world. In this instance, both communication technology and neglect by the Continental Congress to consider Franklin's reports impacted engagement in France. Additionally, this case demonstrates recognition by American representatives of the need to communicate with the public of another nation as a way to represent itself, the nation's policies, and to maintain its image. Another theme is the consistency of the methods used by Franklin to engage the French public. Future cases will feature similar methods of engagement.

And finally, the case exposed the roots of one of the three interconnected issues impacting US public diplomacy today. Benjamin Franklin believed the liberal ideals upon which the United States was founded would serve to attract people around the world to settle in the US. He advocated for the United States using these values when current information from the Continental Congress was unavailable. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, US leaders and citizens believed nothing further was required to advocate America because the nation's liberal, democratic values were enough to secure peace and friendship with the world. As the US matures and grows as a nation and the world changes, this passive attitude toward America's relationship with the world dissipates.

The following chapter will build upon some of the themes identified in this case, particularly problems caused by advances in communication capabilities as well as communication issues between Washington and US representatives abroad. Tied to this theme, the next case will look at the integration of engagement into statecraft as a means to inform policy. Another pattern will also be introduced in the next case with the first attempts at a public-private partnership to conduct engagement with people abroad.

NOTES

1. *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1965. Leonard W. Labaree, et al. (eds.). (Yale University Press: New Haven, CT). Vol. 8, p. 87.
2. Claude-Anne Lopez, 1990. *Mon Cher Papa: Franklin and the Ladies of Paris* (Yale University Press: New Haven, CT); Stacy Schiff, 2005. *A Great Improvisation: Franklin, France, and the Birth of America* (Owl Books, Henry Holt and Company, LLC: New York, NY).

3. A group of representatives sent to Philadelphia by each of the British American colonies between September 5 and October 26, 1774, initially to discuss a united response to the so-called Intolerable Acts or Coercive Acts. The Congress reconvened a second time in May 1775 and remained a de facto governing body of the colonies throughout the American Revolution.
4. Lopez 1990, p. 7.
5. John Adams autobiography, part 2, "Travels, and Negotiations," 1777–1778, sheet 26 of 37 [electronic edition]. Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>.
6. Gilbert Chinard, 1947. "Eighteenth Century Theories on America as a Human Habitat," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 91, pp. 27–57.
7. Several historians recount various perceptions of America which depict the land and the inhabitants of the American colonies as uncivilized, unintelligent, uninhabitable, and depraved (see James W. Ceaser, 2003. "A Genealogy of Anti-Americanism," *The Public Interest*, No 152; Sophie Meunier, March 2005. "Anti-Americanisms in France," Princeton University, Accessed April 25, 2013. <http://ducis.jhfc.duke.edu/wp-content/uploads/archive/documents/Meunier.pdf>; and Chinard (1947). Muenier's work focuses on the evolution of French anti-American perceptions up through the present, while Ceaser outlines five periods which recount the origins, changes, and the movement of anti-American ideas throughout time and across the world. Chinard explains that by the mid-seventeenth century much of the hopes that the New World inspired in Europe faded with the realities of the difficult climates and failures of the colonies to be a valuable investment for raw materials.
8. Examples of Franklin explaining about life in the American colonies can be found in the BFP collection. The collection includes second-hand accounts of conversations with Franklin which were later printed in Europe. Swedish botanist, Peter Kalm, spent several years traveling in North America, interviewing notable Americans of the period to include Franklin. Another example of this type of exchange is in a series of articles published in the spring of 1767 in the *Hannoverisches Magazin*. The series recounts an oral interview of Franklin on varying subjects including weather in the regions of the colonies, Native Americans, population growth, and general lifestyle of American colonists (BFP).
9. Chinard 1947, p. 28.
10. José Calvet de Magalhães, 1988. *The Pure Concept of Diplomacy* (Greenwood Press: New York); Harold Nicholson, 1963. *Diplomacy* (Oxford University Press: London).

11. J.S. Reeves, 1909. 'The Influence of the Law of Nations upon International Law in the United States', *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 3, p. 549.
12. T. Bickman, 2009. *Making Headlines: The American Revolution as Seen through the British Press* (Northern Illinois University Press: Dekalb, Illinois); Jon Cowans, 2001. *To Speak for the People: Public Opinion and the Problem of Legitimacy in the French Revolution* (Routledge: New York).
13. 2007, *Rebels Rising: Cities and the American Revolution* (Oxford University Press: USA), p. 173.
14. Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774–1789, ed. Worthington C. Ford et al. (Washington, D.C., 1904–1937), Vol. 1, p. 43.
15. Lawrence S. Kaplan, 1975. *Colonies into Nation: American Diplomacy 1763–1801* (MacMillan Company: New York); Paul A. Varg, 1963. *Foreign Policies of the Founding Fathers* (Michigan State University Press: Michigan).
16. *JCC*, 1:50; *JCC* 2:79–80, 110; Smith, Paul H., et al., eds. *Letters of Delegates to Congress, 1774–1789*, Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1976–2000), Vol 1: pp. 175–179.
17. *BFP* 1978, William Wilcox, et. al (eds.). (Yale University Press: New Haven, CT). Vol. 21:155 and 214.
18. *BFP* 21:495–497.
19. *JCC*, 2:253–254.
20. *JCC*, 3:392.
21. Jonathan R. Dull, 1982. 'Franklin the Diplomat: the French Mission', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 72.
22. *BFP* 1982, William Wilcox, et. al (eds.). (Yale University Press: New Haven, CT). Vol. 22:287.
23. Ed Crews, 2004. "Spies and Scouts, Secret Writing, and Sympathetic Citizens." In *Colonial Williamsburg Journal*. <http://www.history.org/foundation/journal/summer04/spies.cfm>: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.
24. *JCC*, 6:1061–1068.
25. Charles Francis Adams (ed.), 1856. *The Works of John Adams, Second President of the United States: with a Life of the Author* (Little, Brown and Co.: Boston). Vol. 3.
26. *Ibid*, Vol. 3, p. 31.
27. *JCC* 5:431.
28. *JCC* 5:575–589.
29. *JCC* 5:813–817.
30. *BFP* 1982, William Wilcox, et. al (eds.). (Yale University Press: New Haven, CT). Vol. 22:624, emphasis added.
31. Samuel Flagg Bemis, 1957. *The Diplomacy of the American Revolution* (Indiana University Press: Indiana, USA).
32. Dull 1982.

33. Bemis 1957; Schiff 2005.
34. Beaumarchais sent many letters to Vergennes describing different schemes and providing reasons to support the American colonies. Whether out of annoyance or due to his own persistence, Beaumarchais did manage to get Vergennes to take his idea to King Louis XVI to provide covert funds and supplies to the American colonies. Against the guidance of Turgot, the *contrôleur-général des finances*, and Jean-Frédéric Phélypeaux, Count of Maurepas, the minister of state, King Louis agreed to grant secret funds and send supplies to the Americans using Beaumarchais as a cutout agent (Bemis 1957; Schiff 2005).
35. Bemis 1957, p. 24.
36. Bemis 1957.
37. Franklin and Robert Morris's reason for keeping Thomas Story's information secret from even the Continental Congress was their concern that the agreement by the French government to provide monetary assistance might be made public. "As the Court of France have taken Measures to Negotiate this loan and succour in the most cautious and Secret Manner, shou'd [*sic*] we divulge it immediately, we may not only loose the present benefit, but also render that Court Cautious of any further Connection with such unguarded People and prevent their granting other Loans and assistance that we stand in need of..." (*BFP* 22:636).
38. *BFP* 22:636, emphasis added.
39. *BFP* 1983, William Wilcox, et. al (eds.). (Yale University Press: New Haven, CT). Vol. 23:113.
40. Schiff 2005.
41. *BFP* 23:82 and 124; Schiff 2005.
42. *BFP* 23:164.
43. Schiff 2005, p. 48.
44. Adams 1856, Vols. 1–3; Schiff 2005.
45. Lopez 1990.
46. *BFP* 23:28.
47. Historians looking at Franklin's time as a printer and newspaperman note his acute awareness of public opinion (F.B. Adams, April 1956. "Franklin and His Press at Passy," *The Yale University Library Gazette*, Vol. 30; Bemis 1957; J.A. Leo Lemay, 2006. *The Life of Benjamin Franklin: Volume I, Journalist, 1706–1730* (University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia)). Franklin himself makes many observations and remarks regarding public opinion and his ability to both gauge public opinion as well as alter it in his Autobiography (1904. *The Works of Benjamin Franklin Including the Private as well as the Official and Scientific Correspondence Together with the*

- Unmutilated and Correct Version of the Autobiography* In, edited by John Bigelow. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.).
48. Bemis 1957, p. 49.
 49. John Adams autobiography, part 2, "Travels, and Negotiations," 1777–1778, sheet 26 of 37 [electronic edition]. *Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive*. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>.
 50. Upon arriving in France, Franklin received an anonymous memorandum from a French person explaining the current dynamics in France. The anonymous writer observed that governments in Europe almost always cede to the general interest and that America's cause of liberty has the general interest of the people of France. Franklin marked the memorandum in his own hand "Good advice" (*BFP*, 23:104). In the fall of 1777, Franklin writes to Dr. Dubourg to vent about the hundreds of commission requests he continued to receive (*BFP*, 1986, William Wilcox, et. al (eds.). (Yale University Press: New Haven, CT). Vol. 25:20).
 51. Jack R. Censor and Jeremy D. Popkin (ed.), 1987. *Press and Politics in Pre-Revolutionary France* (University of California Press: Berkley); Cowans 2001; Robert Darnton, 1982. *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press); Schiff 2005.
 52. A fervent supporter of the American colonies. Her salon hosted Adam Smith, Turgot, and Franklin. She introduced her son, Louis-Alexandre, duc de La Rochefoucauld, and de la Roche-Guyon, to Franklin who would play an important role in American advocacy and international broadcasting.
 53. Widow of French philosopher, Claude Adrien Helvétius, and patron of arts and sciences. Diderot, Condorcet, Raynal, and Turgot frequented her salon.
 54. An accomplished musician and composer and neighbor of Franklin while he stayed at Passy. She helped edit Franklin's *Bagatelles* and composed a song, *Marche des Insurgents*, in honour of the American victory at Saratoga.
 55. Lopez 1990; Schiff 2005.
 56. Adams 1856, 3:139.
 57. Adams 1856, 3:189.
 58. Adams 1856, 3:138.
 59. *BFP* 23:113; 23:194; 23:466; 24:514.
 60. *BFP* 23:31.
 61. René Sigrist, 2009. "Scientific Networks and Frontiers in the Golden Age of Academics (1700–1830)." in Jürgen Barkhoff and Helmut Eberhart (eds.), *Networking across Borders and Frontiers, Demarcation and Connectedness in European Culture and Society* (Peter Lang: Frankfurt), p. 40.
 62. Sigrist 2009, p. 57.
 63. Sigrist, 2009, p. 45.

64. 2005, p. 369.
65. J.A. Leo Lemay, 2008. *The Life of Benjamin Franklin: Volume III, Soldier, Scientist, & Politician, 1748–1757* (University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia).
66. J.L. Heilbron, 2007. “Benjamin Franklin in Europe: Electrician, Academician, Politician,” *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, Vol. 61.
67. B.R. Gossick June–September 1964. “Benjamin Franklin, Scientist,” *Education, IEEE Transactions on*, Vol. 7.
68. A glass jar device used to study static electricity in the eighteenth century.
69. Schiff 2005, pp. 2–3.
70. While Franklin served as a commissioner in France, King George III and the Privy Council commissioned the Royal Society to determine whether blunted or pointed lightning rods were better at protecting structures from lightning strikes. The investigation divided scientists within the Royal Society along political lines—those who sympathized with America and those who did not (Heilbron 2007). Franklin refused to become involved in the debate, but stuck by his own conclusion that a pointed rod was better than a blunted rod. “The connection between politics and science...had an immediate parallel in real life in England in fight between royalists and Franklinists over the shape of lightening rods” (Heilbron 2007; pp. 364–365). Franklin was aware of how his position as both an American and serving American commissioner created divisions between himself and his colleagues in the Royal Society. In some of his letters to David Hartley, British scientist and a member of Parliament, he explains how he avoided writing him simply because he did not wish to cause trouble for his friend (*BFP*, 25:64).
71. Jan Ingenhousz worked as the personal physician to Joseph II and Maria Theresa of Austria.
72. *BFP* 23:7.
73. *BFP* 23:310.
74. *BFP* 23:613.
75. Le Roy was also a well-regarded scientist interested in hygiene and ventilation in hospitals, and shared an interest in electricity with Franklin. He was the director of the royal laboratory in Passy near where Franklin resided while serving as an American minister. Turgot was the former *controleur general* of King Louis XVI’s council.
76. *BFP* 1986, William Wilcox, et. al (eds.). (Yale University Press: New Haven, CT). Vol. 24:142; 24:210.
77. French 1979; The *ferme générale* was a syndicate of tax “farmers” who were contracted by the French government to collect taxes by leasing

- the land. The syndicate paid the government a fixed rent or share of revenue for the bail or the lease of the right to collect taxes (Eugene N. White, 2004. "From privatised to government-administered tax collection: tax farming in eighteenth-century France," *Economic History Review*, Vol. 57, p. 640).
78. *BFP*, 23:328; 23:388; *BFP* 1997, Barbara B. Oberg, et. al (eds.). (Yale University Press: New Haven, CT). Vol. 33:486.
 79. *BFP* 23:50, emphasis added.
 80. *BFP* 23:466, emphasis added.
 81. A letter from CSC to American Commissioners, Feb 2, 1777, explains that the heavy presence of British cruisers prohibits more frequent communication, but also complains about the lack of information and supplies from Europe. The American Commissioners write to the CSC on February 6, 1777, to complain about having no way to refute "*the false news*" spread by the British all over Europe (*BFP* 23:285). On March 4 and 12, 1777, the commissioners write again to the CSC asking for current information from America. Several months after the commissioners established a packet service, the commissioners write to the Committee for Foreign Affairs (previously the CSC) on September 8, 1777, again asking for current information and saying they had received no correspondence from the committee for some months, though the committee had written several letters between March and August. In one of the letters from the committee dated May 30, 1777, they indicated they did not receive the dispatches sent via the packet ship.
 82. *BFP*, 23:285, emphasis added.
 83. *BFP* 23:339; General George Washington attempted to push the British out of New York by launching attacks at Trenton (December 26, 1776) and Princeton (January 3, 1777). In both the Battles of Trenton and Princeton, most of the casualties were Hessian soldiers under British command.
 84. *BFP* 23:339.
 85. *BFP* 23:522;25: 327.
 86. *BFP* 24:6.
 87. Paul Leicester Ford, 1889. 'Affaires de l'Angleterre et de l'Amérique', *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 13; Given France's policy stance in late 1776, Vergennes's actions seem to contradict policy. However, Vergennes was influenced more by his own feelings, decidedly anti-British and eager to right the wrongs of the Seven Years' War. Vergennes also saw the American Revolution as an opportunity to raise France's world power status. Though official French support of the USA was not possible, he hoped that by galvanizing the public's opinion he might persuade the other members of the King's

- Council to favor more direct involvement (Bemis 1957 p. 43, 45, 50; John Hardman, 1995. *French Politics 1774–1789: From the accession of Louis XVI to the fall of the Bastille* (Longman: London), p. 168).
88. Ford 1889; Durand Echevarria, 1953. “French Publications of the Declaration of Independence and the American Constitutions, 1776–1783,” *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, Vol. 47: 313–338.
 89. Ford 1889, p. 222, emphasis added.
 90. Laura Anne Bédard, 1986. “Les Affaires de l’Angleterre et de l’Amérique”: A French Journal Covering the American Revolution from France,” University of Maryland; Echevarria 1953; Ford 1889.
 91. Echevarria 1953 p. 316.
 92. Bédard 1986; Lemay 2006.
 93. Bédard 1986.
 94. Bédard 1986, p. 81.
 95. *BFP* 23:459.
 96. *BFP* 23:459, emphasis added.
 97. Anne Marie Mercier-Faivre, 2012. “Presentation of the Leiden Gazette,” *European newspapers of 18th century*, Accessed October 10, 2013. <http://www.gazettes18e.fr/gazette-leyde>.
 98. *BFP* 24:68; 23:339.
 99. *BFP* 24:71.
 100. *BFP* 24:134, 25:317, *BFP* 1987, William Wilcox, et. al (eds.). (Yale University Press: New Haven, CT). Vol. 26:568.
 101. For example, Franklin received a letter from Thomas Walpole, dated February 1, 1777, where he complains about the lack of engagement from America to explain their position to the British. “All those who are friends to both Countrys [*sic*] think they have much reason to complain of the neglect with which they have been treated by America, in not having been made acquainted in some authentick [*sic*] manner with her real views and circumstances at the opening of this unhappy rupture, nor with a true representation of the events which have followed. The want of which advices it is thought has not been less prejudicial to the reputation of America in the eyes of the rest of Europe than in the public opinion here, as the friends of both Countrys [*sic*] have thus been deprived of all means of refuting the tales which have been imposed on the world by the artifice of Administration and which have principally contributed to the delusion of the people of England” (*BFP* 23:264). Also, Georges Grand, writes from Amsterdam on February 27, 1777, “...it is important that [for] your Interests You sent me all the good news you would receive to insert for [the] paper in Dutch and French

[to] support for Your Credit, and maintain the will of spirits in this country...” (*BFP 23:393*).

102. In one report to the CSC, Franklin reported on the unprofessional behavior of Mr. Merkle, a commercial contracts agent working for the CC at Bourdeaux. Franklin wrote “...his Character is marked for low Debauchery incompatible with the Gentleman or the Man of Business. Persons of such a Character giving themselves out for Agents of Congress and producing Contracts in support of their Pretensions, hurt the Commercial reputation of the United States, and can be of no service in any shape whatever” (*BFP 23:421*).
103. CSC to American Commissioners, *BFP 24:12*, emphasis added.
104. CSC to American Commissioners, *BFP 23:50*.
105. *BFP 24:8*, emphasis added.
106. Lopez 1964; Schiff 2005.



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