they can either do without or make themselves." Shortly after peace with England was signed he asked from Paris: "Is not the Hope of one day being able to purchase and enjoy Luxuries a great Spur to Labour and Industry? . . . without such a Spur People would be, as they are naturally enough inclined to be, lazy and indolent." Franklin's lead essay in the first issue of Mathew Carey's *American Museum* assaulted the thesis that the United States must remain wholly agricultural and dependent for its manufactures on imports. He was, in other words, hardly an agrarian idealist.[36]

Franklin's inconsistent statements on the future of manufacturing in republican America, which were quite typical of the revolutionary generation, betray his inner conflict over the question of encouraging the forbidden transfer of industrial technology. The moralist who associated industrial production with oppressive exploitation of England's poor inhabitants was an unlikely advocate of introducing a similar order to the New World. The patriot who believed American economic and political independence was contingent upon weaning itself from its dependence on British industrial production, however, opposed emigration restrictions and favored the introduction of technologies that were likely to make the young nation self-sufficient.[37] The abundance of land in America mediated between these conflicting approaches. Americans would not be forced to pile on top of one another in inhumane urban conditions because men could always opt for the life of independent yeomen. The transfer of manufacturing technology could thus ensure the country's economic independence without the risk of emulating the horrible conditions in England's industrial towns.

Without prosperity the confederation that defeated the British Empire could disintegrate. Imaginary bucolic fantasies aside, Franklin realized that the republican model was inherently counterdevelopmental. He understood that the civic construction of American identity depended on a political economy balanced between agriculture, commerce, and industry. Since the newly independent nation did not have the know-how and machinery to compete with British industry, America had to import them from Europe. Franklin's next great national assignment as the preeminent representative of the independent United States in Europe placed him at the axis of the politics and diplomacy of technology diffusion.



## The Besieged Diplomat

Franklin's American stay between his missions to London and Paris was brief. On September 26, 1776, he was appointed to a three-man delegation headed for Europe to negotiate commercial agreements with European powers. Shortly thereafter, with the war going poorly for the American rebels, Franklin was put in charge of securing the diplomatic and military alliance of France. The Revolution transformed his work on behalf of American technology from a private concern into an important element in the colonies' struggle for independence. Indeed, one of the first things Franklin did in his new capacity was to request engineering assistance for the American war effort.[38]

Independence heightened the importance of closing the technology gap. Patriots warned that "if America is to be wholly indebted to any foreign loom, we may be allowed to exclaim—adieu to the religion! farewell the liberties of our country."[39] One of the richest men in America, Charles Carroll of Maryland, asked Franklin in 1777 to devote his energy to promoting artisanal migration. Military and economic hardship called for skilled migrants who could strengthen the colonies' economy and help them sever their dependence on the Empire. Franklin replied that Carroll "can have no Conception of the Numbers that apply to me with that View; and who would go over if I could assist them." Franklin explained that if a national consensus about the usefulness of such a measure was reached, "and