# Redefining the Seal's Use

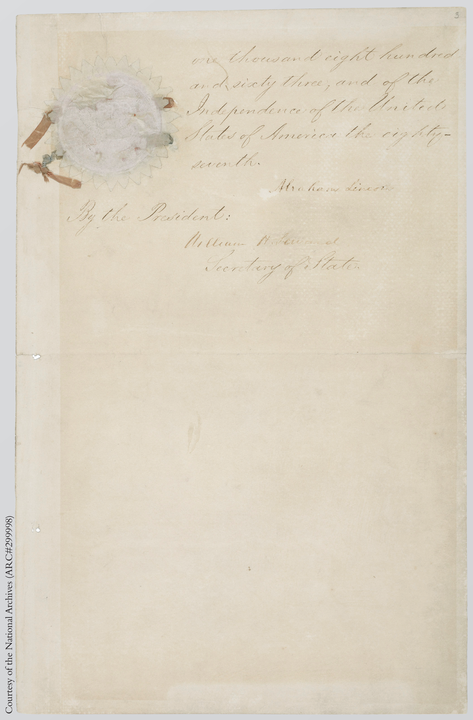
As the government grew and expanded along with the territory and population of the United States, the use of the Seal also changed. New government bureaus created their own seals. An expanding diplomatic corps required faster processing of papers. Streamlining removed Seals on warrants for fugitives from U.S. justice or Presidential pardons. Presidents Grover Cleveland, Richard Nixon and Lyndon B. Johnson issued Executive Orders to cease use of the Seal on certain documents.

No matter what changes have taken place, the President and Secretary of State must first sign all documents before the Seal is affixed.

## EXAMPLES OF DOCUMENTS NO LONGER REQUIRING THE GREAT SEAL

### Presidential Proclamations

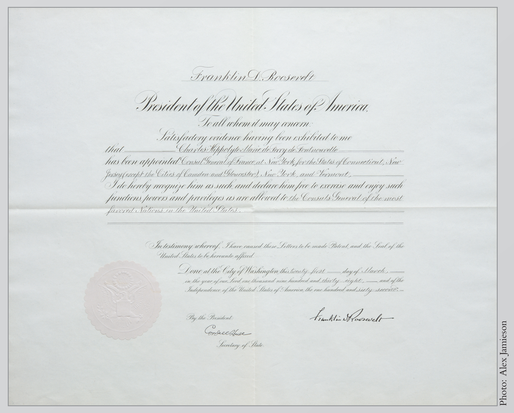
The Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, which addressed complex issues of slavery during the Civil War, is one of the best known proclamations of our nation's history.



Courtesy of the National Archives (ARC#299998)

### Exequaturs

The exequatur here is an example of a document that U.S. presidents issued in the past to foreign consular officials to conduct business in our country. As of 1971 this document is no longer required. A consul to the U.S. only needs a diplomatic note from his or her country requesting recognition from the U.S.



Photos: Alex Jamieson

This exequatur, signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1938, authorized the French consul general in New York City, Charles de Ferry de Fontnouvelle, to conduct diplomatic business for France in the U.S.

The Emancipation Proclamation (left) bears the signatures of President Abraham Lincoln and Secretary of State William H. Seward on its fifth and last page along with an imprint of the Great Seal.

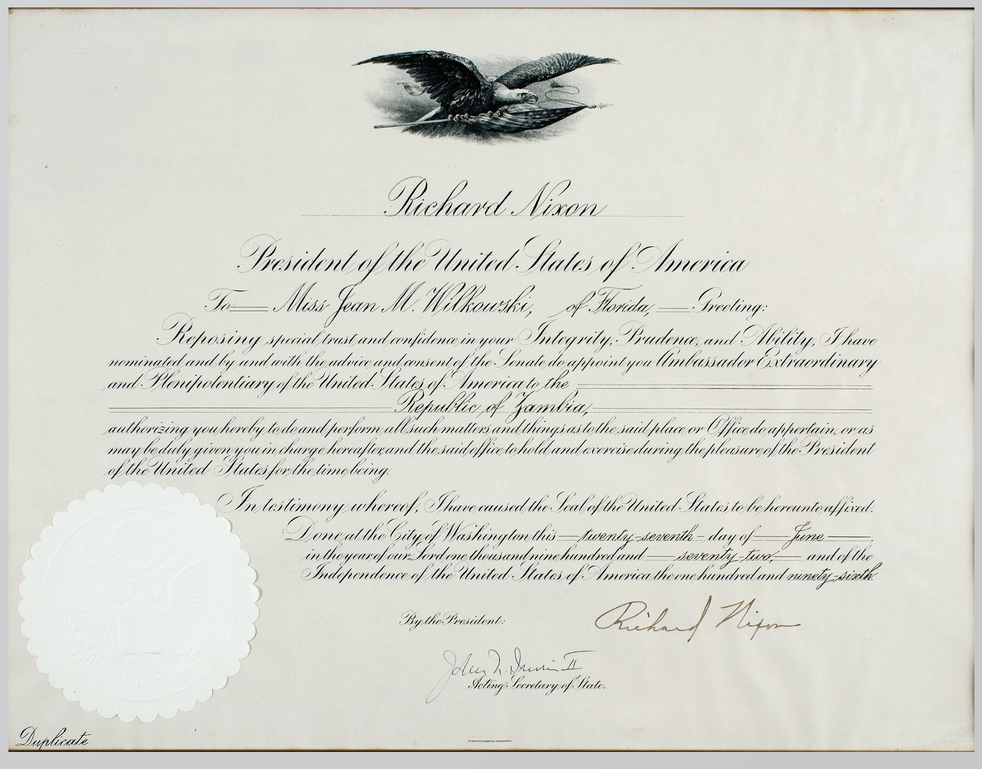
### Diplomatic Envelopes

The Great Seal also appears on the envelopes that contain letters of credence [credentials] and recall and other ceremonial communications from the President to heads of foreign governments.

## EXAMPLES OF DOCUMENTS WHICH REQUIRE THE GREAT SEAL

### Commissions

Presidentially appointed officers receive commissions, official documents that grant the right to take office. Cabinet Officers, Heads of independent government agencies, Ambassadors, Foreign Service Officers and special envoys receive sealed commissions.



Richard Nixon

President of the United States of America

To Miss Jean M. Wilkowski, of Florida, Greeting:

Reposing special trust and confidence in your Integrity, Prudence, and Ability, I have nominated and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate do appoint you Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Zambia

authorizing you hereby to do and perform all such matters and things as to the said place or Office do appertain, or as may be duly given you in charge hereafter, and the said office to hold and exercise during the pleasure of the President of the United States for the time being.

In testimony whereof, I have caused the Seal of the United States to be hereunto affixed.

Done at the City of Washington this twenty-seventh day of June in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and seventy-two and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and ninety-sixth

By the President: Richard Nixon

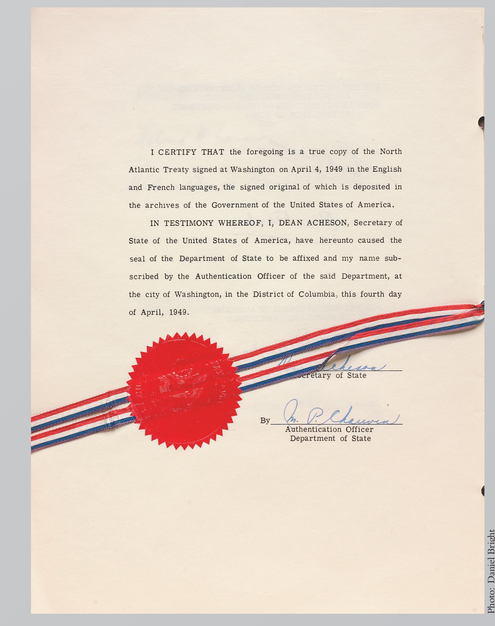
Alexander M. Haig, Jr.
Acting Secretary of State

Duplicate

This is a copy of the commission that Ambassador Jean Wilkowski received from President Nixon upon her appointment as Ambassador to Zambia in 1972. She was the first female ambassador from the U.S. to serve in Africa.

### Ratified Treaties

This is an image of an authentic copy of the ratified NATO Treaty, signed by representatives of 12 countries in 1949.



I CERTIFY THAT the foregoing is a true copy of the North Atlantic Treaty signed at Washington on April 4, 1949 in the English and French languages, the signed original of which is deposited in the archives of the Government of the United States of America.

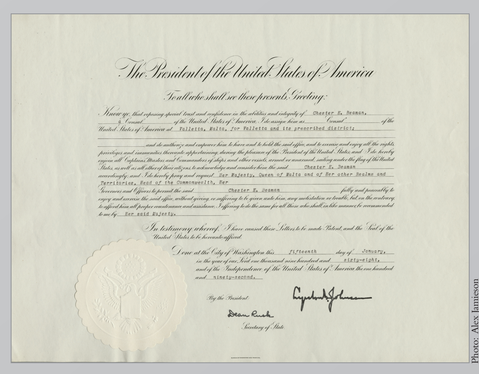
IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I, DEAN ACHESON, Secretary of State of the United States of America, have hereunto caused the seal of the Department of State to be affixed and my name subscribed by the Authentication Officer of the said Department, at the city of Washington, in the District of Columbia, this fourth day of April, 1949.

Secretary of State

By
Authentication Officer
Department of State

Photos: Daniel Bright

Chester E. Beaman received this consular assignment commission in 1968, as U.S. Consul at Valletta, Malta. President Lyndon Johnson and Secretary of State Dean Rusk signed it.

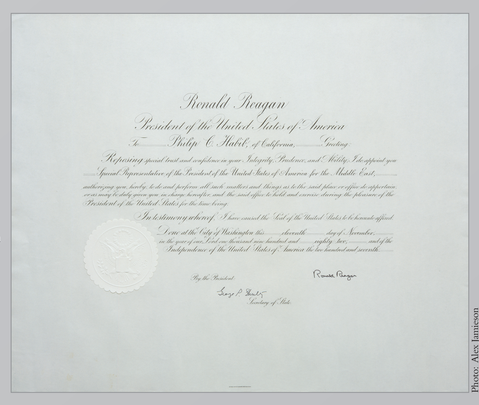


The President of the United States of America

To all to whom shall come these presents, Greeting:

Photos: Alex Jamieson

Ambassador Phillip Habib received this commission in 1982 as a Special Representative of the President of the United States for the Middle East. President Ronald Reagan and Secretary of State George P. Shultz signed it. Ambassador Habib's outstanding contribution to the peace effort won him the Medal of Freedom from President Reagan.



Ronald Reagan

President of the United States of America

To Philip C. Habib, of California, Greeting:

Photos: Alex Jamieson