



# Tripoli

Located in North Africa on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, Tripoli has been populated since at least the 7th century BCE. Tripoli came under the control of the Ottoman Empire in 1551. Tripoli paid a yearly tax to the Ottoman rulers, but was otherwise independent. The “Dey,” or governor of Tripoli, could make his own decisions in all matters related to other countries.

Tripoli relied heavily on corsairing to fund the state. Corsairing provided money through selling captured ships and their cargo. The crew of a captured ship could be ransomed for money or put to labor in the city. The government of Tripoli received a percentage of this money and also sponsored its own corsairs. Corsairing also provided money through treaties. In these agreements, a country paid Tripoli money (called a tribute) to stop Tripoli corsairs from capturing that country’s ships. While corsairing was an important way to fund the state, Tunis was open to new ways of generating revenue.

In 1794, Tripoli had treaty agreements with several countries including Great Britain and France, but did not have a treaty with the United States. To Tripoli, the United States was not nearly as intimidating as Great Britain or France as it had no navy to threaten war. The United States was also a new country and the ability of the United States to reliably pay tributes is uncertain. Tripoli also wanted to strengthen its navy and sought naval supplies such as wood planks, oars, bales of canvas, nails, cables, pipe staves, rope, bombshells, and gunpowder. In addition to these supplies, Tripoli was interested in trade goods that the United States produced like indigo and cochineal, two products used to dye cloth. The United States could provide these as part of a possible treaty agreement.

## Opening Position:

- Will sign a treaty agreement to end corsairs capturing U.S. ships for money or naval supplies.
- Interested in exploring new ways to generate revenue through trade routes.

## Questions to Consider:

- What does Tripoli hope to gain in a possible treaty with the United States?
- What is the possible risk of war with the United States or its allies?

## What can Tripoli negotiate with?

*Remember that you don’t have to offer these right away in a negotiation.*

- Agree to not capture any U.S. ships in the future
- Access to foreign markets.