International relations among states is a **broad and complex topic** both for countries engaged in relationships with other nations, and for **observers** trying to understand those interactions. These relationships depend and may be influenced to a great extent **by the art of diplomacy**. Diplomacy is ‘the art of conducting international negotiations’. Nation-states, through authorized agents, **maintain mutual relations**, communicate with each other and carry out political, economic and legal **transactions**. Diplomacy as a uniform system based on generally-accepted rules and **directed by diplomatic hierarchy** with a fixed international status is of quite modern growth. The history of diplomacy **dates back** to ancient times when **tribes, city-states** and other communities sought ways of establishing relations with one another.

It is well known that the tradition leading to the present world system of international relations originated in ancient Greece. The Greeks developed a diplomatic vocabulary, principles of international conduct and elements of international law. Here already existed an international system of **multilateral diplomacy**.

In the XV-XVI centuries the French system of diplomacy began to **emerge** and dominate international relations. Diplomacy was then a **game of wits** played in a narrow circle, and etiquette took a huge amount of time. The “**haute diplomacy**” appeared with its **exquisite politeness**, conducted with an utter **disregard** of the ordinary standards of morality. For the management of foreign affairs royal secretaries were appointed in France, England and Spain who were considered as the **forerunners** of the modern embassies. France was the first European state to establish a modern Foreign Ministry in 1626. In 1720, Russia acquired its own Ministry, when Peter the Great created College of Foreign Affairs.

The French diplomacy developed several key features of contemporary diplomacy – resident ambassadors, the art of conducting **secret negotiations**, ceremonial duties and **protocols**.

Until the 1970s, the study of international relations and diplomacy centered mainly on **international security studies** – i.e. questions of war and peace. Scholars believed that a nation’s military power was the most important characteristic in determining how that nation would relate to others, **alliances** and diplomacy between nations and what strategies nations used to protect their territories and to further their own interests.

Since the 1970s, the role and importance of diplomacy in international relations has grown and scholars believe that the primary force driving the interaction between nations is economic, not military.