**UNIT II**

**GLIMPSE ON THE HISTORY OF DIPLOMACY**

### 1. Ancient Egypt, Canaan, and Hittite Empire

Some of the earliest known diplomatic records are the Amarna letters written between the pharaohs of the Eighteenth dynasty of Egypt and the Amurru rulers of Canaan during the 14th century BC. Following the Battle of Kadesh in *c*. 1274 BC during the Nineteenth dynasty, the pharaoh of Egypt and ruler of the Hittite Empire created one of the first known international peace treaties which survives in stone tablet fragments.

**2. Classical Greece**

The Greek City States on some occasions sent envoys to each other in order to negotiate specific issues, such as war and peace or commercial relations, but did not have diplomatic representatives regularly posted in each other's territory. However, some of the functions given to modern diplomatic representatives were in Classical Greece filled by a proxenos, who was a citizen of the host city having a particular relations of friendship with another city – a relationship often hereditary in a particular family.

**3. Europe**

The ability to practice diplomacy is one of the defining elements of a state. As noted above, diplomacy has been practiced since the first city-states were formed millennia ago in ancient Greece. For most of human history diplomats were sent only for specific negotiations, and would return immediately after their mission concluded. Diplomats were usually relatives of the ruling family or of very high rank in order to give them legitimacy when they sought to negotiate with the other state.

One notable exception involved the relationship between the Pope and the Byzantine Emperor; papal agents, called *apocrisiarii* were permanently resident in Constantinople. After the 8th century, however, conflicts between the Pope and Emperor (such as the Iconoclastic controversy) led to the breaking of close ties.

The origins of diplomacy lie in the strategic and competitive exchange of impressive gifts, which may be traced to the Bronze Age and recognized as an aspect of Homeric guest-friendship. Thus diplomacy and trade have been inexorably linked from the outset. "In the framework of diplomatic relations it was customary for Byzantine emperors and Muslim rulers, especially the 'Abbāsids and the Fātimids, as well as for Muslim rulers between themselves, to exchange precious gifts, with which they attempted to impress or surpass their counterparts," remarks David Jacoby, in the context of the economics of silk in cultural exchange among Byzantium, Islam and the Latin West: merchants accompanied emissaries, who often traveled on commercial ships. At a later date, it will be recalled that the English adventurer and trader Anthony Sherley convinced the Persian ruler to send the first Persian embassy to Europe (1599–1602).

**4. Roots of modern diplomacy**

Early modern diplomacy's origins are often traced to the states of Northern Italy in the early Renaissance, with the first embassies being established in the thirteenth century. Milan played a leading role, especially under Francesco Sforza who established permanent embassies to the other city states of Northern Italy. Tuscany and Venice were also flourishing centers of diplomacy from the 1300s onwards. It was in the Italian Peninsula that many of the traditions of modern diplomacy began, such as the presentation of an ambassador's credentials to the head of state.

From Italy the practice was spread to other European regions. Milan was the first to send a representative to the court of France in 1455. However, Milan refused to host French representatives fearing espionage and that the French representatives would intervene in its internal affairs. As foreign powers such as France and Spain became increasingly involved in Italian politics the need to accept emissaries was recognized. Soon the major European powers were exchanging representatives. Spain was the first to send a permanent representative; it appointed an ambassador to the Court of England in 1487. By the late 16th century, permanent missions became customary. The Holy Roman Emperor, however, did not regularly send permanent legates, as they could not represent the interests of all the German princes (who were in theory all subordinate to the Emperor, but in practice each independent).

During that period the rules of modern diplomacy were further developed. The top rank of representatives was an ambassador. At that time an ambassador was a nobleman, the rank of the noble assigned varying with the prestige of the country he was delegated to. Strict standards developed for ambassadors, requiring they have large residences, host lavish parties, and play an important role in the court life of their host nation. In Rome, the most prized posting for a Catholic ambassador, the French and Spanish representatives would have a retinue of up to a hundred. Even in smaller posts, ambassadors were very expensive. Smaller states would send and receive envoys, who were a rung below ambassador. Somewhere between the two was the position of minister plenipotentiary.

Diplomacy was a complex affair, even more so than now. The ambassadors from each state were ranked by complex levels of precedence that were much disputed. States were normally ranked by the title of the sovereign; for Catholic nations the emissary from the Vatican was paramount, then those from the kingdoms, then those from duchies and principalities. Representatives from republics were ranked the lowest (which often angred the leaders of the numerous German, Scandinavian and Italian republics). Determining precedence between two kingdoms depended on a number of factors that often fluctuated, leading to near-constant squabbling.

French diplomat Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord is considered one of the most skilled diplomats of all time.

Ambassadors, nobles with little foreign experience and no expectation of a career in diplomacy, needed to be supported by large embassy staff. These professionals would be sent on longer assignments and would be far more knowledgeable than the higher-ranking officials about the host country. Embassy staff would include a wide range of employees, including some dedicated to espionage. The need for skilled individuals to staff embassies was met by the graduates of universities, and this led to a great increase in the study of international law, modern languages, and history at universities throughout Europe.



At the same time, permanent foreign ministries began to be established in almost all European states to coordinate embassies and their staffs. These ministries were still far from their modern form, and many of them had extraneous internal responsibilities. Britain had two departments with frequently overlapping powers until 1782. They were also far smaller than they are currently. France, which boasted the largest foreign affairs department, had only some 70 full-time employees in the 1780s.

The elements of modern diplomacy slowly spread to Eastern Europe and Russia, arriving by the early eighteenth century. The entire edifice would be greatly disrupted by the French Revolution and the subsequent years of warfare. The revolution would see commoners take over the diplomacy of the French state, and of those conquered by revolutionary armies. Ranks of precedence were abolished. Napoleon also refused to acknowledge diplomatic immunity, imprisoning several British diplomats accused of scheming against France.

After the fall of Napoleon, the Congress of Vienna of 1815 established an international system of diplomatic rank. Disputes on precedence among nations (and therefore the appropriate diplomatic ranks used) persisted for over a century until after World War II, when the rank of ambassador became the norm. In between that time, figures such as the German Chancellor Otto von Bismark were renowned for international diplomacy.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

1. Fill in the blanks in each definition with the suitable word or expression:

Envoy, a city-state, proxenos , apocrisiarii, creditial, espionage, minister plenipotentiary

1…….is a region controlled exclusively by be a city (in ancient Greece — Athens, Sparta )

2……is a high diplomatic representative during late Antiquity and the early Medieval period.

3…..is a messenger sent on a special mission, a diplomat agent next in rank bellow an ambassador.

4. In Classical Greece a …..was a citizen (usually rich) of a particular city-state who felt friendship towards another city and voluntary took up some of the role fulfilled in modern states by Consuls. He would use Whatever influence he had in his own city to promote policies of friendship or alliance with the city he voluntarily represented.

5……is a person who has “full powers”

6….is a practice of obtaining information that is considered secret or confident without permission of the holder of the information.

7…is an attestation of qualification, competence, or authority issued to an individual by a third party. (presentation of letters directly from the issuer detailing its faith in the person representing them in a negotiation or meeting).