**" To what extent has Diplomacy and the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations contributed to a consolidation of 'International Society' and the maintenance of International Order? ”**

Diplomacy is the established method of conducting negotiations and managing international relations between states or other non-state actors in order to allow for cooperation, and resolve disputes. It also allows the advancement of interests without resorting to violence or war. Diplomacy is important as it plays a significant role in maintaining peace through dialogue, arbitration as well as negotiation. It strengthens collaboration among nations as they handle global issues such as climate change. Diplomacy promotes economic interests as it facilitates trade agreements and promotes market access. An example may be, the diplomatic efforts created between the European Union and the African countries to promote development through partnerships.

The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961, is an international treaty that defines a framework for diplomatic relations between independent countries. It was developed during the Cold War when maintaining respectful diplomatic practices was critical to avoid conflicts. This was a legal framework that formalized rules for the following: establishing diplomatic missions, conducting diplomatic relations and protecting diplomats and the embassy staff. It was adopted on April 18, 1961, and has been ratified by 193 countries to date. The Vienna convention is important because it ensures that states can engage in dialogue and cooperation even during challenging times.

International society is a term that originates from the English School of International Relations, and it refers to a group of sovereign states bound by common norms, shared rules, and institutions. The concept was influenced by the growth of the diplomatic system in Europe after the 15th Century and the growth of international law in the 19th Century. The states in an international society adhere to shared principles which include: respect for sovereignty, non-intervention and peaceful dispute resolution. Examples of international societies include the United Nations and the Global Trade Agreements like the World Trade Organization. These are important because they promote rules and institutions that create predictability in international relations, also allow states to address issues such as terrorism, which are global and create cooperation among states despite differences in culture and ideology.

International order entails some level of regularity, predictability, and stability in the ways that the actors interact with each other. It is the structured pattern of relationships among states and non-state actors, which is maintained through shared norms, rules and institutions. International order ensures there is predictability and stability in global affairs. The norms are unwritten and may include sovereignty, non-aggression and peaceful dispute resolution. The modern international order began with the Treaty of Westphalia, and with the collapse of the Soviet Union, a unipolar order emerged, the Post-Cold War Order, which was dominated by the United states.

Diplomacy is important in international relations. Without diplomacy, the global community would lack the mechanisms necessary to manage the complexities of international relations. It is the channel through which states express their intentions and concerns to one another. Through diplomatic missions, ambassadors get to communicate effectively hence gaining mutual understanding in international relations. This mutual understanding is achieved through, negotiations, mediation of disputes and the signing of treaties. Diplomatic efforts can prevent the recurrence of violence and they lay the foundation for sustainable peace.

Diplomacy has evolved from Ancient Diplomacy, which can be traced back to ancient civilizations where the rulers sent envoys to negotiate peace, trade agreements and alliances, to the 21st- Century Diplomacy which is the modern diplomacy that is shaped by globalization and technological advancements. The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations was signed during the era of the 20th- Century Diplomacy. In this era, diplomatic practices were increasingly codified into International law to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts. The Vienna Convention formalized key principles of diplomacy, such as diplomatic immunity, privileges of embassies and diplomats and the inviolability of diplomatic missions. The signing of the Vienna Convention, was, therefore, a milestone in the modernization and institutionalization of diplomacy during the twentieth century’s evolving multilateral framework.

Diplomacy has contributed to international society, which I earlier stated that, refers to states, organizations or non-state actors which share common values, by establishing and promoting shared norms and values. The engagement in dialogue and negotiations resolves conflicts and manages disputes without resorting to war, and there is also the promotion of multilateral cooperation through institutions like the United Nations. It is significant in creating understanding and respect of shared norms such as sovereignty and the advocacy of global human rights.

Through diplomacy, trade agreements, such as market access which ensures that countries grant each other access to their markets for goods, services and investments, the European Single Market allows for free movement of goods, services and labor among the EU members are created hence creating economic ties between nations, there are cultural programs which encourage mutual understanding and solidarity. The creation of alliances forms a sense of dependency among states, and this results in solidarity and cooperation for a cohesive international community.

The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations was adopted on April 18, 1961 and entered into force on April 24, 1964. It is a treaty that governs diplomatic relations between countries. It has been adopted by 193 countries making it one of the most ratified international treaty. Before the Convention diplomatic relations were based on unwritten customs and traditions, leading to inconsistency and frequent violations, the treaty then provided a structured system to address these gaps and to ensure mutual respect between sovereign states.

Diplomatic immunity is a principle that was brought about by this treaty. It ensures that diplomats can perform their duties without interference from the host state. The diplomats are exempted from criminal jurisdiction, they cannot be arrested, detained or even prosecuted for criminal offenses in the host country, on the same hand, they are immune from lawsuits or administrative penalties. The host state can however declare a diplomat persona non grata, hence compelling them to leave the country. The sending state has the right to waiver a diplomat’s immunity in the event they are involved in serious crimes such as corruption. This principle simply protects diplomats from undue harassment or influence that could compromise their diplomatic mission.

Additionally, embassies are considered sovereign territories to the sending state. Host stares cannot enter embassies without the consent of sending states, they are protected from attacks or surveillance from the sending state, this makes it possible for diplomats to operate from secure and private offices. It has been beneficial, for example, during times of war, when embassies have served as safe havens for diplomats facilitating humanitarian efforts.

The Vienna Convention, also formalizes the procedures for establishing diplomatic relations, such as: the establishment and functioning of diplomatic missions, the resolution of disputes through peaceful means as well as the eradication of ambassadors. The persona non grata is a peaceful and diplomatic way of addressing misconduct and it helps minimize escalation of tensions between states.

The Vienna Convention made multiple contributions to international society. It has promoted mutual trust and cooperation between states, through the establishment of clear rules that must be followed by all stated when conducting diplomacy. Trust is important for effective communication and negotiation. An example is when, The U.S. and the Soviet Union, during the Cold War, used the Vienna Convention to provide the basis for peaceful diplomatic relations through embassies despite the high tensions that existed then. This trust-building aspect provided ground for understanding and preventing the escalation of conflicts.

In 1990 during the Gulf War, Kuwait respected the Convention when it allowed diplomats from foreign states to evacuate safely, and a current happening is when, during the 2023 crisis in Sudan, international efforts were employed in order to evacuate diplomats. These are illustrations to show that the Vienna Convention treaty helps to ensure that diplomatic relations continue despite wars, conflicts, and political instabilities. The Convention obligates the host states to protect diplomats and embassies at all costs.

Moreover, the Vienna Convention has formalized diplomatic relations into a binding legal framework, providing clarity and consistency. Before the treaty, diplomatic practices were based on traditions and unwritten rules which led to confusion and disputes. Through the codification of laws, there is certainty that all nations follow the same standard I their diplomatic dealings. It has also strengthened legitimacy in diplomacy and made the rules enforceable under international law.

Diplomacy is the cornerstone of international relations and the Vienna Convention ensures that this tool remains effective even during challenging times. It helps nations to resolve disputes through dialogue rather than resorting to violence and disputes.

During the 1979 Iran hostage crisis, the global community condemned Iran for violating the Convention by detaining th U.S. diplomats. This is because the Vienna Convention establishes a system of accountability by clearly defining the responsibilities of both the sending state and the receiving states. When violations happen, the international community can respond collectively to enforce compliance. Violations may include: the mistreatment of diplomats or attacks on embassies. The condemnation of Iran shows the importance of adhering to the rules of the Vienna Convention. It encourages global accountability.

The Vienna Convention allows for equality among states. The treaty treats all states equally regardless of their power, size or influence. This encourages mutual respect and sovereignty.

The Vienna Convention has strengthened multilateral diplomacy. The United General Assembly meetings in New York are attended by diplomats every year. The principles of the Vienna Convention, such as diplomatic immunity, ensure that diplomats can travel and participate in these meetings without any fear of arrest or harassment by the host country. This has enabled multilateral diplomacy on critical global issues such as climate change and international security, enabling collaboration among nations.

In summary, the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations has contributed to international society by establishing a standardized framework for diplomacy. It promotes trust and cooperation among nations through the codification of rules that ensure fairness and clarity in diplomatic relations. By facilitating peaceful resolution of disputes and equality of states, it upholds the aspect of sovereignty and mutual respect. It has also protected diplomats in times of war allowing diplomacy to take place even in times of war and instability. This treaty has ensured that diplomacy takes place since it is an important aspect of maintaining and fostering peace, stability and cooperation in the international system.

Diplomacy is a stabilizing force, in the sense that it helps maintain peace, order, and cooperation. It provides techniques that address disagreements before they turn into open conflicts. Through negotiations, mediation and peace talks, conflicts are prevented. The Cuban Missle Crisis, of 1962, was resolved diplomatically preventing a potential war between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Similarly, the Camp David Accords of 1978 demonstrated diplomacy’s capacity to mediate long-standing disputes, as President Jimmy Carter of the U.S. facilitated a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, ending decades of hostilities.

Diplomacy promotes Global Cooperation on shared challenges among nations such as climate change, trade and health crises. Diplomatic collaboration during the COVID-19 pandemic enabled the creation of COVAX, hence ensuring equitable access to vaccines in the world. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change provides a platform for international diplomatic negotiations, ensuring coordinated global efforts to address climate change challenges and through diplomacy, the World Trade Organization, helped in promoting fair and stable global trading systems. These examples illustrate how diplomacy serves as a tool for addressing global issues effectively.

Although diplomacy has played a big role in maintaining international order, it has quite a number of limitations when it comes to sustaining long-term stability and maintaining global relations.

States may prioritize national sovereignty over international cooperation, making multilateral diplomacy challenging. There are events where states are reluctant to surrender authority to international organizations or to abide by agreements that conflict with their domestic interests. This hinders global efforts in addressing global challenges.

Power imbalances in diplomacy create significant challenges in maintaining fairness and cooperation. The weaker nations face pressure trying to align with the needs and interests of the stronger countries, they may be forced to go against their values and goals through pressure applied by the stronger nations through the use of military threats.

Trust is significant in diplomacy. There may be a lack of trust among states due to factors such as historical conflicts, broken agreements among nations, ideological differences or sometimes misinformation.. The state of mistrust between nations leads to prolonged deadlocks in diplomatic talks since nations hesitate to share critical information.

Diplomacy has mainly focused on the goal of maintaining order, but it has failed in various ways. Diplomacy failed to mediate between the Assad regime and opposition groups during the Arab Springs uprisings. The United Nations held peace talks, but conflicting interests among global and regional powers blocked unified action, which has to the loss of life and the displacement of people.

Approximately 800,000 people were killed in 100 days, in the Rwandan Genocide of 1994. Mismanagement by the United Nations and the international community failed to prevent the mass killings of Tutsi civilians by the Hutu. Despite the warnings, the United Nations Security Council was reluctant to intervene, partly due to the recent failures in Somalia. This is an example of how the art of diplomacy failed. Other examples of when diplomacy failed include the North Korean Crisis, the Yugoslav Wars of 1991- 2001, and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

It is, therefore, true to conclude that, mistrust, delayed action, overlooking of root causes and ineffectiveness of multilateral institutions lead to the fall of diplomacy.

Scholars and analysts have criticized diplomacy for its ineffectiveness in addressing current global challenges. Realists argue that power dynamics and self-interest dominate, making it hard to sustain cooperation through diplomacy. The multilateral institutions such as the United Nations struggle to accommodate the competing interests of an increasingly divided global order.

Liberal theorists have argued that the weakening of multilateral institutions diminishes the credibility of diplomatic agreements. Institutions like the United Nations and the WTO are often paralyzed by political deadlock, showing power struggles rather than facilitating cooperation. The growth of mistrust among powers like China and Russia weakens the effectiveness of multilateral diplomacy.

The rise of technological communication, such as social media has undermined traditional practices such as confidential negotiations. Leaders have been seen to use platforms such as “X” to conduct “digital diplomacy” which creates tension rather than leading to the creation of solutions. Scholars have highlighted the risks of disinformation and cyber attacks which cause the disruption of diplomatic efforts.

Both diplomacy and the Vienna Convention have been important tools in shaping the international society and maintaining international order. They have established norms necessary for maintaining peace and order among sovereign states. The protection of diplomats and the promotion of dialogue have fostered stability in international relations. The Vienna Convention should be expanded to include provisions for protecting digital infrastructure, there should also be the creation of guidelines for the use of social media which helps maintain accountability and consistency with international propaganda as well as the addressing of disinformation.