

## **The Power of Diplomacy in the New World Politics**

**By**

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### **Abstract**

This paper explores the dynamic significance of diplomacy in shaping global politics in the twenty-first century. It examines how traditional state-centred diplomacy has transformed amid globalisation, technological advancement, and the rise of multipolarity. The study highlighted that modern diplomacy now encompasses not only states but also non-state actors, such as multinational institutions and corporations, civil society organisations, and digital platforms, representing a move away from coercive power toward cooperative engagement. To decipher the power of diplomacy in the new global politics, this work relied on the Shopkeeper and Warrior theories as its theoretical framework. The analysis demonstrates that contemporary diplomacy increasingly leans on negotiation and cooperation rather than confrontation. A scrutiny of global challenges, including economic crises, political instability, migration, and insecurity, indicates that diplomacy plays a crucial role in moderating conflicts, encouraging multilateral cooperation, and confronting non-traditional threats such as pandemics and climate change. The study therefore concludes that, despite weaknesses in multilateral institutions and the rise of unilateralism, diplomacy remains an essential tool for global peace, security, stability, and collective governance amid waves of fragmentation in the global order.

**Keywords:** Power, Diplomacy, New World, and Politics

### **Introduction**

In the contemporary world order, it is the vagaries of competing asymmetric power relations and the instrumentalism of multilateral institutions that continue to polarise global relations. Diplomacy has proven to be a harbinger of global stability because, at its core, it is the management of relations among actors in the international system through dialogue, negotiation, and peaceful engagement (Berridge, 2015).

Indeed, the end of the Cold War was once heralded as the dawn of a liberal international order in which diplomacy and multilateralism would reign supreme. However, the last three decades have been characterised by paradoxes; while globalisation has fostered unprecedented integration, it has also exposed societies to vulnerabilities ranging from economic shocks to transnational insecurity (Acharya, 2018). This duality has heightened the importance of diplomacy as states, international organisations, and non-state actors attempt to negotiate the complexities of a rapidly changing international system in the twenty-first century.

The dawn of the twenty-first century proved to be distinct in that the traditional instruments of power, military might, and economic dominance are no longer sufficient to guarantee stability or influence. Climate change, pandemics, cyber threats, and mass migration are challenges that defy unilateral solutions. As Nye (2021) argues, power in the modern era is diffused, requiring states to invest in networks and coalitions rather than rely solely on coercion. Against this backdrop, diplomacy has acquired renewed significance not merely as an instrument of statecraft but as a global public good capable of bridging divides, preventing the escalation of conflicts, and enabling cooperation.

However, diplomacy today is also under strain from the rise of populism, unilateralism, and transactional politics, which have weakened multilateral institutions such as the United Nations, the World Trade Organisation, and regional blocs like the African Union and the European Union (Patrick, 2020). Economic destruction caused by wars, sanctions, and systemic crises, such as the 2008 global financial meltdown and the economic dislocations of COVID-19, has deepened mistrust among nations. Political instability in regions such as the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, and parts of Eastern Europe underscores the fragility of international order. These developments raise questions about whether diplomacy can adapt to new challenges or risk becoming an anachronism amid growing hard-power rivalries.

Consequently, this paper seeks to provide insight and a structured analysis of diplomacy as a cornerstone of global politics in this new era, against the backdrop of a competing new world order, propelled on the one hand by the rise of multipolar politics, with emerging powers like China, India, and Brazil challenging Western dominance. Second, the rise of non-state actors, including multinational corporations, civil society organisations, and terrorist groups, has expanded the field of diplomatic engagement. Third, the digital revolution has transformed diplomacy, giving rise to "digital diplomacy" and "public diplomacy" in which states must engage foreign publics directly through social media and global communications (Bjola & Holmes, 2015). This paper is thus a modest insight into the power of diplomacy in the new world politics.

## **Diplomacy**

Essentially, diplomacy is the management of relations between actors in the international system through dialogue, negotiation, and peaceful engagement (Berridge, 2015). The Oxford English Dictionary defines diplomacy as "the profession, activity, or skill of managing international relations, typically by a country's representatives abroad." Harold Nicolson (1939) offered one of the classical definitions, describing diplomacy as "the management of international relations by negotiation; the method by which these relations are adjusted and managed by ambassadors and envoys." More contemporary scholars, such as Schiller (2025), see diplomacy as the practice of negotiating and building relationships between nations to resolve disputes and promote peace. Schiller believes that diplomacy plays an important role in international relations, as it ensures stability in an increasingly interconnected world. It is about finding common ground on global challenges such as terrorism and trade disputes. Diplomacy is therefore not about fusty receptions or vague treaties; it is the baseline for communities facing famine, the shield against cyber-attacks, and the bridge between clashing superpowers.

To the International Shield Organisation (2025), diplomacy is not merely a means of reaching agreement but the primary tool for building political, economic, and cultural partnerships across borders, contributing to global stability that ensures the welfare and prosperity of future generations. Diplomacy plays a pivotal role in guiding the paths of international cooperation and mitigating conflict. It is a flexible mechanism through which nations enhance dialogue and mutual understanding, thereby building strong communication bridges.

While these definitions emphasise state-centred approaches, the twenty-first century has expanded the scope of diplomacy beyond states. The inclusion of non-state actors such as multinational corporations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and international organisations has broadened the definition. For example, Bjola and Holmes (2015) define "digital diplomacy" as the use of digital technologies to achieve diplomatic objectives, while Nye (2021) highlights "public diplomacy" as the ability of states to engage directly with foreign populations to shape perceptions and influence behaviours.

Thus, diplomacy in the new era is best conceptualised as a dynamic, multi-layered process involving both state and non-state actors that uses dialogue, persuasion, and negotiation to manage global challenges.

### **Functions of Diplomacy**

Diplomacy performs several vital functions in international politics. Classical theorists and practitioners (e.g., Satow, 1979; Berridge, 2015) identify the following core functions:

1. **Representation** – Diplomats act as representatives of their states, conveying policies, perspectives, and interests abroad.
2. **Negotiation** – Diplomacy provides a platform for bargaining, compromise, and conflict resolution without resorting to force.
3. **Communication** – Diplomats serve as channels of information between governments, fostering transparency and reducing misunderstandings.
4. **Promotion of National Interests** – States rely on diplomacy to advance political, economic, and security interests.
5. **Conflict Prevention and Peace-building** – Diplomacy is essential for mediation, dialogue, and peace agreements in fragile contexts.
6. **Cultural Exchange and Soft Power** – Diplomacy often involves cultural programs, education exchanges, and public engagement to build goodwill.

In the new era, these functions have expanded. For instance, climate diplomacy addresses environmental sustainability; economic diplomacy emphasises trade, investment, and sanctions management; and migration diplomacy addresses the management of cross-border movements of people (Betts, 2011).

### **Types of Diplomacy**

Diplomacy manifests in different forms, each serving specific purposes within international relations:

1. **Bilateral Diplomacy** – Engagement between two states to resolve issues or strengthen relations.
2. **Multilateral Diplomacy** – Negotiations involving multiple states, typically under the umbrella of international organisations like the United Nations.
3. **Track One Diplomacy** – Official, government-to-government negotiations.
4. **Track Two Diplomacy** – Informal interactions involving academics, NGOs, and civil society to build trust and explore solutions (Montville, 1991).
5. **Economic Diplomacy** – Focused on trade agreements, investment promotion, and economic sanctions.
6. **Cultural/Public Diplomacy** – Efforts to shape perceptions and build trust through cultural programs, media, and educational exchanges.
7. **Digital Diplomacy** – Use of digital technologies, social media, and online platforms for diplomatic engagement.

The rise of digital diplomacy is particularly significant. Governments now use platforms such as Twitter and Facebook to communicate directly with global audiences, bypassing traditional gatekeepers. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many states used digital diplomacy

to disseminate information, coordinate aid, and counter misinformation (Manor & Segev, 2020).

### **Diplomacy and Globalisation**

Globalisation has profoundly shaped the practice of diplomacy. As Held and McGrew (2007) argue, globalisation has produced more profound interdependence among states, compelling them to cooperate across borders. This has led to the rise of multilateral diplomacy, particularly in addressing transnational issues such as terrorism, climate change, and pandemics. However, globalisation has also introduced challenges, such as increased economic inequality and the erosion of state sovereignty, which complicate diplomatic negotiations.

Diplomacy now operates in a world where decisions in one part of the globe can have immediate ripple effects elsewhere. For example, the 2008 global financial crisis required coordinated economic diplomacy among major economies to stabilise financial systems (Helleiner, 2011). Similarly, climate diplomacy under the Paris Agreement demonstrates how diplomacy can be mobilised to address a global common good.

### **Diplomacy and Sovereignty**

The concept of sovereignty has traditionally been central to diplomacy. States guard their autonomy while engaging diplomatically with others. However, in the new era, sovereignty is increasingly challenged by supranational institutions, international law, and the activities of non-state actors. Humanitarian interventions, for instance, often pit sovereignty against the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine, raising ethical and political dilemmas (Bellamy, 2009). Diplomacy thus becomes the arena in which sovereignty is negotiated, contested, and redefined.

### **Diplomacy and Power**

Diplomacy is intrinsically tied to power dynamics. Realists argue that diplomacy is a tool of the strong, used to manipulate or constrain weaker states (Morgenthau, 1948). Liberals, by contrast, see diplomacy as a means of fostering cooperation, trust, and mutually beneficial outcomes (Keohane & Nye, 1977). Constructivists focus on the role of ideas, identities, and norms in shaping diplomatic practices (Wendt, 1992). These perspectives highlight that diplomacy is not neutral; it reflects underlying power relations, ideologies, and worldviews.

In the twenty-first century, power is more diffuse, with soft power and network power becoming increasingly important. Joseph Nye's (2004) notion of "soft power" underscores the effectiveness of attraction and persuasion in international relations. For example, cultural diplomacy, education exchanges, and humanitarian assistance have become tools of influence alongside traditional military and economic levers.

### **Diplomacy in the New Era of World Politics**

What distinguishes diplomacy in the contemporary era is the multiplicity of actors and issues involved. Unlike earlier periods dominated by great-power rivalry, today's diplomatic landscape includes middle powers, small states, regional organisations, NGOs, and even individuals who command global influence through digital platforms. Diplomacy is no longer confined to foreign ministries; it is conducted by finance ministers, health officials, and even tech executives.

It is important to note that diplomacy in a contemporary multipolar system faces four significant challenges, viz.

- i. Economic Destruction – Trade disputes, sanctions, and global recessions necessitate economic diplomacy to stabilise markets and foster cooperation.
- ii. Political Instability – Diplomatic interventions in conflict zones are essential for peace processes, humanitarian aid, and governance rebuilding.
- iii. Migration – Migration diplomacy has become central as states balance humanitarian obligations with national security and domestic pressures.
- iv. Insecurity – Counterterrorism, cyber threats, and nuclear proliferation require unprecedented levels of diplomatic coordination.

However, diplomacy remains at the heart of managing global challenges; throughout history, it has evolved to meet the demands posed by ongoing transformations in the international system. This process has always been marked by shifts in ideas, norms of behaviour, and actual/informal practices that create new international customs and conventions. Within this dynamic, the relevance and importance of diplomacy as a tool of international relations remain as tenacious as ever. Countries and their professionally trained diplomats remain highly significant actors in the conduct of international affairs, despite fundamental changes to the Westphalian state system. The institution of diplomacy has shown incredible resilience and an ability to adapt to change rather than withering away as some have predicted.

Although it has changed shape to accommodate new actors, concerns, and technologies, the fundamental element of diplomacy remains the same: resolving international conflicts peacefully through communication, negotiation, and information-gathering (Manojlovic, M., and C.H. Thorheim, 2007).

### **The Future of Diplomacy in a Fragmented World Order**

The rise of populism, nationalism, and great-power rivalry poses new challenges for diplomacy. The U.S.-China rivalry, for instance, increasingly shapes global politics, with spillover effects on trade, technology, and security. This fragmentation threatens multilateral cooperation but also opens space for innovative diplomacy, where coalitions of like-minded states, NGOs, and private actors collaborate on specific issues.

The growing complexities of multilateral diplomacy in the 21st century are undoubtedly of profound importance to global politics. However, it has also brought many universal strains; these problems include human rights, international flows of capital and information, humanitarian assistance, trade, and national environmental issues. Multilateral diplomacy must address global problems effectively. The world is facing many challenges because of multilateral diplomacy:

#### **a. Diplomacy and Economic Destruction**

Economic destruction is another domain where diplomacy plays a decisive role. This is because economic challenges in diplomacy often revolve around the complex interactions of people's interests, trade imbalances, and economic disparities among nations. Economic crises and disparities can lead to tensions, affecting diplomatic relations. Addressing these economic concerns through fair trade agreements, currency stability measures, and economic aid programs is crucial for fostering international collaboration and ensuring that economic considerations do not delay the activity of diplomatic solutions to global challenges hence, economic diplomacy has shown to be a powerful platform for building economic partnership between countries, strengthening economic relations, and creating mutual investment opportunities in the face daunting challenges like;

### **b. The Global Financial Crisis (2008–2009)**

The 2008 financial crisis was one of the most devastating economic collapses since the Great Depression. It originated in the United States with the subprime mortgage meltdown, but quickly spread worldwide, triggering bank failures, unemployment, and sharp declines in GDP growth. What made this crisis particularly unique was the speed at which it spread, driven by globalisation and interconnected markets.

Diplomatic efforts were crucial in preventing a total collapse of the global financial system. The G20 Summit in London (2009) brought together leaders of the world's largest economies to coordinate fiscal stimulus, strengthen financial regulation, and restore confidence. According to Helleiner (2011), this summit exemplified the importance of multilateral economic diplomacy, as states recognised that unilateral actions were insufficient. Additionally, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) expanded its lending capacity, providing financial support to struggling economies.

#### **a. Trade Wars and Sanctions**

Trade wars, sanctions, and global recessions have profound implications for economies, especially the United States, and require coordinated responses. The example underlines how economic diplomacy can determine the trajectory of international relations. In Africa, regional diplomacy under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) illustrates efforts to advance economic integration and resilience against external shocks (Kassa & Megersa, 2021). The crisis thus demonstrated the value of diplomatic coordination in economic recovery, reinforcing the need for global governance structures.

#### **b. COVID-19 Pandemic (2020–2022)**

The COVID-19 pandemic caused unprecedented economic destruction worldwide, with global GDP contracting by 3.4% in 2020 (IMF, 2021). Diplomacy played a key role in managing its economic fallout. The World Health Organisation (WHO) facilitated information-sharing and vaccine diplomacy, while bilateral and multilateral negotiations determined vaccine access and supply chains.

China, Russia, the United States, and the European Union engaged in “vaccine diplomacy,” using vaccine distribution as a tool of influence (Fazal, 2021). For example, China’s Sinopharm vaccine was distributed to Africa and Latin America, strengthening Beijing’s soft power, while the United States relied on COVAX contributions to maintain its diplomatic standing.

These cases illustrate that economic crises increasingly require not just domestic policies but coordinated diplomatic action across borders.

### **Diplomacy and Political Instability**

#### **a. The Iran Nuclear Deal (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action - JCPOA, 2015)**

Political instability in the Middle East has long been a test for diplomacy. The JCPOA was a landmark multilateral diplomatic achievement in which Iran agreed to limit its nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief. Negotiated by the P5+1 (the U.S., U.K., France, Russia, China, and Germany) alongside the European Union, the deal demonstrated how sustained diplomacy could prevent escalation into conflict (Kaye, 2015).

However, the U.S. withdrawal from the agreement in 2018 under the Trump administration underscored the fragility of diplomatic accords when domestic politics shift. The unravelling of the JCPOA has since contributed to renewed tensions, underscoring both the potential and the vulnerability of diplomacy in managing political instability.

## **Sudan Peace Processes**

Sudan has long been a theatre of political instability, from civil wars to the Darfur conflict. Diplomatic interventions, such as the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 2005, facilitated by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), ended Africa's longest-running civil war and eventually led to South Sudan's independence in 2011.

Although violence persisted in both Sudan and South Sudan, these diplomatic efforts demonstrated the ability of regional organisations, backed by international actors, to foster peace through sustained negotiation. The Sudan case highlights the importance of regional diplomacy, complementing global interventions.

## **Diplomacy and Migration**

The migration crisis provides a vivid example of diplomacy's critical importance. According to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM, 2022), more than 281 million people worldwide are international migrants, many of whom are fleeing conflict, poverty, or environmental disasters. The surge of migrants has triggered tensions across Europe, Africa, and the Americas, making migration diplomacy essential for balancing humanitarian responsibilities with national interests. These efforts can be seen from:

### **a. The Syrian Refugee Crisis**

The Syrian civil war, beginning in 2011, displaced over 13 million people, creating one of the most significant migration crises of modern times (UNHCR, 2020). Neighbouring countries such as Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan bore the brunt, while Europe faced a wave of asylum seekers that reshaped its politics.

Diplomatic negotiations attempted to manage this crisis. The EU-Turkey Deal of 2016 stands out, whereby Turkey agreed to curb migration flows in exchange for financial aid and political concessions from the EU. While controversial, the agreement reflected migration diplomacy, balancing humanitarian concerns with political realities (Betts & Collier, 2017).

The crisis also revealed divisions within the European Union, as some states welcomed refugees (e.g., Germany under Angela Merkel) while others closed their borders. This divergence illustrates the limits of collective diplomacy in migration governance.

### **b. African Migration Diplomacy**

In Africa, migration diplomacy has often revolved around labour agreements and regional integration. For instance, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) allows free movement of persons, facilitating regional labour mobility (Adepoju, 2010). However, implementation challenges persist, as some member states impose restrictions due to security and economic concerns.

These examples underscore how migration diplomacy requires balancing humanitarian obligations, security imperatives, and domestic politics.

## **Diplomacy and Insecurity**

Political instability has remained one of the harbingers that complicate global diplomacy. Insecurity caused by terrorism, piracy, and organised crime highlights the need for transnational diplomatic cooperation. The fight against Boko Haram in Nigeria and the Sahel, for instance, demonstrates how regional diplomacy can strengthen collective security (Adebajo, 2019). Some of these crises caused by insecurity and terrorism include;

### **a. Geopolitical Tensions**

Tensions between major powers, such as the United States, China, and Russia, are among the most significant impediments to global peace and security and account for why diplomatic efforts to resolve local and regional conflicts remain unsuccessful. For example, the US-China technology rivalry, the tension in the South China Sea, the ongoing war in Ukraine, the Gaza crisis, coups in West Africa, fragile governance systems, disputes among neighbouring countries, and complicated diplomatic efforts have created ripple effects across borders, leading to humanitarian crises and renewed calls for diplomatic interventions. Diplomats today navigate a minefield of polarised alliances. Peace negotiations, ceasefire agreements, and conflict mediation remain central to addressing such instability.

**b. Counterterrorism Diplomacy Post-9/11**

The September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks transformed global diplomacy, ushering in an era of counterterrorism cooperation. The U.S.-led "War on Terror" was initially militarised, but diplomacy played a central role in sustaining global coalitions. NATO invoked Article 5 of its treaty for the first time, declaring the attacks on the United States as an attack on all members.

Diplomatic initiatives, such as intelligence-sharing agreements, financial monitoring systems, and regional counterterrorism forums, became critical. For example, the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) was established in 2011 to coordinate strategies across continents. Although counterterrorism diplomacy has often been criticised for prioritising security over rights, it demonstrates that international cooperation is essential for addressing transnational threats, as it not only prevents escalation but also lays the groundwork for post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation.

**c. Climate Change as a Security Issue**

Climate change and resource inadequacy are crucial challenges in diplomacy. The shifting climate patterns intensify competition for dwindling resources such as water, agricultural land, and energy sources, leading to conflicts. Thus, while traditionally considered an environmental issue, climate change is now recognised as a driver of insecurity. Rising sea levels, droughts, and resource scarcity have fueled conflicts and migration.

Climate change is a global threat that necessitates skillful diplomacy to forge agreements, reduce emissions, and secure funding. Environmental diplomacy also plays a pivotal role in fostering cooperation, while nations leverage their environmental policies for soft power and reputation enhancement. The Paris Agreement (2015) is a prime example of climate diplomacy, where 196 parties agreed to limit global warming to below 2°C (Falkner, 2016).

Despite setbacks, such as the U.S. withdrawal under Trump, the agreement demonstrates the capacity of diplomacy to unite diverse states around a shared security challenge. Climate diplomacy thus represents a new frontier in addressing non-traditional security threats.

The derivative from the analysis series of challenges and strains posed by the rise of populism, unilateralism, and transactional politics means that the future of diplomacy will likely be characterised by networked governance, where multiple actors, states, corporations, civil society, and international organisations interact in overlapping forums (Slaughter, 2017). This pluralisation may dilute traditional state dominance but can enhance flexibility and inclusiveness in addressing global challenges.

**Diplomacy as a Balancing Act between National and Global Interests**

One recurring theme in modern diplomacy is the tension between national sovereignty and global interdependence. States are increasingly compelled to negotiate policies that serve domestic priorities while aligning with international obligations. For instance, in the Iran

Nuclear Deal (JCPOA), Iran sought economic relief to stabilise its domestic economy, while global powers pursued non-proliferation goals. Similarly, the EU-Turkey migration deal illustrated how domestic political imperatives (European governments' efforts to limit migration flows) intersected with broader humanitarian and diplomatic considerations.

This balancing act raises questions about the durability of diplomatic agreements. As Zürn (2018) argues, international cooperation is often undermined by “domestic backlash,” where public opinion or political elites resist perceived external impositions. Thus, diplomacy in the twenty-first century must be adaptive, accounting for both domestic constraints and the need for collective action.

### **The Shifting Role of Power in Diplomacy**

Traditional diplomacy was dominated by great powers, which leveraged their military and economic might. While power asymmetry remains relevant, today's diplomatic landscape is more multipolar and complex. Middle powers such as Turkey, Brazil, and South Africa, along with regional organisations like the African Union (AU) and ECOWAS, increasingly play prominent roles in mediating conflicts and shaping negotiations.

Moreover, soft power, the ability to attract and persuade rather than coerce, has grown in importance (Nye, 2004). Vaccine diplomacy during COVID-19 is a prime example of states using humanitarian assistance as a tool of influence. This evolution suggests that in the twenty-first century, power in diplomacy is less about unilateral dominance and more about coalition-building, credibility, and legitimacy.

Again, discussion of insecurity reveals that diplomacy has expanded beyond conventional state-to-state conflict to encompass non-traditional threats. Issues such as climate change, pandemics, cybersecurity, and migration require new frameworks for diplomatic engagement. For example, the Paris Agreement shows how environmental diplomacy reframes climate change as a collective security issue rather than just an ecological one (Falkner, 2016).

Similarly, counterterrorism diplomacy demonstrates that states must coordinate on intelligence sharing and border security to address transnational threats. These domains reveal the adaptability of diplomacy but also highlight its limitations, particularly in enforcing compliance and ensuring equity between developed and developing nations.

Furthermore, the rise of digital technologies has revolutionised diplomatic practices. Social media diplomacy (Twiplomacy) enables leaders to communicate directly with foreign publics, bypassing traditional channels. For example, Twitter has become a platform for real-time diplomatic signalling, as seen during U.S.-Iran tensions in 2019.

However, whilst digital diplomacy facilitates global campaigns on issues such as climate change, human rights, and migration, amplifying voices beyond state actors, it also introduces risks, such as misinformation, cyberattacks, and the erosion of confidentiality in negotiations (Bjola & Holmes, 2015). Diplomacy in the digital age must therefore balance transparency with security.

### **The Limits of Multilateral Diplomacy**

Multilateral diplomacy has delivered historic achievements, but it often faces deadlock due to competing interests. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) illustrates this tension, as permanent members wield veto powers that frequently paralyse responses to crises (Weiss, 2020). For example, divergent positions among UNSC members on the Syrian conflict led to fragmented and inconsistent interventions.

Similarly, while the G20 played a stabilising role during the financial crisis, its effectiveness has since been questioned amid the resurgence of economic nationalism. These examples underscore that multilateral diplomacy, though necessary, is not always sufficient. Bilateral and minilateral (small-group) diplomacy often complements multilateral processes by providing more flexible, pragmatic avenues for negotiation.

### **Diplomacy as a Tool for Peace-building**

One of the most significant contributions of diplomacy lies in its role in peace-building. The Sudan Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2005) and South Sudan's independence illustrate both the potential and pitfalls of diplomatic mediation. Peace agreements can provide frameworks for ending violence, but their success depends on sustained follow-up, capacity-building, and inclusive participation.

Recent research highlights the importance of involving non-state actors, including civil society, local communities, and NGOs, in peace diplomacy (Richmond & Mac Ginty, 2019). This broader approach recognises that durable peace cannot be achieved solely through elite-level negotiations but must integrate grassroots perspectives.

### **The Resilience and Fragility of Diplomatic Agreements**

The empirical cases reveal a paradox: diplomacy is both resilient and fragile. Agreements like the Paris Climate Accord and the JCPOA demonstrated the potential of diplomacy to achieve breakthroughs, but their unravelling amid political shifts highlights their fragility.

This suggests that successful diplomacy must incorporate institutional resilience mechanisms, such as dispute-resolution frameworks, monitoring systems, and adaptive clauses. Without these safeguards, agreements remain vulnerable to unilateral withdrawal, as seen with the U.S. exit from both the JCPOA and Paris Agreement.

### **Conclusion**

This paper examined the evolving role of diplomacy in addressing global challenges in the twenty-first century. The analysis shows that diplomacy remains indispensable, but new realities, including multipolarity, digitalisation, non-traditional security threats, and domestic political pressures, increasingly shape it.

The conceptual review highlighted how diplomacy has moved beyond traditional state-to-state negotiations to embrace multilateralism, soft power, and digital engagement. Empirical cases such as the Paris Climate Agreement, the Iran Nuclear Deal, the EU-Turkey migration arrangement, and African Union interventions illustrated both the possibilities and limitations of diplomacy. The discussion further emphasised that while diplomacy can achieve peace agreements, manage economic crises, and coordinate humanitarian responses, it is constrained by fragility, competing interests, and the challenge of sustaining political will.

In today's fragmented global order, diplomacy is no longer the preserve of great powers alone. Middle powers, regional organisations, civil society, and even corporations are reshaping the diplomatic landscape. Future diplomacy must adapt to these dynamics, balancing national sovereignty with collective security, ensuring inclusivity, and embedding resilience mechanisms in agreements.

Ultimately, diplomacy in the new era is not merely about negotiation at conference tables; it is about fostering trust, building coalitions, and finding common ground in a world marked by uncertainty. While imperfect, diplomacy remains humanity's most potent instrument for managing differences and averting destructive conflict. Its future success depends on

adaptability, creativity, and the collective recognition that no single nation can solve today's global problems alone.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. Strengthen Multilateral Institutions: Reform key bodies such as the United Nations Security Council is needed to enhance legitimacy and effectiveness by including greater representation from the Global South.
- ii. Embed Resilience Mechanisms: International agreements should include adaptive clauses, monitoring systems, and dispute resolution mechanisms that can withstand political shifts and unilateral withdrawals.
- iii. Prioritise Non-Traditional Security Diplomacy: Greater emphasis should be placed on climate change, health, migration, and cyber-security as core areas of diplomatic engagement, not peripheral concerns.
- iv. Invest in Digital Diplomacy: States and international organisations should harness technology for dialogue, advocacy, and crisis response while safeguarding against misinformation and cyber threats.
- v. Promote Inclusive Peace-building: Peace diplomacy should integrate local communities, civil society, and non-state actors to ensure inclusiveness, legitimacy and sustainability of agreements.
- vi. Encourage Regional Diplomacy: Regional organisations such as ECOWAS, AU, and ASEAN should be empowered with resources and authority to manage crises in their respective areas.
- vii. Foster Public Diplomacy: Governments should invest in communication strategies that build public support for international cooperation, reducing domestic backlash against diplomacy.

Diplomacy in international relations is pivotal in fostering peace and cooperation in an increasingly interconnected world. Diplomacy involves negotiating to resolve conflicts, advance national interests, and address global challenges such as climate change, cybersecurity, and human rights. Diplomatic efforts lead to long-term relations between nations through trade agreements and environmental policies.

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