SID Lingua Inglese 1 2018-19 Collective essay writing: the case of Jamal Khashoggi

Essay question: “Describe the background and events surrounding the disappearance of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, and assess the impact of this case on international relations”

Topic sentences for 8 component paragraphs:

1. Jamal Khashoggi was a Saudi journalist. [..]
2. Khashoggi lived in self-imposed exile in the USA. [..]
3. On October 2°, 2018, Jamal Kashoggi entered the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul. [..]
4. The mystery surrounding his disappearance provoked some strongly worded responses in the international community.
5. The story soon became politicised.
6. The treatment of Khashoggi has provoked a crisis in international relations.
7. The US and some other traditional Western allies of Saudi Arabia have been severely embarrassed by the story.
8. It remains to be seen how this incident will be resolved.

Student paragraphs: 1st draft. First editing task: resolve issues with grammar and vocabulary. Clean up these paragraphs:

**1a.Jamal Khashoggi was a Saudi journalist** and a Washington Post columnist. He has disappeared on 2 October while he was at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul to obtain a document certifying his divorce from his former wife. His actual fiancée waited for him outside the building several hours before warning Turkish authorities about his disappearing. After that Turkish officials has declared he had never got out of the consulate, as the security cameras videos have shown. Khashoggi has been an high-profile critic of the crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman; for this reason the journalist had recently moved to Virginia (US) as a form of protection. US Intelligence intercepts of Saudi officials have made clear that the Crown Prince was planning to lure Jamal back to Saudi Arabia. However, this plan has never been pursued and according to most recent news, he has been brutally killed inside the home country Consulate by a 15-member team arrived for the operation.

1b **Jamal Khashoggi was a Saudi Journalist,** born in 1958 in Medina, Saudi Arabia. He was also an editor in chief of the Al-Arab News Channel and editor for the Saudi Arabian newspaper Al-Watan, turning it into a platform for Saudi Arabian progressives. In 2017, he began to write for The Washington Post in the United States and his articles criticized Saudi Arabian's kingdom and its desputes against Qatar and Lebanon and the invasion of Yemen. Furthermore, he had been married and divorced three times. By the time he disappeared he had a Turkish fiancé who was planning to marry, moving to Istanbul, the city that would have hosted his new tv channel.

**2.Khashoggi lived in self-imposed exile in the USA.**Jamal Khashoggi, who had spent several years of service at the court of Saudi royal family as an editor, decided to flee his native country for a number of reasons. Before moving to the US as a self-exile, Jamal Khashoggi had already been there to obtain his MBA at Indiana University. After his studies, Khashoggi started his career as journalist and became closer and closer to the royal family writing for the national newspaper. That made him aware of the tensions within the inner circle of the Saud family: he was described as someone who recognised the virtues of the regime but who could not remain silent in front of its injustices. After Khashoggi criticised President Trump in late 2016, the Saudi royal family banned him from public appearances and writing so he decided to move to the US for a temporary stay before definitively settling down in Turkey with his fiancée. Moreover, the collision with the Wahhabid clergy orbiting around the royal family, due to his pro-Muslim Brotherhood leanings, is considered as another key factor in his decision. Given that, it is striking the parallel with another important figure, the Turkish cleric Fethullah Gülen, also in exile in the US for similar, religious motives.

**3.On October 2nd, 2018, Jamal Khashoggi entered the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul**. and never came out of the building, thus the alarm was raised by his fiancée on the same day, four hours after he went in. As claimed by first reports, that was the second visit since September 28th, when he was told to come back and get the marriage papers he needed; the details of what happened are yet to be officially determined, but Turkey government did its best to provide any useful information to the press – like CCTV footage and audio recordings – in order to determine the causes of Khashoggi’s death. According to the most reliable hypothesis the Saudi journalist was tortured, murdered and dismembered in seven minutes by the Saudi forensics expert Salah Muhammad al-Tubaigy, one of the members of the so-called *Tiger Squad,* a well-known team of assassins formed more than a year ago by the Saudi Crown Prince Mohamed bin Salman.

**4.The mystery surrounding his disappearance provoke some strongly wondered responses in the international community.**Firstly, Samah Hadid, Middle East director of campaigns for Amnesty International, said that Saudi version of events cannot be trusted.

The USA response, one of the most waited of all, comes from the president Donald Trump, who has just declared that the Secretary of state Mike Pompeo had spoken with the King Salman but was not totally clear about the matter. The reason of this caution is due to the fact that the USA and Saudi Arabia has a military treaty worth 110 billion dollars. US President Donald Trump, also said, that Saudi Arabia's explanation for how Khashoggi was killed was credible, adding what happened at the consulate is "unacceptable".

French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said his country condemned the killing of Khashoggi and called for a thorough investigation into the incident.

The Germany, with his Chancellor Angela Merkel, disagree with the Saudi Arabia Explanation on this murder. The "horrific events" surrounding the journalist's killing as a warning that democratic freedoms are under assault across the globe, she added.

This week, Saudi state media reported that King Salman had ordered the formation of a ministerial committee, headed by Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, to restructure the kingdom's intelligence services.

Britain's Foreign Office, instead, said it was considering its "next steps" following Saudi Arabia's admission over Khashoggi's killing and reiterated that those responsible must be held to account.

**5a.The story soon became politicised**, as many countries have different connections with Jamal Khashoggi.  Beyond the fact, that he was known for his strong criticism against the Saudi government, the Turkish police denounced Saudi Arabia for the journalist’s disappearance, after finding evidence of his murder. Nevertheless, Saudi Arabia denied any involvement. The US played an important role in the matter, mainly because of the new alliance with Saudi Arabia: as a matter of fact, the Secretary of State Pompeo has been travelling to Riyadh and Ankara to mediate with Mohammed bin Salman and Erdogan. If Saudi Arabia should be found guilty, not only would this give birth to an international crisis, it would also shine a light on the reason why the Saudi journalist has been murdered, thus beckoning the question: is Khashoggi a martyr of free speech?

**5b. The story soon became politicized**. The governments of Turkey and Saudi Arabia have turned the matter from the juridical field into a political issue. The Turkish government has immediately pointed the finger against Saudi Arabia and this fact messed up the political global scenery, asking for clarity. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia blamed diverted elements of secret services, trying to keep out the royal family. Saudi Arabia has many interests in saving face because of the FII (Future Investment Initiative), while Turkey would like to see its failure. Trump took a more balanced position and tried to be kindly diplomatic because his aim is to preserve USA economical affairs.

**6.The treatment of Khashoggi has provoked a crisis in international relations.** Turkey and Saudi Arabia were backed up by several other main countries, given that Saudi Arabia has had the US' support for over 40 years now: Trump has shown his support for the Saudi and refuses to take a stand until evidence will prove him wrong. Meanwhile, Turkey, along with Russia, has been strumentalizing the situation in its favor, wanting to prove Saudi Arabia's lack of diplomacy. Relations between the two lead countries were already tense, but Khashoggi's death has compromised them definitely. The diplomatic world is about to be deeply changed, but it may also bring international relationships back on an old path: the US and Russia are, once again, one against another but they're also not the main protagonists. Russia has admitted that, since no actual proof has been found, they can't cut all ties with Saudi Arabia; however, the murder of someone that has such ties with the US won't be underestimated.

**7aThe US and some other traditional western allies of Saudi Arabia have been embarrassed by the story.** Concerning the US, its public opinion harshly condemns the facts and aims to a definitive breakdown of the currently elapsing relations with Saudi Arabia. By contrast, President Donald Trump stressed the importance of Saudi Arabia as a counterbalance to Iran and firmly opposed to the need of sanctions against the country, because of the way it would affect the US economy.  Nevertheless, is not to be neglected that the country has already planned a $110 billion arms sale to the Saudi, whose halting would entail a consistent financial loss. The UK, France and Germany say, “Nothing can justify this killing and we condemn it in the strongest possible terms”. Nonetheless, all three nations would rather wait further explanation before making any judgement, even though they are all taking part to the growing boycott of the investment summit that will take place in Riyadh.

**7bThe US and some other traditional western allies of Saudi Arabia have been severely embarrassed by the story**. The European Union condemns the murder and claims for deep investigations on the accident, France in particular, and also Spain asked for transparent investigations and urges to find who is the responsable for it. Nobody believes Saudi Arabia version anymore as they first said there was no evidence the murder happened in their embassy, but some days later admitted that the murder happened there. This lack of transparency lead the European countries to strengthen the suspects on Saudi Arabia attitude. Many western countries also asked for an involvement of the United Nations, including Germany. In the United Kingdom, the Labour Party has called on the governing Conservative party to suspend arms sales to the kingdom. The only one who seems to trust Saudi Arabia version is Donald Trump, the US president. He said Saudi Arabia’s explanation for how Khashoggi was killed was credible, even if the event is still unacceptable. What is most important, he said he prefers any sanctions against Riyadh not include cancelling the defence deals, that, together with the oil trade, are the closest bond between the countries. The USA and Saudi Arabia are long time alleys.

**7c The US and some other traditional western allies of Saudi Arabia have been severely embarrassed by the story**. Donald Trump, the president of the United States, defended the Saudi regime from the beginning, declaring himself sure about the innocence of the Saudi government; those declarations have already been contradicted by the Saudi consulate itself. France, another strong allied, has strongly convicted the murder, but has taken no action, as many other European countries. Uk, for example, convicted the event too, but at the same time declared it will not take any action against the Saudi government. It is not willing to face the economic consequences, in fact, as many other states that, for economic and financial reasons, won't take any concrete action.

**8.It remains to be seen how this incident will be resolved.** What happened the 2nd October 2018 in the Saudi’s consulate in Istanbul is a Dramatic diplomatic case which risks to undermine the situation in an already troubled zone: the Middle East. In this region, recent events have seriously and rapidly changed the geopolitic strategies  of international and local powers. It is also not to exclude a direct American intervention due to its consistent military presence and its relevant import and export interests that could be affected by the issue. Even if all the major exponents of the international community have provided their efforts in order to prevent an escalation, it remains difficult to see how this incident will be solved. In order to avoid a Middle East’s crisis, it is necessary to find a compromise between Turkey and Saudi Arabia but the situation is still confused and unstable. In fact, while from one side, a Turkish official, speaking anonymously and without providing evidence, said Khashoggi was murdered inside the consulate,  the Saudi government continue to vehemently deny this theory, continuing to cast shadows about what happened, pulling away the idea of an agreement between the parts. Despite Arabian will try to cover up the truth, the International Community will have to encourage an economic and political agreement between the two countries mentioned before in order to preserve the actual "status quo" in this unsteady area. In conclusion, this is the only way to preserve this area from future instability.