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**FOREIGN POLICY OF THE UNITED KINGDOM:
PECULIARITIES OF BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL COOPERATION**

**ЗОВНІШНЯ ПОЛІТИКА СПОЛУЧЕНОГО КОРОЛІВСТВА:
ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ДВОСТОРОННЬОГО
ТА БАГАТОСТОРОННЬОГО СПІВРОБІТНИЦТВА**

The article is devoted to the analysis of the peculiarities of the foreign policy of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in both bilateral and multilateral aspects. Relations between the UK and Ukraine are developing rapidly. The article also examines UK's relations with the USA, Germany, and China. First of all, economic relations between the UK and the USA are analyzed in the article. In UK-Germany relations much attention is paid to maintaining strong economic ties. In UK-China relations it is worth noting that relations between the two countries are tense, but at the same time both parties are interested in continuous economic cooperation. In the article, it is stressed that the UK is an active participant in many international organizations. NATO is the primary way for the UK to achieve national and collective security, while AUKUS aims to strengthen security in the Pacific region. The Commonwealth also plays an important role as a means of extending British influence.

Key words: *the UK, foreign policy, bilateral and multilateral cooperation, NATO, AUKUS.*

Стаття присвячена комплексному аналізу особливостей зовнішньої політики Сполученого Королівства Великої Британії та Північної Ірландії у двосторонньому та багатосторонньому вимірах на сучасному етапі. У статті зазначається, що Сполучене Королівство, як одна з найрозвиненіших країн світу, має концеп-

цію, що виступає в якості ідейної основи британської зовнішньої політики. У статті аналізується процес імплементації ідеї «Глобальної Британії» (“Global Britain”) через різні способи співпраці. У статті також приділено увагу аналізу організаційних засад здійснення зовнішньої політики, насамперед діяльності Управління закордонних справ і розвитку (Foreign Office) та його спеціальних департаментів, відповідальних за різні аспекти зовнішньої політики. У статті відносини Сполученого Королівства Великої Британії та Північної Ірландії з Україною, США, Німеччиною та КНР визначаються як такі, що відіграють важливу роль у сучасний період. Відносини Великої Британії та України активно розвиваються. Також підкреслюється, що підтримка України є одним з непорушних принципів зовнішньої політики Сполученого Королівства. У статті аналізуються відносини зі Сполученими Штатами Америки насамперед в економічній сфері. У відносинах з Німеччиною велика увага приділяється збереженню міцних економічних зв’язків після Brexit, оскільки це створило нові виклики для обох країн. Шляхом проведення комплексного аналізу відносин Сполученого Королівства Великої Британії та Північної Ірландії з Китайською Народною Республікою було визначено, що відносини між двома країнами є, з одного боку, доволі напруженими, але водночас країни зацікавлені співпрацювати в економічній сфері. Великобританія є активним учасником багатьох міжнародних організацій. У статті визначено, що членство Сполученого Королівства в НАТО є основним способом досягнення національної та колективної безпеки, тоді як AUKUS спрямований на зміцнення безпеки в Тихоокеанському регіоні. Також у статті підкреслюється, що Співдружність Націй відіграє важливу роль в контексті розширення британського впливу.

Ключові слова: Об’єднане Королівство, зовнішня політика, двостороннє та багатостороннє співробітництво, НАТО, AUKUS.

Problem statement. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (hereinafter – the UK) is rightfully one of the most influential actors in world affairs in the XXI century. Its regional gravity and global ambitions are destined to have a major impact on the inevitable evolution of the international system in the future. Its efforts of global engagement have already started to pay off, establishing this nation-state as a new leading power in the world. The UK attempts to create a single yet multidimensional vision for its future. An important place in the UK foreign policy is given to cooperation at both bilateral and multilateral levels.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The scope of the research on the chosen topic requires the involvement of a wide range of literature, starting from numerous official program documents of the UK [6; 7; 16] and up to multiple scientific papers [4; 8; 10; 14], touching on various topics of foreign policy, such as defense, economy, Brexit, bilateral cooperation, interaction with international organizations, etc.

The purpose of the article is to define and comprehensively analyze the features of bilateral and multilateral cooperation as an important component of UK foreign policy.

Presentation of the main material. The UK was seeking a new role in the multilateral global system after leaving the European Union. As the nation decided on Brexit, it began to face the biggest identity crisis since the end of the Cold

War. UK’s willingness to reconfigure its global image and engage more deeply with regional and international networks, as a result of its withdrawal from the European Union, has led to the emergence of a new foreign policy vision for the country – “Global Britain”.

“Global Britain in a Competitive Age: Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy” (hereinafter – Integrated Review) which was published in 2021 can be referred to as the main foreign policy paper. In this document, the government’s vision for the UK’s role in international relations is presented [6].

“Global Britain” is a complex, wide and ambitious foreign policy project, which acknowledges the contemporary international challenges and attempts to apply appropriate solutions to expand the reach of the United Kingdom in the world and earn it a role of a global leading power.

The United Kingdom has the next main subjects, responsible for foreign policy making and implementation: the UK Parliament, the Prime Minister and the Cabinet, the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (hereinafter – the FCDO). Their collective efforts, combined with a tight cooperation with multiple other governmental and nongovernmental entities help to shape and execute the national foreign policy agenda.

The most important department of the government, which is primarily responsible for the protection and promotion of the UK’s interests

abroad, is the FCDO. This body was created in September 2020 as a result of the merging of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development. It aims at implementing the “Global Britain” foreign policy agenda, using the UK’s diplomatic and development tools in a more integrated way. It employs around 17,300 staff in its diplomatic and development offices worldwide, including 280 overseas embassies and high commissions [5].

The FCDO works with 12 agencies and public bodies: Wilton Park, British Council, Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK, Great Britain-China Centre, Marshall Aid Commemoration Commission, Westminster Foundation for Democracy, Independent Commission for Aid Impact, BBC World Service, Chevening Scholarship Programme, FCDO Services, Government Communications Headquarters, and Secret Intelligence Service [2].

The FCDO’s mission is to pursue the UK’s national interests and project the UK as a force for good; to promote the interests of British citizens; to safeguard the UK’s security; to defend its values; to reduce poverty and tackle global challenges with its international partners. The body’s main priority outcomes include: shaping the international order and securing the UK’s role as a force for good (by supporting sustainable development and humanitarian needs, promoting democratic and liberal values, and establishing common international standards); increasing UK’s safety and resilience to global threats; extending and amplifying the UK’s influence in the world. The department’s governance structure includes numerous boards and sub-committees: FCDO Supervisory Board, FCDO Management Board, Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, FCDO Senior Leadership Board, and Executive Committee. Other agencies which are connected to the body include: the Investment Committee, the People Committee, and the Delivery Committee. The FCDO also sponsors the British Council and FCDO Services [1].

Therefore, there are several key entities in the UK political system, involved in shaping and implementing of foreign policy. The executive branch, represented by the PM and the Cabinet along with FCDO, possesses the primary implementation power, while the Parliament ensures their ability to perform and challenges their decisions, thus

controlling and limiting power. Furthermore, these bodies work with multiple ministerial and non-ministerial departments, executive agencies, advisory non-departmental public bodies, and other entities, which provide expertise in their respective fields in order to improve the quality of the work of government.

If we turn directly to the analysis of the features of the development of bilateral cooperation in the UK, it should be noted that the United States of America and Ukraine are of the highest priority for the UK at the moment. The USA has been a trusted strategic ally for the UK for decades which allowed them to develop extremely tight security, economic and political bonds. Aside from transatlantic bonds, Ukraine has become UK’s most important European strategic partner. Having shown its willingness and ability to stand its ground, Ukraine has become the core of the European security architecture. The coordinated efforts of Ukraine and its partners will ensure the failure of Russia’s imperial ambitions to redraw the political map of the continent. It is in the UK’s interest to continue providing military, economic, and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, thus deepening the relationship even more. The UK also cooperates with multiple other European and non-European partners within and outside the framework of NATO, yet in our view, on a bilateral level, it is the nation’s ties with Ukraine and the US that are of the highest significance at the current stage.

The cooperation between the United Kingdom and Ukraine dates all the way to the independence of the latter. Then the following events took place. In 1994 the Budapest Memorandum was signed. However, the agreement proved to be useless. The important step was taken in 2008, as Ukraine was seeking closer ties with the European Union and its ambitions of joining NATO were welcomed by the member-states during the 2008 Bucharest summit. The agreement on the organization’s open-door policy was also achieved during the summit. That year a Joint Statement was signed between Britain and Ukraine, which officially declared the strategic nature of their cooperation. After Brexit, the “Global Britain” vision essentially became a framework of cooperation between the two, leading to deeper engagement in political and defense areas. In 2020 the Political, Free Trade and Strategic Partnership Agreement formalizes and modernizes the strategic

framework of cooperation between the two countries [14].

Up to now the last major shift in London's foreign policy regarding Ukraine came on 24 February 2022. The start of the bloodiest conflict in Europe since WWII secured Britain's position as the closest strategic ally of Ukraine. It can be argued that in a way the war became a test for the UK to demonstrate its ability to lead the Western community and truly become a force for good, which the country successfully passed.

Analyzing the economic dimension of the UK's bilateral cooperation, it is necessary to note the following. According to the Office for National Statistics, the top 5 trading partners for the UK in 2020 were: the United States, Germany, China, the Netherlands, and France. These nations accounted for 46% of total trade in goods [18].

It is worth starting with the study of the UK-US economic partnership. On May 5, 2020, the formal launch of trade agreement negotiations between the United States and the United Kingdom was announced by US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and UK Secretary of State for International Trade Elizabeth Truss. As part of the US-UK Trade and Investment Working Group, the countries have signed agreements on specific products (US-UK Agreement on Trade in Wine, US-UK Agreement on Mutual Recognition of Certain Distilled Spirits/Spirits Drinks, Agreement on Mutual Recognition Between the US-UK, Agreement Between the US-UK on the Mutual Recognition of Certificates of Conformity for Marine Equipment, Bilateral Agreement Between the United Kingdom and the United States of America on Prudential Measures Regarding Insurance and Reinsurance), which were covered by existing agreements the United States maintains with the EU [19]. However, the negotiations did not lead to a final agreement on free trade between the two nations. This FTA has been a major priority for the UK and its Global Britain agenda, as it would demonstrate the country's competitiveness in the post-Brexit era and would ensure the stability of the bilateral trade relations with the United States.

As of 2020, the UK had the position of the seventh-largest goods trading partner by country for the United States, and its largest services trading partner. The UK comprised 5% of total U.S. trade, and the United States accounted for nearly one-fifth of total UK trade. In 2021, total U.S. goods

trade with the UK was \$118 billion (\$61 billion in exports, and \$56 billion in imports), while total US-UK services trade was \$115 billion (\$63 billion in exports, and \$53 billion in imports). In 2020, the UK was the top destination, by country, for the Foreign Direct Investments of the US. The US FDI stock in the UK was \$890 billion, and the UK FDI stock in the United States was \$487 billion [20]. In the four quarters to the end of Q2 2022 total trade in goods and services (exports plus imports) between the UK and the United States was £234.7 billion, which signified an increase of 14.8%, compared to the same period last year [15; 18].

While the trading relationship between the US and UK is relatively open and their trade policies are aligned on many fronts, frictions emerge periodically on specific issues e.g., on tariffs during the Trump presidency. However, the new White House Administration aims to improve the bilateral ties between the two. The nations signed a "New Atlantic Charter" in 2021 that emphasizes open and fair trade. Economic partnership with the US remains vital for the UK economy, with both parties enjoying a steady flow of goods and services for decades and aiming to improve their trading relations even further.

The Federal Republic of Germany occupies the place of the second-largest trading partner for the UK. According to Financial Times and the Guardian, the trade between the two nations has dropped significantly since the Brexit referendum, with Britain gradually falling out of the top five of Germany's largest trade partners [9; 13]. At the current stage trade relations between the EU and UK are based on the "Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community, of the one part, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, of the other part", which entered into force on 1 January 2021. The agreement was regarded as a total success, with both parties benefiting from it. However, the costs of exports and imports for both countries have gone up since the agreement came into effect. Thomas Sampson, associate professor of economics at the London School of Economics, said that "the erosion of trade ties caused by the Trade and Cooperation Agreement is likely to be permanent, as firms struggle with the additional red tape created by the UK leaving the single market and customs union" [13]. Intensive cooperation and close friendly relations with the United Kingdom

are essential for the European Union as well as for Germany. According to the UK Department for International Trade, in the four quarters to the end of Q2 2022 total trade in goods and services (exports plus imports) between the UK and Germany accounted for £122.5 billion, signifying an increase of 6.1% from the four quarters to the end of Q2 2021. The majority of UK imports from Germany in the four quarters to the end of Q2 2022 (£63.1 billion (87.1%)) were goods, with only £9.3 billion (12.9%) being services. The UK reported a total trade deficit of £22.4 billion with Germany.

In 2020, the stock of FDI from the UK in Germany was £40.8 billion, with the top destination for UK FDI being the US (24.1% of the total UK outward FDI stock). The stock of FDI from Germany in the UK was £106.6 billion, with the top investor in the UK being the US (24.8% of the total UK inward FDI stock). Integrated Review describes Germany as an essential ally, with deep economic ties and a growing foreign policy partnership [6]. The UK is willing to bolster its economic and political ties with Germany in the years ahead.

The People's Republic of China is another crucial trade partner for the UK. With Xi Jinping securing his third term as China's top leader, the PRC continues on its political and economic paths as the most powerful actor in Asia. According to the Department for International Trade, in the four quarters to the end of Q2 2022 total trade in goods and services between the UK and China accounted for £92.9 billion, which was a decrease of 1.6% compared to this period in the previous year. China became the UK's 4th largest trading partner with 6.3% of total UK trade in the four quarters to the end of Q2 2022, a slight downturn compared to 6.9% in the four quarters to the end of Q1 2022 (when China was the third largest trading partner).

As of 2020, the outward stock of foreign direct investment from the UK in the PRC accounted for £12.9 billion (0.8% of the total UK outward FDI stock), while the inward stock of FDI in the UK from China was £3.4 billion (0.2% of the total UK inward FDI stock). While the trade with Beijing is beneficial and important for London, the UK is rather critical of China's long history of human rights abuses, which contributes to a rather ambiguous relationship between the two. According to Integrated Review, China also presents the biggest state-based threat to the UK's economic security.

For that reason, the document proposes a strong diplomatic framework for this relationship, which would allow to manage disagreements and defend the UK's values, while at the same time preserving space for cooperation where the interests of both parties align [6]. The pursuit of a positive economic relationship, including deepening trade links and aiming for more Chinese investment in the UK is the desired result of cooperation in the future.

Therefore, the largest and most significant trading partners for the UK are the United States of America, the Federal Republic of Germany, and the People's Republic of China. The Covid-19 Pandemic and Brexit have heavily contributed to the worsening of the trading ties between the UK and its partners, yet the prospects of future cooperation have not been damaged. The US remains UK's top trading partner and investor, which contributes to the close bilateral ties between them. Germany remains UK's top European trading ally, with both parties aiming at improving their economic cooperation. The PRC is another valuable partner, the relationship with which is rather equivocal, yet the UK is willing to continue cooperation with China in the areas of aligned interests.

An important place in UK foreign policy is occupied by multilateral cooperation. It is evident that Britain is one of the most important and influential members of the United Nations. Its efforts in establishing the organization at the early stages have contributed to relative stability in world affairs for many decades. However, the power shifts on the regional and global level, the development of new technologies, the rising question of presence in space, progressing climate change and emerging health challenges have shown the need to reconfigure and reform the United Nations and adapt it to the modern age, which the UK supports. Since the UK witnessed the birth of this multinational entity and has contributed many resources to its development, it would be no surprise if the reconstruction of this organization would begin under the British umbrella.

For the UK membership in NATO is the cornerstone of its defense and security strategy. The UK has been a trusted member of this intergovernmental institution since its inception and continues to commit its efforts to the alliance's development. London is one of the top contributors to the organization, accounting for 11% of the total budget [12].

UK expenditure on defense as a percentage of national GDP in 2021 was 2.3%, placing it at the 3rd position in global defense expenditure rankings (according to IISS) and the 3rd position in the ranking of NATO countries in the defense expenditure as a percentage of GDP, following Greece and the United States.

There is a commitment to drive forward a modernization program that embraces the newer domains of cyber and space as well as equipping the UK's armed forces with cutting-edge technologies [6].

Aside from the UK's cooperation within the NATO framework, a new dimension of regional security in the Indo-Pacific theater has recently emerged. The announcement of AUKUS – a trilateral security cooperation pact between the UK, the United States, and Australia – on September 15, 2021, signified the importance of these partnerships for the UK and increased the bond between the nations even more. The parties have shown their commitments to a free and open Indo-Pacific, and to an international system in general, a system that respects human rights, the rule of law, and the peaceful resolution of disputes. AUKUS has without a doubt become one of the most significant developments in the region and has also reevaluated the cooperation with the United States and Australia for Britain. The implementation of the Australia – United Kingdom – United States Partnership has two related lines of effort: providing Australia with a conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarine capability, while upholding the highest non-proliferation standards; and developing and providing joint advanced military capabilities to promote security and stability in the Indo-Pacific region [3].

Thus, AUKUS is another instance of the new foreign policy put into practice. It is evident that the UK seeks to expand its reach to the Indo-Pacific, securing its influence in the region, while simultaneously improving cooperation with Australia and the United States. The new alliance has a lot of potential, which if realized properly, could drastically change the security environment in the region. Yet such shifts will not be left unchallenged by regional powers such as the PRC. Another vector of regional influence includes Britain's efforts in joining the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) with the negotiations ongoing.

The Commonwealth is a unique organization that has significant importance for the United Kingdom. It includes 56 states (mostly former colonies) from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Americas, Europe and the Pacific [11]. It is evident that the Commonwealth is another great asset for Britain to expand its global reach and engage in a multiregional environment. Integrated Review states that “the Commonwealth is an important institution in supporting an open and resilient international order, bringing together states with a national interest in promoting democracy, sustaining individual freedoms, driving sustainable development and enabling cross-border trade in goods and services that supports economic growth” [6]. The forum helps the UK to coordinate actions with other member states and to discuss topical issues as well as to ensure close relationships with such influential nations as India, Canada, and Australia.

Conclusions. The UK strives to become a leading regional power with a global reach, which promotes free trade and democratic values, engages in the economic and political relations in many distinct and diverse regions of the world, and reassures its commitments to the principles of multilateralism, collective security and the rules-based international system.

At the current stage, in the strategic framework of bilateral relations, the most important partners for the United Kingdom are the United States of America and Ukraine. A decades-long alignment of interests and tight strategic cooperation granted the US the status of the most valuable and crucial partner for Britain. The Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 completely shattered the European security environment and brought havoc to the region and the entire international system. Britain's unwavering military, humanitarian, economic, and political support for Ukraine and immediate economic pressure on Russia made the UK one of the key leading powers of the West. As of now Ukraine remains at the core of European security and its successes on the battlefield, to some extent dependent on Western support, will dictate the further evolution of the regional security environment. The UK might seize the opportunity and become one of the key actors in a new potential security network in Eastern Europe.

In the economic dimension the United States of America, the Federal Republic of Germany, and the

People's Republic of China are the key partners of the UK at the moment.

The UK is heavily committed to the principles of multilateralism and the rule of law in international relations. For that reason, it is an active participant of numerous intergovernmental organizations and forums. The new foreign policy underlines the importance of such participation, which ensures that the voice of Britain will not only be heard on a global scale but also have significant political weight in respective areas of interest.

The UK has a permanent seat in the UN Security Council – the most powerful, yet at the same time, most criticized and controversial body in the structure of the United Nations – which gives it a considerable amount of authority within the organization. Aside from that, the country is also involved in multiple other UN programs and bodies, and it heavily contributes to reaching the goals of sustainable development. The UK is a founding member of NATO and has been a crucial partner of the alliance for more than 70 years.

The North Atlantic alliance is the cornerstone of British defense and security, and as the European security architecture continues to degrade, the UK's deep ties with the organization only become stronger.

The key and prioritized security partners of the United Kingdom are the NATO members. However, aside from that Britain's global ambitions have led to the creation of a new trilateral security partnership, which has the potential to shift the balance of power in the Indo-Pacific region – AUKUS. This pact highlights the UK's ambitions to deepen the cooperation framework with the US and Australia. This expansion of the UK interest is another instance of implementing the new foreign policy.

The Commonwealth serves as a great forum for the members, to discuss and decide on important policy issues. It helps the UK to keep contact and coordinate its actions with friendly states from multiple regions of the world as well as highlighting its willingness of collective and integrated approach to deal with various issues.

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