



**The Future of British Foreign Policy: Security and
Diplomacy in a World after Brexit, by Christopher
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The book, *The Future of British Foreign Policy: Security and Diplomacy in a World after Brexit*, is written by a well-known professor and expert in British foreign policy affairs, Professor Christopher Hill. He made an effort to trace the various dimensions and challenges of the UK–EU relationship since the establishment of the European Community, later the European Union.

Christopher Hill is currently the Wilson E. Schmidt Distinguished Professor at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) and an Emeritus Professor of International Relations at Cambridge University. As a pioneer academician in this issue, Hill believes that writing about the Brexit impacts, particularly about the foreign policy and the future of the UK is not easy and would be risky because of the ongoing debate on the issue (the debate was ongoing at the time of the writing of the book). In line with his assertion, even after signing the Brexit agreement, there are still numerous doubts about the future of the

deal as well as the ways in which it would impact the UK. Hill believes that there remain uncertainties about the two party's deal, but the importance of the issue convinces him to present his judgements and opinions. He argues that the relations between the UK and its European neighbors and their interdependence are more extensive than it appears, due to their historical, cultural, and geographical past. Thus in reality, the post-Brexit era would not much differ from the pre-Brexit era.

The UK has officially withdrawn from the EU since January 1, 2021. Although leaders from London and Brussels reached an agreement, chaos continues in certain parts of the UK, and Brexit' 'shamle hashtag' had been widely trended in the past few months. However, according to Hill, the situation would stabilize soon. Hill uses historical analysis to argue that there are complexities in the current situation of the United Kingdom and the European Union, but believes that the UK and EU's interdependence is beyond these problems.

The book consists of seven chapters. Half of the book focuses on the modern history of the UK and the EU. In the first four chapters, the main historical events that made the UK-EU relationship specific after WW2 are discussed. These chapters focus on how and why certain European countries, mainly France, opposed the UK annexation to the EU and give readers a broad view of their strong ties, which date back to centuries. The fourth chapter could be considered as a final step to claim that the UK was not a follower that obeyed EU policies on the entire Brexit issue. In chapter 4, Hill argues that the UK selected various EU strategies and regulations based on its own interests. He refers to Boris Johnson's quotation in the period before the Brexit referendum saying, "My policy on cake is pro having it and pro-eating it" (p. 113). He dedicates an entire chapter to this issue: Brexit was not a

shocking event that altered every aspect of the UK-EU relationships.

Hill passes the dilemmas facing British foreign policy due to the referendum vote in 2016, but at the same time, he argues that – in or out of the EU – Britain is first and foremost a European power. He notes that the EU would remain the UK's priority despite its talks about the "Global Britain" plan. He believes that Global Britain, discussed since the Theresa May administration, is merely a slogan: "In the pol-mil sphere, at least the idea of global Britain has little content" (p. 198).

According to Hill, after Brexit, the UK may be more vulnerable to US unilateralism. Furthermore, the UK is one of the United Nations Security Council European members, and France, its European neighbor, has a special relationship with the United States. Since France has revived its position in the NATO structure, the UK needs to manage these two relations.

The majority of Brexit debates predict new socio-economic, commercial, and political horizons for the post-Brexit UK. Although almost all scholars believe the UK would make new ties with East Asian and African countries, the book argues that Brexit might not be considered a turning point in the UK's future policies, particularly in defense-related and political dimensions. The European Union and the US would remain the main ally for the UK, even after the Brexit, and Global Britain remains just a slogan. In the book, Hill presents his central idea, which is " 'in or out of the EU—we (The UK) are first and foremost a European power" (p.178). This argument is in contrast with other books that emphasize that the UK would attempt to make new ties to replace the previous ties with the EU, and look for a new future. T. J. Coles, in his book entitled *The Great Brexit Swindle: Why the*

Mega-rich and Free Market Fanatics Conspired to Force Britain from the European Union, claims that making new free trade agreements with East Asian countries was a decisive motivation for implementing the Brexit. Ralph Buckle and his colleagues, in "BREXIT: Directions for Britain Outside the EU" argue that the UK has to seek new strong economic and political alliances with countries outside of Europe, such as those in the Commonwealth.

In general, the book's most significant strength is its author, a well-known academician on UK foreign policy. As argued by Hill, foreign policy is a neglected debate regarding the Brexit agreement. Scholars and experts have widely discussed the future of trade, economy, and labor market after the Brexit; however, foreign policy has not been as extensively debated. Another advantage of Hill's book is the comprehensive characteristic of the presented arguments; it traces historical trends and developments and attracts even less knowledgeable audiences who want to read an inclusive text on the subject. To compare this book with similar works, one could mention Fabrizio Coricelli's books, *The Economics of UK-EU Relations*, and *After Brexit Consequences for the European Union*, among dozen other books that focus on the economic aspects of the Brexit agreement. Many scholars believe the main consequences of the Brexit agreement consist of economic issues, and they predict that the UK would form new partners outside of the EU. On the other side, professor Hill concentrates on foreign policy and believes that the EU would remain the main ally for the UK.

Regarding the book's weaknesses, it focuses more significantly on history and less on current international relations. For instance, the world may face various international relations developments such as growing East Asian powers, increasing US unilateralism, and popularity of radical right-wing politicians in the EU, which

would impact the future of international relations among the UK and other countries. This extensive emphasis on the past may distract the audience from the current situation. Another weakness may refer to a certain degree of redundancy and repetitiveness. The author discusses the same issues in various chapters at different times, e.g., UK-EU relationship problems.

The historical perspective of the book could be considered a double-edged sword. The less knowledgeable readers may enjoy the book since it gives them a broad view on the UK-EU relationship; on the other hand, experts may come to read information and data that they already know.

To sum up, the book is informative for obtaining an overview of the modern UK foreign policy decisions, its relationship with the EU, and the process and progressions of the Brexit. In terms of Post-Brexit impacts, the author presents his argument in the early pages of the book, stressing its ineffectiveness. As a result, the path to understanding Professor Hill's opinion would not be difficult for his readers.