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**MUTUAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN
AND POLAND AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SECOND WORLD
WAR THROUGH THE PRYSM OF THE WAR CABINET ACTIVITY
(BASED ON THE OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS OF THE BRITISH
NATIONAL ARCHIVES)**

The article reveals mutual relationships between Great Britain and Poland on the verge of World War II based on the British War Cabinet documents from the National Archives (Kew, United Kingdom). The authors acknowledge principles of the British foreign policy towards Poland and the activity of its diplomatic corps along with the War Cabinet. The paper determines that diplomatic and military-political relations between Great Britain and Poland have been multidimensional with deep historical roots.

The article represents the analysis of the main misunderstandings and challenges that determined British-Polish relations before and at the beginning of the Second World War. Sequentially, the paper shows the British position and interest regarding the strategic military partnership establishment with Poland. The authors examined British-Polish agreements that were signed during the spring-summer pe-

riod of 1939 to designate the nature of the negotiation process between the states. The publication also reveals the reasons for a weak practical element of the negotiation process, emphasising the difficulties concerning the Royal force on the European continent deployed on the Polish border. Also, the authors analyse scenarios of the counteractions towards the aggressive steps of Germany and study the mechanisms of the aggression deterrence considering different dynamics of the events. It is stated that along with the British influence on the situation in Poland, either France took an active part in the decision-making process.

The research is based on the British War Cabinet documents, including official diplomatic commentaries and reports written by ambassadors and British state officials regarding German actions on the Polish territories on the verge of World War II. Emphasising the cruel legacy of the Nazi regime, the authors describe the rapid nature of German army attacks and brutal treatment towards the Polish population in the first days of September 1939.

The authors concluded that actions taken by the British political and military circuits concerning aid to Poland at the start of World War II seem to have been inconsistent, unconfident and did not bring strategic effect.

After the Nazi occupation of Poland, British authorities had to change their approaches to the realisation of British-Polish relations. London accepted the idea to recognise Polish emigrated state officials headed by V. Sikorsky and provide them with substantial empowerment to the Non-Aligned Movement.

Key words: Great Britain, Poland, Germany, Diplomacy, Second World War, foreign policy, national interests, combat presence.

1. INTRODUCTION

Set of the Problem. In the system of global affairs, the history of diplomatic and military-political relations between Great Britain and Poland at the beginning of the Second World War has become a matter of interest and a vivid example of a comprehensive history. During the summer-autumn of 1939, world leaders subconsciously started to architect the shape of new world order and countries' attitude towards the beginning of the Second World War. Combat actions of the war had been actively developing and affecting dynamically diplomatic events and further aggravation of the conflict. Therefore, the analysis and introduction of the War Cabinet documents from the British archives to historians can help study the aspects of the Second World War and the impact of the British-Polish relations more thoroughly. Moreover, the formation of historical memory and further conflict prevention are essential aspects.

Analysis of the Recent Documents and Publications. Analysis of the international affairs on the verge of the Second World War and studying core

aspects of the British, Polish and German (during the A. Hitler's regime) foreign policies arouse interest among international and Ukrainian experts in history and political science.

It is necessary to outline the significance shown in the studies of L. Gerhard [1] and H. Arnold [2]. Primarily, they focused on the threats and misconceptions between powerful actors had at the beginning of the Second World War in the international relations system. Separate parts of these studies do reflect the relations between Great Britain and Poland in 1939.

Considering the national scientific environment in this field, such researchers as L. Zashkilniak and L. Krykun dedicated their papers to Polish history, drawing our attention to the analysis of British-Polish relations dynamic outgoing before and at the time of the war [3].

Another group of studies consists of works by Western European and Ukrainian historians who revealed different aspects of European policy before the Second World War and at its beginning, arousing the issues of aid to Poland, the first country occupied by the warfare.

The issue of British military aid to Poland before the war started is revealed in the Polish researcher W. Mazur's work [4]. The author highlights the substantially difficult state of Great Britain at that time what influenced the efficiency of the help and relationships between the countries.

Ukrainian scientist I. Mraka claims a lack of monolithic viewpoint amongst British MPs and military service regarding the future of Poland [5]. In his work, British researcher J. Greenhalgh emphasises how Great Britain enlarged their control of the country during the Second World War using warnings about air travel and eclipse as a lens through which it is possible to observe state attitude towards the internal situation [6].

Despite a substantial number of publications in the field of research, the need for objective and impersonal studies of the remarkable aspects concerning British-Polish relations before and during the Second World War still exists. Furthermore, an integral part of such research should be reliance on the unresearched foreign archival materials. It is necessary to say that the representative resource database, which includes documents of the War Cabinet and diplomatic correspondence, gave the possibility to discover the formation, establishment and development of the British-Polish relations of the chronological period.

The Objective of the Research. The research objective is to undertake the analysis and cover the development of mutual relations between Great Britain and Poland on the verge of and during the Second World War. Based on the War Cabinet reports from the National Archives of the United

Kingdom, the authors examined stages of interstate British-Polish relations, released British War Cabinet activity, as well as researched the viewpoint of the British parliament regarding the escalation and start of the Second World War. The authors also focused on the diplomatic activities of the War Cabinet in the context of revealed documents.

2. RESULTS OF RESEARCH

As it is commonly known, in the 1930s, the Versailles-Washington system of international relations had been gradually collapsing. The political circumstances of the after-war period did not satisfy all the affluent actors who strived for changing the political world map. Tense had been rising, and escalation in Europe and the Far East invigorated British politicians to seek various possibilities to assert influence on prevention from aggressive actions of Germany and its allies.

The development of relations between Great Britain and Poland had deep historical roots. Apparently, since the beginning of 1939, British-Polish relations have gained a new sense. On the threshold of the Second World War, Great Britain supported Poland, and those friendly relationships became a method for ambitious plans for the Kingdom. Implementing the political course of Appeasement of Nazi Germany, the Chamberlain's cabinet persuaded the Polish government in diplomatic support and military force of Great Britain.

This idea can be easily traced by analysing British and Polish agreements and resolutions that were entered into force during the spring-summer season in 1939. For instance, on the 31st of March 1939, N. Chamberlain officially announced to the British Parliament on providing Poland guarantees of immunity.

By diplomatic missions of Great Britain and the Polish Republic, with the help of military and political public officials, countries started a thorough negotiating process to create a joint military alliance. The analysis of the memorandums of Anglo-Polish staff conversations and commentaries testified about the substantial intensity concerning the talks, especially during April-August of 1939. The period is significant due to the frequent diplomatic correspondence and contacts with other countries such as France and the United States.

According to the memorandum by the Minister for Coordination of Defence of Great Britain, at that moment, the practical part of the British-Polish commitments, including military assistance of Britain, had acquired

clear and definite forms having only informative character. During all that time, the British command authorities had emphasised difficulties regarding the use of the Royal Forces on the European continent dislocated nearby the Polish frontiers. Firstly, due to the lack of British land forces. Secondly, the authorities had always accented to the low capacity of potential supply routes for the Royal Army through the Mediterranean and Romania routes particularly. Therefore, it was predictable that in the last August days of 1939, the cooperation project between Polish Army and the Royal British Army achieved only the level of staff talks and was in the development process [7].

At the same time, the analysis of the documents regarding the main directions of the War Cabinet activities during spring-summer of 1939 showed that the overall international situation about Poland did become the main topic of most meetings [8].

The diplomatic corps of Great Britain had started looking for all potential scenarios for the development of the international relationship, searching and analysing approaches to resist aggressive German actions. The search of alternatives, restraint mechanisms and counteractions to aggression took place considering different scenarios.

With the assistance of many diplomatic representatives in Europe, the Foreign Office managed to collect information about German relationships with different European states in order to determine alternative scenarios for the foreseeable future. For example, at the cabinet meetings, ministers meticulously studied international reactions regarding the Anschluss with Austria. It is necessary to outline that among all foreign policy factors, which Great Britain took into account, German military movement on the border of Poland was in more detail.

On the one hand, British military-political circuits did not want to worsen their relations with Germany before the Second World War started. On the other hand, Great Britain demonstrated the determination of their intentions, calling behaviour of the German government provocative and those which would lead to the aggravation of interstate relations in Europe and the whole world [9].

At the same time, the role of British Diplomacy should not be underestimated concerning the forecast of the international situation before the Second World War. For instance, an accurate calculation of scenarios to maximise neutralisation of states provided Germany with finances and armaments that could have strengthened its military capacity.

The War Cabinet documents represented by the National Archives of the United Kingdom deserve particular attention. The report dated 24 July of 1939 marked as a secret one, contains an analysis of world affairs and possible further events of British-French aid to Poland if warfare started [9]. The report is said to have conducted 350 joint meetings of the British and French commission in the matter of Poland. In particular, the document includes analytical information about the possible neutrality of Italy. The report stated that Great Britain and France had to embark on any steps to convene Italy to declare neutral status officially. The parties even discuss a scenario of conducting a military operation in Italy on the part of the allies and speed capitulation to complicate Germany's condition and help Poland. In addition, the document includes conclusions according to which most possible neutrality could have been Spain considering the consequences of the civil war in the country.

A Polish military historian W. Mazura accurately acknowledges in his research that the attitude and estimates of British military authorities about the situation in Poland significantly affected the British and French final decision. In this context, it should be highlighted that France tended to rely on Great Britain regarding settling foreign policy decisions before and at the beginning of the Second World War [4, p.72].

The attack on Poland and quick occupation committed by Nazi Germany led to fundamental changes in the political, military and economic situation in Europe and the world. Subsequently, the British political circuit had to address frequently every change that had been happening in the world scene by adjusting their political course.

In the research «Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin», T. Snyder emphasises the outrageous character of Nazi military operations, huge humanitarian losses and suffering of locals on the Polish territories [10, p. 163–168].

Official commentaries and reports of diplomats and state authorities regarding German actions in Poland in early September of 1939 contain evidence of the significant human toll in Polish armed forces and civil population. Many messages testified about the mass character of attacks on strategically essential objectives for a victimised country and the thorough readiness of German military operations on the Polish land.

Along with total failure in the military defence, ultimate worsening of the psychological state of the Polish army, including the downfall of moral spirit among Poles caused by brutal German attacks and actions taken re-

garding civil populations, took place. For instance, the diplomatic reports show propagandist activity with regard to the Polish people. Moreover, the British secret service reported information about the mass German bombing of civil objectives and dwellings and even poisonous substances dispersing. For example, the report dated September 1939 reveals evidence about the poisoning of children with sweets they had found in the streets of Polish cities after German bombings. The German cynicism in military actions on the territory of Poland is impressive. According to the archives, sweets were wrapped like they were produced by Polish confectionery factories. Incidents of fatal poisoning were registered in Warsaw on 4 September and Lublin on 6 September in 1939 [11].

The documents of the British War Cabinet dated the first two weeks of September 1939 comprise numerous arguments about the rapid nature of military actions and intensive air attacks in Poland, which, therefore, bitterly demoralise the Polish army and civil people. In this regard, Captain Davies, the representative of the British Mission to Poland, mentioned in his report addressed to the British government dated 8 September 1939 that during the systematic airstrikes, German were bombing not only military objectives but enterprises, power stations, dwellings, etc. Also, Captain Davies emphasises that heavy German air attacks aimed to threaten Poles [12]. At the same time, the representative focused attention on the heroic resistance of the Polish army. In the protocol of the 9 September 1939, Polish courage in counterattack is outlined [12].

In September 1939, Great Britain did not provide Poland with efficient assistance what soon became a reason for condemnation in postponement or even betrayal [4, p. 43-44]. However, the possibilities of London were limited enough what is clear according to the archival documents.

The idea to enter into war during the first phase using a wide range of air forces was rejected by the combat officials of the Royal Army in August 1939. Moreover, the British political and military authorities did not have integrity concerning the form and volume of security assistance to Poland, especially the use of Royal Forces in the active phase of the conflict. The British justified as they had wanted to preserve the main air forces and naval armament in order to take advantage of it in the most appropriate military situation.

Through the fast nature of military actions in Poland in September 1939, substantial aid appeared to have been impossible. Firstly, because of the lack of the appropriate combat machinery the British army needed on the

European continent, it was hard to compete with Germany. Secondly, as the war started, the situation was worsening, and every day it was getting harder to relocate troops. Therefore, delays had become ordinary, especially in the Mediterranean routes concerning provision, as well as the political stability had been threatened of the Far East. In early September 1939, Lord Hankey, in one of his reports dedicated to German air operations in Poland, emphasised the importance of responsibility to consider any possible risks [8].

That British military aid, which succeeded in getting to Poland, was not in enough amount and did not help to affect the sequence of combat operations significantly. In other words, the support was to raise the morale spirit of the Poles. According to the War Cabinet reports, even frequent use of the British forces would not stop military actions in Poland and general German aggression [8].

In mid-September 1939, London concluded that the Polish army was totally defeated and soon would lose its independence. Although the sequence of events was not surprising, the circuit of British political and military elites began to realise that passive attitude towards Polish “East front” could have fatal consequences for the Polish-British relations in the foreseeable future.

Analysing the reasons for the unknown military aid from Great Britain to Poland in the war with Germany, the British general E. Ironside wrote in his diary that «...we have lost our strategic advantage. We have lost the perfect opportunity» [13, p. 91]. Soon, German general A. Jodl stated that the German army could have been defeated in 1939 if 110 French and British divisions had acted [14].

At the end of September 1939, the British government started the new rhetoric in British-Polish relations. It was highlighted that Great Britain did not recede from its responsibilities concerning Poland and had an intention to help Polish elites to renew their independence. After the declaration of the emigrated Polish government headed by V. Sikorsky, Great Britain recognised them. In addition, London started to support them in the framework of diplomatic and military-political dimensions [15]. Moreover, the British government significantly maintained the organisation and proliferation of the Non-Aligned Movement on the occupied Polish territories. This fact affected further development in their interstate relationships.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Concluding the main results of the research, it is necessary to outline that the development of mutual relations between Great Britain and Poland took a

significant place in studying and understanding the interwar system of international relations and diplomatic collisions on the verge of the Second World War.

Military and Political actions of the British statesmen regarding the aid to Poland were incoherent and without vital determination and speed in the decision-making process. Great Britain was directed by their interests first, and, therefore, outcomes appeared to have been minor. In this case, it is crucial to understand the mechanisms of foreign affairs decision-making due to the representation of the archival documents to the socio-historical environment.

After the Nazi occupation of Poland, British authorities had to change their approaches to British-Polish relations through recognition and empowerment of Polish emigrated government officials headed by V. Sikorsky.

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ВІДНОСИНИ ВЕЛИКОЇ БРИТАНІЇ ТА ПОЛЬЩІ НА ПОЧАТКУ ДРУГОЇ СВІТОВОЇ ВІЙНИ КРИЗЬ ПРИЗМУ ДІЯЛЬНОСТІ ВІЙСЬКОВОГО КАБІНЕТУ (НА ОСНОВІ ДОКУМЕНТІВ БРИТАНСЬКИХ НАЦІОНАЛЬНИХ АРХІВІВ) КОНФЛІКТУ

У публікації проаналізовано відносини Великої Британії та Польщі на початку Другої світової війни на основі матеріалів британських архівів. Розкрито засади польського напряму зовнішньої політики Великої Британії й особливості діяльності її дипломатичних представництв і Військового кабінету. Визначено, що дипломатичні та військово-політичні відносини Великої Британії й Польщі багатогранні та мають глибоке історичне коріння. Виявлено основні суперечності й виклики, які визначали британсько-польські відносини напередодні та на початку Другої світової війни. Послідовно розкриті позиції й інтереси Великої Британії щодо встановлення військового стратегічного партнерства з Польщею. У публікації досліджено британсько-польські угоди та домовленості, що укладені протягом весни-літа 1939 р., й особливості переговорного процесу між країнами.

У публікації розкрито причини низької практичної складової частини переговорного процесу, наголошено на складнощах щодо використання військових сил Великої Британії на Європейському континенті та розміщенні біля кордонів Польщі. Також проаналізовано варіанти протидії агресивним крокам Німеччини й пошук механізмів стримування агресивних кроків з урахуванням різних сценаріїв розвитку подій із боку британських урядових та військових кіл. У статті визначено вплив військового керівництва Великої Британії на ситуацію навколо Польщі на рішення британського уряду, а також Франції.

На основі матеріалів британських архівів досліджено дипломатичні коментарі й звіти дипломатів та високопосадовців щодо німецьких дій на польських територіях на початку Другої світової війни. Визначено швидкий характер наступальних дій німецької армії, жорстке поводження з польським населенням із перших днів вересня 1939 р.

Дії військово-політичного керівництва Великої Британії щодо надання допомоги Польщі на початку Другої світової війни були непослідовними, нерішучими та не мали стратегічного ефекту.

Після нацистської окупації Польщі британське керівництво змінило підходи до польсько-британських відносин, уряд Великої Британії визнав польських урядовців в еміграції на чолі з В. Сікорським і надав максимальну підтримку в організації Руху Опору та оновленні незалежності.

Ключові слова: Велика Британія, Польща, Німеччина, дипломатія, Друга світова війна, зовнішня політика, національні інтереси, військова присутність.

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ОБМЕЖЕННЯ «ТРАНСФОРМАЦІЙНОЇ СИЛИ» ЄС У ДЕРЖАВАХ СХІДНОГО ПАРТНЕРСТВА

У статті досліджено ініціативу Східного партнерства ЄС крізь призму конструктивістських концепцій «нормативної сили» та «трансформаційної сили». Проаналізовано зміст, механізми й результати реалізації Східного партнерства з погляду ефективності «трансформаційної сили» ЄС. Розглянуто інституційні та геополітичні обмеження й виклики, які ускладнюють реалізацію нормативного впливу ЄС у державах Східного партнерства.

Стверджується, що вплив ЄС у країнах-партнерах ґрунтується на складному поєднанні його економічної привабливості, взаємозалежності, просуванні міжнародних норм та обіцянки більш тісної інтеграції, привабливої для деяких східних сусідів (Грузії, Молдови, України). Але творці Східного партнерства не врахували обмежень «трансформаційної сили» ЄС без перспективи членства, суттєвих внутрішніх перешкод на шляху реформ у країнах-партнерах, а також геополітичної ситуації в регіоні, зокрема сили російського впливу. Нездатність ЄС запропонувати сильні стимули