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Features of the current geopolitical situation and foreign policy of independent Ukraine

Abstract. The relevance of the subject under study is conditioned by the fact that in the context of Russian aggression, Ukraine is undergoing a new stage of state development, which primarily concerns its future position on the political map of the world and its role in the system of international relations. The purpose of this study was to analyse the geopolitical situation and foreign policy activities of Ukraine at the present stage of its historical development. General scientific and special research methods, including comparative, historical, and systemic, structural and functional, forecasting, institutional, and other methods, were used to solve the tasks set. The findings of this study can be considered as the identification of the stages of Ukraine's development in the diplomatic space, and the formulation of the state's foreign policy guidelines. The study described Ukraine's geopolitical strategy since independence and the state of its partnership potential at present. The study analysed the principal areas of foreign policy activities of the state authorities and the country's prospects in terms of its advancement on the world stage. The participants also identified the priorities of Ukraine's foreign policy and the problems of asserting the state in the international arena in the context of Russian aggression and the struggle for territorial integrity. The results of this study are important for government officials whose responsibilities include the development of the state's foreign policy course, as well as for scholars whose research interests include foreign policy in the European-Atlantic context and Ukraine's cooperation with foreign countries

Keywords: geopolitical strategy; national security of Ukraine; international relations; European integration; national interests; multipolar model of the world order

Introduction

After gaining independence in 1991, Ukraine proclaimed its right to an independent foreign policy (FP) aimed at ensuring its security and national interests. The state's foreign policy activity determines its successful development in the context of positioning in the international arena and support from the international community in the context of the armed aggression of the Russian Federation (RF). A thorough study of Ukraine's current foreign policy course is important for expanding cooperation with foreign countries and improving the efficiency of public authorities implementing policy at the international level (Sitsinskiy, 2017).

The relevance of the subject under study is conditioned by the fact that in the context of external aggression, Ukraine needs to intensify the integration into international politics, economy, and other areas of interstate cooperation, specifically within the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Alliance (NATO) (Kvasha & Syniakova,

2019). Therefore, an analysis of the state's foreign policy activities over the past 30 years will help to improve the mechanisms of activity of state bodies and officials vested with powers in the field of international relations and to formulate a consolidated foreign policy course.

Quite a few Ukrainian and European political scientists, historians, and lawyers pay attention to the issues of international relations in a broad sense and the topic of Ukraine's foreign policy in a narrow sense. However, this is the first time that a comprehensive analysis of Ukraine's activities in the field of international relations against the backdrop of Russian armed aggression has been conducted. For example, N. Sitsinskiy (2017) examines the legal content of Ukraine's foreign policy activities. The author argues for the need to improve the legal framework for a greater integration into international politics.

Ye. Yuriichuk & S. Opinko (2021) investigate the activities of Ukraine's foreign policy authorities in the United

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Nations (UN) and international courts to counter Russian aggression. The researchers state that the Ukrainian government has a systematic approach to countering hybrid warfare in this area. O. Kondratenko (2020) studies the issues of Ukraine's geopolitical status through the lens of the methodological discourse of Ukrainian and foreign scholars. In his opinion, the state is geographically located at the intersection of the strategic interests of three cultures: Euro-Atlantic, Eurasian, and Islamic. This factor, along with internal problems, has long determined Ukraine's positioning as a buffer country. V. Smolianiuk (2022) focuses on the international institutional and geopolitical consequences of the Russian-Ukrainian war. The researcher concludes that the armed aggression against Ukraine has led to Russia's economic decline, its collapse at the geopolitical level and its transition to a group of third world countries that have no influence on global political processes. In researcher opinion, this armed conflict has also demonstrated the need to form a new system of international relations and create modern security structures.

The theoretical and methodological foundations of Ukraine's foreign policy under P. Poroshenko's presidency are studied by M. Simchera (2019). The author emphasises that the country's foreign policy activities during this period were primarily aimed at safeguarding its national interests by maintaining peaceful and mutually beneficial cooperation with international actors. R. Bezsmertnyi (2018) considers the geopolitical context of the Russian-Ukrainian war. The scholar believes that the conflict on the territory of Ukraine cannot be perceived as a border or regional one, as it has the characteristics of a geopolitical confrontation. The scholar emphasises the reformatting of international relations on a global scale and states the need to create a new global security system that would meet modern realities. Polish scholar M. Wozniak (2016) holds the same opinion. He argues that the annexation of Ukrainian territories has dramatically changed US policy towards Russia. It is also for this reason that Washington has increased its military presence in Central and Eastern Europe and expressed its readiness to support the democratic aspirations of Ukrainians. The purpose of this study was to cover the content of Ukraine's foreign policy activities from the moment of proclamation of independence to the present period of historical development. The object of this study is the foreign policy of Ukraine.

The scientific originality of this study lies in the fact that, based on the analysis of scientific literature and information sources on the problems of the state policy of ensuring the national security of Ukraine in the foreign policy sphere, the study analysed the relations between Ukraine and the leading centres of power in the modern security environment and substantiated the priorities of Ukraine's foreign policy at the present stage.

Materials and Methods

The methodological framework of this study is a qualitative combination of general scientific and special research methods. Specifically, the following theoretical methods were used: abstraction, analogy, generalisation, and analysis. Using the method of abstraction, the study

identified the characteristic features of Ukraine's foreign policy activities. The analogy helped to consider the common features of the state's foreign policy in the early 1990s and at the present stage. The method of generalisation became the basis for studying Ukraine's place on the modern geopolitical map of the world. The analysis was used to highlight the specific features of Ukraine's geopolitical position.

Special research methods were also used in the study, including historical and systemic, structural and functional, comparative, institutional, political legal analysis, statistical data analysis, and forecasting. The historical and systematic method became the basis for the study of the stages of establishing diplomatic relations between Ukraine and foreign states and international organisations after gaining independence. Particular attention was paid to the recognition of Ukrainian independence by the international community, the characteristic features of the state's foreign policy in the early 1990s and the formation of the foreign policy course under the first President Leonid Kravchuk.

Using the comparative method, the author of this study managed to identify common and distinctive features of Ukraine's foreign policy activities before and after the beginning of Russian aggression, and to formulate the reasons for intensifying cooperation with the international community against the background of a full-scale invasion and threat of occupation of the state by the Russian Federation. The institutional method was used to investigate the development of the institutions of state power of Ukraine, which are vested with the functions of practical implementation and coordination of foreign policy activities. It also highlighted the problems of political institutions functioning in the context of external aggression.

The method of political legal analysis helped to consider the regulations that outline the priorities of the foreign policy of Ukraine and regulate the foreign policy activities of the state. Specifically, attention was paid to the Constitution of Ukraine, the Strategy of Foreign Policy of Ukraine, the Verkhovna Rada Resolution "On the Main Directions of the Foreign Policy of Ukraine" (1993), the Laws "On the Principles of Domestic and Foreign Policy", and "On National Security of Ukraine" (Draft Law of Ukraine No. 1117-1..., 2008; Law of Ukraine No. 2469-VIII..., 2018).

Using the forecasting method, the author of this study managed to identify the main and most likely ways of Ukraine's development in the context of the transformation of the international security system against the background of Russian aggression, possible bilateral and multilateral partnerships, projects and agreements with the world's leading economies. Assumptions were also made about the state's membership in the EU and accession to NATO in the near future.

The method of statistical data analysis became the basis for assessing the level of support of Ukrainians for the country's integration with the European Union and the North Atlantic Alliance. The study used the results of surveys conducted by the Sociological Group "Rating", Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, and the National Democratic Institute in Ukraine (Foreign policy

attitudes..., 2023; NDI, 2022). These data made it possible to analyse trends in the attitudes of citizens in different regions of Ukraine towards EU and NATO membership in various periods of historical development.

Using the structural-functional method, the study examined the impact of the situation in Ukraine on international politics, assessed the international community's reaction to the Russian invasion in February 2022, and outlined the activities of international institutions in the context of resolving the military conflict and bringing the aggressor to justice. Furthermore, this method helped to identify the role of internal factors and external actors in the changes in Ukraine's foreign policy activities under the presidencies of Leonid Kuchma, Viktor Yushchenko, Viktor Yanukovych, Petro Poroshenko, and Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Results

Ukraine's foreign policy activities in the first years of independence, international recognition, and establishment of diplomatic relations. Ukraine's declaration of independence in 1991 increased the influence of international factors on its socio-political and economic development. The solution to the problems faced by the state has moved into the realm of international relations – bilateral and multilateral. While the processes of globalisation that intensified in the 20th century were reflected in the intensification of Ukraine's relations with other states and international organisations.

The main document that defined the foundations of state-building processes, including in the field of foreign policy, was the Act of Declaration of Independence of Ukraine (Decree Verkhovna Rada..., 1991). Based on it, in July 1993, the parliament adopted a resolution "On the Main Directions of Ukraine's Foreign Policy" (Resolution on the Main..., 1993). It noted that an indispensable component of state development is its active entry into the global community. The country's national policy is aimed at preserving its territorial integrity and inviolability of borders, integrating into the global economic system, promoting the image of Ukraine as a trusted partner, and renouncing its nuclear status.

The main principles of the foreign policy developed the provisions prescribed in the Act of Independence of Ukraine and other domestic regulations and were in line with international law. According to these documents, Ukraine pursues an open foreign policy and intends to cooperate with all actors in international politics, avoiding dependence on other countries and superpowers.

In its relations with other countries, Ukraine is guided by the principles of mutual respect, equality, mutual benefit, and non-interference in internal affairs. It has no territorial claims against its neighbouring states and does not recognise territorial claims against itself and adheres to internationally recognised human and minority rights standards.

However, before 1991, Ukraine hardly ever conducted foreign policy, although it had a Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). Therefore, a fundamental problem for the authorities was to create an action plan in the international arena, define national interests and identify geopolitical

priorities. Ukraine's first steps in this area were taken under the presidency of Leonid Kravchuk, and the Foreign Ministry was then headed by A. Zlenko. The main task at that time was to make the state a subject of international law and achieve recognition by the international community (Zavadzka, 2016).

Notably, this process was quite lively. Within three months of regaining independence, more than 100 countries recognised Ukraine as an independent state. Poland was the first to do so, followed by Canada (both on 2 December 1991). Diplomatic relations were established on 8 and 27 January 1992, respectively. After the All-Ukrainian referendum on 3 December 1991, a protocol on the establishment of international relations with Hungary was also signed, and on 6 December, the Agreement on the Basics of Good Neighbourliness and Cooperation (Agreement "On the Foundations...", 1991) was signed. Furthermore, in the first months of the year, Ukraine was recognised by Lithuania, Latvia, Russia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Argentina, Bolivia, the United States, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom. By 2000, diplomatic relations were established with more than 150 countries, and Ukraine had 53 embassies at that time (Balabanov & Trofymenko, 2012).

The recognition of Ukraine's independence by the world's most influential states has demonstrated the irreversibility of the state-building process and demonstrated the final turnaround in the world community's position on this issue. Immediately after the declaration of independence, L. Kravchuk chose the path of dissociation from Russia and rapprochement with Western countries, which included integration into the Euro-Atlantic space. Therewith, there were many issues in the foreign policy sphere. One of them is the performance of Ukraine's obligations to renounce its nuclear status. The state of Russian-Ukrainian relations was also alarming, especially regarding the ownership of the Black Sea Fleet in Crimea and the succession of the USSR (Zadorozhny & Khmeleva, 2017).

Thus, immediately after declaring independence, Ukraine established diplomatic relations with all European countries and international organisations, defined foreign policy guidelines, established contacts at the highest level and expanded trade and economic relations.

Ukraine's foreign policy guidelines, the principle of multi-vectorism of the foreign policy. At the stage of establishing its statehood and formulating its foreign policy, Ukraine implemented the concept of multi-vectorism. This refers to developing and maintaining equal and mutually beneficial relations with various members of the international community following their own national interests (Aleksieyevets & Seko, 2016). For a long time, Ukrainian politicians have been discussing the choice of integration model: European or Eurasian. The Euromaidan, the annexation of Crimea and the Russian invasion in February 2022 finally resolved the debate over Ukraine's European path. Therefore, integration into the EU is currently Ukraine's only foreign policy option as a guarantee of strengthening its position in the international arena, acquiring additional guarantees of territorial integrity, restructuring and preparing the national economy to operate in fierce competition with global powers.

Notably, since Ukraine is in the centre of Europe, its interaction with European structures is quite natural. The course of rapprochement with the EU was set in the first years of independence under the presidency of Leonid Kravchuk. Thus, in 1994, Ukraine signed a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the organisation (Agreement No. 237/94-BP, 1994). This accelerated the establishment of relations at the highest level, and the Kyiv-Brussels Cooperation Council and Committee began their work. In 1995, Ukraine became a member of the Council of Europe (CoE) and has been involved in European policymaking since then.

In March 2007, Ukraine and the EU began negotiations on a new agreement. The following year, at the Paris Summit, Kyiv and Brussels reached a consensus on the Association Agreement, which is based on the norms of political association and economic integration. In 2009, the Association Agenda was agreed upon, replacing the EU-Ukraine Action Plan, and aiming to serve as a guide for reforms in preparation for the implementation of the future agreement.

At the fifteenth EU-Ukraine Summit in Kyiv in December 2011, negotiations on the Association Agreement were completed, and on 30 March 2012, its text was preliminarily signed by the heads of the negotiating teams (Association Agreement between..., 2014). The political part of the Association Agreement was signed on 21 March 2014, and the economic part on 27 June. On 16 September of the same year, the Verkhovna Rada and the European Parliament simultaneously ratified it. The EU-Ukraine Association Agreement entered into full force on 1 September 2017. This is an international legal document that consolidates the transition of relations between Ukraine and the EU from partnership to integration.

And in 2019, the Verkhovna Rada amended the Constitution with 334 votes, which legally consolidated Ukraine's course towards full membership in the EU and NATO (The Rada fixed..., 2019). The explanatory note states that these changes will contribute to the implementation of the European and Euro-Atlantic choice by expanding Ukraine's cooperation with the European Union and the North Atlantic Alliance until full membership is achieved. However, the introduction of the corresponding constitutional amendments did not accelerate integration into the Euro-Atlantic space (Ukraine will fix..., 2018).

A major step towards European integration was taken immediately after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Thus, on 28 February 2022, President Zelenskyy, Prime Minister Shmyhal, and Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada R. Stefanchuk jointly signed an application for EU membership. Already in June, the leaders of the 27 EU member states unanimously supported granting Ukraine the status of an EU candidate at a summit in Brussels (The EU finally..., 2022). Further preparation for membership will involve completing reforms in all areas of public life. This will create the conditions for bringing the standard of living and legal protection of Ukrainians closer to that of other countries of the Commonwealth. Therewith, the candidate status opened opportunities for financial aid provided through grants, investments, or technical aid,

and through participation in EU programmes and initiatives (The status of a candidate..., 2022).

Close cooperation with the North Atlantic Alliance is an essential element of Ukraine's pro-Western policy. The state has been taking steps to expand cooperation with NATO for three decades. The purpose of this cooperation is to provide guarantees of political independence and sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of state borders (Skachko, 2020). The relationship was officially launched in 1991 when Ukraine joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC). In 1994, the Partnership for Peace programme was signed, and in 1997, a NATO Information Centre was opened in Kyiv and a Charter on a Distinctive Partnership was signed.

Since 2014, due to the annexation of Crimea by Russia and the occupation of certain districts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, cooperation between Ukraine and NATO has expanded in several key areas. It covered a wide scope of areas, including reform of security and defence structures, military cooperation, and peacekeeping operations (Skachko, 2020). Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022 gave the idea of joining the North Atlantic Alliance a new sound. Whereas earlier citizens mostly believed that NATO membership could have negative consequences for the state, now, according to a poll conducted in autumn 2022, 79% of citizens would like Ukraine to become a full member of NATO by 2030. In May, 73% of respondents answered this question positively (The majority of Ukrainians..., 2022).

And at the end of September 2022, in response to the annexation of four Ukrainian regions by Russia, V. Zelenskyy announced that the application to join the North Atlantic Alliance under an accelerated procedure. The President is convinced that Ukraine has already proved its compliance with NATO standards. "We trust each other, we help each other, and we protect each other. This is the Alliance. De facto. Today, Ukraine is applying to make it de jure", the Ukrainian leader said (Ukraine submits an..., 2022). Thus, according to most of the population and Ukrainian politicians, NATO membership will guarantee security for the state. Therefore, Ukraine's further movement towards integration with the Alliance is unavoidable in the current security situation. At this stage, Kyiv's relations with the organisation play a vital role in the fight against the Russian aggressor.

The impact of Russia's aggression against Ukraine on the changing geopolitical situation in the world. Russia's invasion of Ukraine is regarded by the international community as a violation of international law and the principles of world order, which has become a serious challenge to European stability since the end of World War II (Bollfrass & Herzog, 2022). The consequences of Russian aggression are also significant for the system of global security and international order, which the UN must guarantee. That is why the entire civilised world united to help the Ukrainian resistance forces repel the Russian Federation, as there were no other levers of influence on the aggressor.

The current system of international law has failed to prevent the war or find a peaceful solution, and the

Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has proven ineffective in the face of an armed conflict of this magnitude. In turn, the UN and the International Red Cross failed to provide the necessary aid and were repeatedly accused of inaction. The war in Ukraine proved that the institutions created after the Second World War were ineffective. The international legal order also proved to be ineffective, as one state cannot invade another and declare it its territory, as Russia is currently doing (Cafruny *et al.*, 2023).

As noted by scholars I. Kotoulas and V. Pusztai, Russia's revisionism in Ukraine is not a separate episode, but a part of its foreign policy and an integral part of Russian statehood and an attempt to use force against post-Soviet states and globally (Kotoulas & Pusztai, 2022). Notably, Russian aggression has further contributed to the division of the world into two camps. Some states support freedom and democracy, while others support authoritarianism. The latter, apart from Russia, was joined by Iran, Syria, Belarus, and North Korea. It is improbable that China will join this coalition. Although Beijing is strengthening its economic ties with Moscow, it is unlikely to dare to side with the aggressor. China's support for the war would be considered as an endorsement of separatism, and such a position would not be beneficial for it due to several territorial claims. Although Beijing refrains from criticising Russia, it declares respect for the territorial integrity of all states.

Predicting the further course of the war, it can be assumed that the Kremlin will not give up on its goal in the question of Ukraine. However, despite the threats, Russia is not ready to challenge the North Atlantic Alliance (Lichterhan, 2022). Russia will focus on particular countries and try to deter their involvement in the armed conflict through subversion, propaganda through pro-government media resources, and energy terror.

At this stage of historical development, the world community is faced with the task of stopping the aggressor as soon as possible and making the war prohibitively expensive for Russia (Ratten, 2022). Given that the most likely scenario for the development of the situation in Ukraine is a "war of attrition", considering the difference in economic resources, as well as the limited effectiveness of sanctions imposed on the Kremlin, it is possible to achieve this goal (Levy & Leaning, 2022). However, only if the international community supports Kyiv at multiple levels: financially, militarily, logistically, technologically, informationally, and diplomatically.

Discussion

The issue of the specific features of Ukraine's foreign policy has been of interest to Ukrainian scholars since the emergence of this phenomenon and has become relevant now, in the period of tectonic shifts in international politics due to Russian aggression. Some American and European scholars are also paying attention to the topic of the Ukrainian foreign policy.

K. Shyrokykh (2018) focuses on the evolution of Ukraine's foreign policy, tracking the influence of external actors and domestic political factors on this process. The

author emphasises that the state's foreign policy has developed in interaction with both the East and the West. But the EU and NATO exerted influence through attractiveness and financial aid, while Russia used brute force, manipulation, and coercion. Proceeding from this, Ukrainian politics has traditionally been divided into two conventional parts. Some supported integration into the European Union and membership in the North Atlantic Alliance. Others advocated multi-vectorism, which would mean balancing between the East and the West. K. Shyrokykh (2018) also notes that after 2014, Russia is no longer considered as a suitable alternative to economic and political integration. This demonstrates the inevitability of reforms to achieve EU membership. Therewith, this research paper does not define Ukraine's prospects for Euro-Atlantic integration.

O. Kvasha & A. Syniakova (2019) focus on the problematic issues of Ukraine's integration into the European economic, social, political, and cultural space at the present stage of historical development. However, the authors consider economic factors as the main obstacle to EU accession. In their opinion, Ukraine needs to implement reforms in this area to improve the living standards of its citizens, ensure the harmonious development of economic institutions, high employment, and currency stability.

Researchers also identify internal factors that hinder Ukraine's progress towards the EU. These include the lack of tangible results of socio-economic reforms, high levels of corruption and economic crime, a shortage of experienced European integration specialists among the elite and civil servants, inconsistencies in legal systems and a gap in the level of economic development between Ukraine and the EU. However, in their study, they do not consider the factor of external aggression, which hinders the country's development and exacerbates the crisis in various spheres of public life. H. Mashtalir & S. Leskiv (2017) considered the issue of Ukraine's integration into the EU as a basis for the development of civil society. Scholars believe that the EU is setting a personal example of the importance of civil society's interaction with the authorities.

Ukraine's accession to the European Union will allow Ukrainian society to move to a qualitatively new level towards establishing European rules for the functioning of civil society. This refers to developing and implementing the rule of law by changing laws, the implementation of which, among other things, should be mandatory for all members of society, protecting violated human and civil rights and freedoms, and fighting corruption at all levels of government. In its foreign policy, the EU promotes relevant values in civil society, which is one of the important tasks on the way towards membership.

L. Skachko (2020) investigates the state and prospects of cooperation between Ukraine and the North Atlantic Alliance in the context of the formation of a common security and defence policy. The researcher suggests that it is the aggression and constant pressure from Russia that has led to the need for Ukraine to seek effective guarantees of its independence and territorial integrity. While military and political cooperation with NATO, as the most influential security organisation, is essential for the state. Recent public opinion polls show that Ukrainians have realised the

benefits of collective security after Russia's full-scale invasion. However, the question arises as to how stable citizens' support for NATO membership will be and to what extent it is a conscious choice rather than a temporary reaction to an external threat (The majority of Ukrainians..., 2022).

E. Wolff (2015) studies the topic of NATO expansion against the background of the situation in Ukraine. The author disputes the Russian propaganda narrative that the annexation of Crimea in 2014 was a response to the possible eastward expansion of the North Atlantic Alliance. In his opinion, NATO's presence in the post-Soviet countries (Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia) creates stability for the entire Europe, and does not pose a threat to Russia. Therewith, the researcher suggests that the prospects of Ukraine and Georgia's membership in NATO will lead to an escalation of the conflict between Russia and the Alliance leaders.

V. Osadchyi (2021) explores the topic of cooperation between Ukraine and NATO in the period from 2014 to 2020. The author emphasises that a sovereign and democratic Ukraine is essential for security on the European continent and constrains Russian expansion to the West. That is why the leadership of the North Atlantic Alliance supports Kyiv's course towards joining the organisation, aiding in strengthening the defence sector and bringing it up to NATO standards. However, internal factors such as ineffective anti-corruption measures and slow defence reforms made it impossible for Ukraine to become a formal NATO member in the near future. But this in no way limits cooperation with the Alliance and bringing it to a qualitatively new level in the wake of Russia's aggression.

A. Haque (2022) examined Ukraine's foreign policy in the context of the Russian invasion. The researcher argues that the Russian Federation, having launched a full-scale war, violated the prohibition of the use of force contained in the UN Charter (UN Office in Ukraine, 1945). And since Ukraine is fighting for its sovereignty and territorial integrity, it can demand aid from the international community in the form of weapons and economic sanctions against Russia. International law, in his opinion, stays one of the main levers in the arsenal of official Kyiv. The author also concludes that the aggressor should pay reparations for all the destruction and casualties. And those officials who unleashed the war in the centre of Europe must be brought to justice in international courts. Therewith, the researcher does not consider the prospects for the formation of a new system of international relations and the creation of security structures that would meet the challenges of modern times and prevent conflicts of this magnitude.

This topic is in the field of research interests of the group of scholars A. Cafruny *et al.* (2023). They consider the armed conflict in Ukraine as a proxy war between Russia and the United States. According to the authors, Russia, having failed to adapt to the post-Cold War capitalist order, adopted a geopolitical programme of confrontation in

response to NATO's advance to the East. The clash of these grand strategies also triggered a struggle for Ukrainian sovereignty. The researchers believe that the international community needs to formulate new security rules that would be in line with the multipolar world order. However, they do not factor in the very real possibility of the West winning the proxy war and the disappearance of Russia as a state that has influence on global political processes.

Conclusions

Based on the analysis of Ukraine's foreign policy activities at the current stage of historical development, the following conclusions can be drawn. After regaining its independence in 1991, Ukraine began to formulate its own foreign policy, which was aimed at preserving peace and stability in the world by protecting its own interests and security. During this period, the state pursued a multi-vector policy, which means maintaining mutually beneficial relations with various members of the international community. This was conditioned by the fact that for a long time there was no consensus in Ukrainian society on the choice of integration model: European or Eurasian. At the same time, in the first years after its independence, Ukraine set a course for European integration and distancing itself from Moscow.

The Revolution of Dignity, the annexation of Crimea, the unleashing of a hybrid war in eastern Ukraine and the full-scale invasion of Russia have finally eliminated the debate over Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic development choice. However, on the way towards EU and NATO membership, the state must overcome internal problems such as high levels of corruption, completion of reforms in all spheres of public life, and overcoming economic instability.

Therewith, against the backdrop of Russian aggression, Ukraine has considerably expanded its cooperation with the international community in various fields, from military to humanitarian. The war unleashed by Russia is global both in terms of its impact on food and energy security and its consequences for the norms recognised by the international community after the Second World War.

The prospect of further research on this topic is a detailed consideration of the various stages of development of the state's foreign policy strategy. Furthermore, this study can serve as a starting point for assessing Ukraine's prospects in the context of Euro-Atlantic integration in the coming years, as well as for analysing trends in the geopolitical orientations of the country's residents against the background of external aggression.

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Conflict of Interest

None.

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Особливості сучасної геополітичної ситуації та зовнішньополітичної діяльності незалежної України

Анотація. Актуальність досліджуваної теми зумовлена тим, що в умовах російської агресії Україна переживає новий етап державного розвитку, який насамперед стосується її майбутнього місця на політичній карті світу та ролі в системі міжнародних відносин. Метою даного дослідження є аналіз геополітичного становища та зовнішньополітичної діяльності України на сучасному етапі її історичного розвитку. Для вирішення поставлених завдань використовувалися загальнонаукові та спеціальні методи дослідження, зокрема порівняльний, історичний, а також системний, структурно-функціональний, прогностичний, інституціональний та інші методи. Результатами дослідження можна вважати визначення етапів розвитку України в дипломатичному просторі та формулювання зовнішньополітичних орієнтирів держави. У дослідженні охарактеризовано геополітичну стратегію України з моменту здобуття незалежності та стан її партнерського потенціалу на сучасному етапі. Проаналізовано основні напрямки зовнішньополітичної діяльності органів державної влади та перспективи країни з точки зору її просування на світовій арені. Учасники також визначили пріоритети зовнішньої політики України та проблеми утвердження держави на міжнародній арені в умовах російської агресії та боротьби за територіальну цілісність. Результати дослідження є важливими для державних службовців, до обов'язків яких входить розробка зовнішньополітичного курсу держави, а також для науковців, до кола наукових інтересів яких входить зовнішня політика в європейсько-атлантичному контексті та співробітництво України із зарубіжними країнами

Ключові слова: геополітична стратегія; національна безпека України; міжнародні відносини; європейська інтеграція; національні інтереси; багатополарна модель світоустрою