Great Power Politics in Greater Eurasia

Regional Alliances, Institutions, Projects, and Conflicts

Edited by
Rahman Dağ
and Özgür Tüfekçi



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LEXINGTON BOOKS
Lanham • Boulder • New York • London

Published by Lexington Books
An imprint of The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.
4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706
www.rowman.com

86-90 Paul Street, London EC2A 4NE

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information Available

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
ISBN 978-1-66691-411-5 (cloth : alk. Paper)
ISBN 978-1-66691-412-2 (electronic)

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992.

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Chapter Six

UK's Post Brexit Strategy "Global Britain"

A Quest of being Great Power

Emrah Atar and Hamdullah Baycar

On June 23, 2016, United Kingdom (UK) citizens were asked a question that has been debated since 1973, "should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?" The response (leaving the Union) was unexpected, which shocked the majority worldwide (Cohn, 2016). Different motivations lay behind the decision, but the most popular were sovereignty, immigration, and better funding for the National Health Services (NHS) (Clegg, 2016). In addition to the prioritization of such "problems" by the "Leave" supporters, they furthermore find the alternative to the European Union, the old friends including the Commonwealth Nations and beyond (Plummer, 2015). Even though many questioned the sincerity of the "Commonwealth" discourse due to the increased racism and xenophobia happening in the UK, returning to the 'kith and kin' discourse was played successfully during the campaign (Namusoke, 2016; Sharma, 2016).

Euroscepticism is a fact in many European Union members; the UK was no exception (Hooghe and Marks, 2007). Without going into a long debate of what have been the real motivations behind the vote, three elements are seen as vital by many; economy, sovereignty, and political elitism (Mauldin and Friedman, 2016). It was suggested (by the Leave supporters) that the UK would be able to fix its legislations per the UK requirements, not to the EU if Brexit happens (Ringeisen-Biardeaud, 2017). Human resources will be reshaped, and thus "unwanted" unskilled migrants will be kept out of the UK's territory (Lahuerta and Iusmen, 2019).

The main logic behind the Brexit was that the UK would restore its sovereignty (Bryant, 2018). By "freeing" itself from the European Union, it will be able to go for "Global Britain," particularly those places where it has historic links due to its imperial history (Global Britain, 2019).

and many others to which the UK had an imperial history over them. Once entirely discursive, the Global Britain initiative now is aimed to be the reality in the post-Brexit period. While it is still early to decide whether the UK can achieve its Global Britain aims and regain its great power position in world affairs, it is clear that this strategy will be on the top agenda of the current and successive UK governments and thus individually participating great power politics, especially in the areas once they ruled.

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