



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Transatlantic Relations After Brexit: Continuity, Change, and Uncertainty

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ABSTRACT

The United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union marked a watershed moment in contemporary European politics, with significant implications for the transatlantic relations framework. This paper examines how Brexit has reshaped the political, economic, and security dynamics linking the United Kingdom, the European Union, and the United States. While the transatlantic partnership remains anchored in shared democratic values, institutionalised security cooperation, and deep economic interdependence, Brexit has introduced new layers of complexity and strategic recalibration. The paper examines three primary dimensions: the continuity of defence and intelligence collaboration, especially within frameworks such as NATO; alterations in trade negotiations, regulatory harmonisation, and diplomatic coordination; and the ambiguity surrounding the future of the 'special relationship' between London and Washington. It also evaluates the impact of Brexit on the EU's quest for strategic autonomy and examines the UK's positioning as a 'Global Britain' seeking renewed significance in the transatlantic and Indo-Pacific arenas. By analysing policy developments, trade patterns, and diplomatic discourse since 2020, the paper argues that Brexit has not dismantled transatlantic ties but has instead transformed them into a more fluid, multi-layered configuration. The transatlantic space is thus characterised by institutional resilience alongside geopolitical ambiguity. Ultimately, the future trajectory of transatlantic relations will depend on evolving global power dynamics, domestic political shifts, and Western allies' capacity to reconcile sovereignty with collective action.

Keywords: Brexit, Nato, Trade Policy, Security Cooperation, Strategic Autonomy

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INTRODUCTION

Transatlantic relations have long served as a central pillar of the contemporary international order. Since the end of the Second World War, cooperation between North America and Western Europe has been built on shared democratic values, economic interdependence, and strong institutional frameworks. These connections have played a crucial role in shaping global governance, maintaining international security, and promoting democratic norms worldwide. Institutions such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the broader process of European integration have reinforced this partnership by providing mechanisms for policy coordination, collective defence, and joint responses to emerging global challenges. Through these structures, the transatlantic community has contributed significantly to the stability and development

of the post-war international system¹. The foundations of the transatlantic alliance were laid during the Cold War. The creation of NATO in 1949 institutionalised military cooperation among Western states and strengthened security ties between Europe and the United States. At the same time, economic initiatives such as the Marshall Plan helped rebuild European economies and deepened economic links across the Atlantic. Over time, the transatlantic partnership expanded beyond security cooperation to include economic integration, diplomatic collaboration, technological exchange, and broader forms of international governance².

Within this framework, the United Kingdom held a distinctive and influential position. As a major European power and a founding member of NATO, the UK



maintained close strategic ties with the United States while also participating actively in the European integration project. After joining the European Union (then the European Communities) in 1973, the UK became an important actor within European institutions. Its engagement in both the transatlantic alliance and the European Union enabled it to function as a bridge between Washington and European capitals. British diplomacy frequently promoted dialogue and cooperation across the Atlantic, helping to align European policies with broader Western strategic objectives. As a result, the UK was often viewed as one of the strongest advocates of Atlanticism within the EU¹⁷. This institutional arrangement was significantly altered by the United Kingdom's decision to withdraw from the European Union following the 2016 referendum. Brexit represented a major political turning point in contemporary European history and reflected complex domestic debates about sovereignty, governance, and the future of European integration. After several years of negotiations, the UK formally exited the EU in 2020, ending nearly five decades of membership³. This development transformed the relationship between the UK and the EU and raised broader questions about the future of transatlantic cooperation.

Brexit generated differing interpretations regarding its potential impact on the transatlantic alliance. Some analysts feared that the EU's loss of a strong pro-American voice could weaken coordination between Europe and the United States. Others suggested that the UK might strengthen its bilateral relationship with Washington and pursue a more flexible global foreign policy outside EU structures⁴. The paper examines how Brexit has influenced transatlantic relations by analysing three key dimensions: the continuity of security cooperation, particularly within NATO; changes in economic and diplomatic relations among the UK, the EU, and the United States; and the emerging uncertainties that may shape the future of the transatlantic alliance in an evolving global order.

Historical Foundations of Transatlantic Relations

The foundations of transatlantic relations emerged from the major geopolitical transformations that followed the Second World War. The extensive destruction across Europe created an urgent need for economic recovery, political stability, and collective security. In this context, the United States emerged as a dominant global power, playing a crucial role in reconstructing Western Europe and shaping the post-war international order. One of the most important initiatives in this process was the Marshall Plan, which provided large-scale economic assistance to European countries. This program helped rebuild infrastructure, revitalise economies, and promote political stability across Western Europe⁵. At the same time, it strengthened economic interdependence between the

United States and European states, thereby laying the foundation for long-term transatlantic cooperation.

Security considerations were equally important in the formation of the transatlantic alliance. The growing ideological and geopolitical rivalry between the Western bloc and the Soviet Union created a strategic environment that required coordinated defence arrangements. In response to these challenges, Western countries established the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation in 1949. NATO institutionalised collective defence by committing its member states to mutual assistance in the event of external aggression⁶. During the Cold War, the alliance became the cornerstone of Western security, facilitating military coordination, strategic planning, and intelligence sharing among North American and European allies. Throughout the Cold War period, transatlantic relations continued to deepen. The United States maintained a strong military presence in Europe, while European states relied on American security guarantees to protect their territorial integrity. This strategic cooperation helped Western democracies maintain a unified stance against Soviet influence. Over time, transatlantic cooperation expanded beyond military security to include economic integration, diplomatic coordination, and technological collaboration within various international institutions⁷.

Another major factor that strengthened transatlantic relations was the process of European integration. The creation of the European Communities in the 1950s marked an important step toward economic and political cooperation among European states. These institutions gradually evolved into the European Union, which became one of the world's largest economic and political blocs⁸. The United States generally supported European integration, viewing a stable and unified Europe as beneficial for both regional stability and transatlantic cooperation. Within this evolving framework, the United Kingdom held a distinctive role. British foreign policy traditionally emphasised close relations with the United States while also participating in European integration⁹. After joining the European Communities in 1973, the UK became an influential actor within European institutions while maintaining strong strategic ties with Washington. This dual orientation enabled the UK to act as an intermediary between Europe and the United States, helping facilitate dialogue and policy coordination across the Atlantic.

The historical development of transatlantic relations demonstrates how shared security concerns, economic cooperation, and institutional frameworks contributed to the emergence of a durable partnership between Western Europe and North America¹⁰. These foundations continue



to influence transatlantic cooperation as the alliance adapts to evolving global challenges.

BREXIT AND THE UNITED KINGDOM'S GLOBAL STRATEGY

The United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union marked a major turning point in British foreign policy and required the country to redefine its role in global politics. For nearly five decades, the UK has operated within the EU's institutional framework, participating in its economic policies, diplomatic initiatives, and decision-making processes. Brexit, therefore, created both challenges and opportunities as Britain sought to reposition itself in an evolving international system. In response, the British government introduced the concept of "Global Britain," a strategic vision to maintain the country's global influence despite its departure from the EU². The Global Britain strategy emphasises a more outward-looking and flexible foreign policy that expands the UK's international engagement beyond Europe. Rather than focusing primarily on regional integration, the policy seeks to strengthen bilateral and multilateral relationships with partners worldwide. By redefining its foreign policy priorities, the United Kingdom aims to preserve its diplomatic relevance, economic competitiveness, and strategic influence in a changing and increasingly multipolar global environment¹¹.

A key objective of the Global Britain strategy is to strengthen bilateral relationships with major global powers, particularly the United States. The close partnership between London and Washington, often described as the "special relationship", has long been central to British foreign policy¹². This relationship involves extensive cooperation across intelligence sharing, defence technology, military operations, and diplomatic coordination on major international issues. Even after Brexit, the UK continues to prioritise this partnership as a cornerstone of its global engagement.

Another important element of the strategy involves expanding trade partnerships beyond Europe. With the UK no longer part of the EU's single market and customs union, it gained the authority to negotiate independent trade agreements with countries worldwide. British policymakers have therefore pursued new trade arrangements with partners in regions such as North America, the Indo-Pacific, and the Commonwealth¹³. These initiatives aim to diversify the UK's economic relationships and strengthen its position in global trade networks.

The Global Britain vision also highlights the importance of active participation in international organisations and multilateral institutions. The United Kingdom continues to

play a significant role in global governance, including through the United Nations and the Group of Seven, contributing to international efforts to address issues such as climate change, economic stability, and global security. Security cooperation remains another central component of Britain's global strategy. The UK continues to play an important role in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, contributing military capabilities, intelligence resources, and strategic leadership¹⁴. At the same time, despite leaving the EU, the UK recognises the importance of maintaining constructive relations with European partners, particularly in trade, diplomacy, and regional security. In this way, the Global Britain strategy seeks to balance strong transatlantic ties with continued engagement with Europe while positioning the UK as an independent yet cooperative actor in the global order¹⁵.

SECURITY COOPERATION AND THE ROLE OF NATO

Security cooperation has long been one of the most stable and enduring pillars of transatlantic relations, and this stability has largely continued in the post-Brexit era. Despite the institutional changes caused by the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union, defence collaboration between Europe and North America remains strong. Shared strategic interests, established military partnerships, and robust institutional frameworks have ensured that the transatlantic security architecture continues to function effectively¹⁶. Among these frameworks, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation remains the most important platform for coordinating defence cooperation between European states and the United States. Established in 1949 during the early years of the Cold War, NATO originally served as a collective defence mechanism designed to deter external aggression and safeguard the security of its member states. Over the decades, the alliance expanded its responsibilities to address a wider range of security challenges, including counterterrorism, crisis management, cyber defence, maritime security, and regional conflict prevention¹⁷. Through joint military exercises, intelligence sharing, and coordinated strategic planning, NATO has continued to provide the institutional foundation for transatlantic security cooperation.

In the context of Brexit, NATO's role has become even more significant. Although the UK's departure from the European Union altered the European political landscape, it did not affect Britain's commitment to the alliance. The United Kingdom remains one of NATO's most influential members, possessing advanced military capabilities, modern naval and air forces, and highly trained armed forces. It is also one of the few NATO members with nuclear deterrence capabilities, which significantly strengthens the alliance's overall strategic capacity¹⁸.



Beyond its military resources, the United Kingdom plays an important role in intelligence cooperation within the transatlantic alliance. British intelligence agencies work closely with their counterparts in other Western countries, particularly the United States, enabling effective coordination in addressing global security threats such as terrorism, cyberattacks, and hybrid warfare¹⁹.

Following Brexit, the UK continues to participate actively in NATO missions, multinational military exercises, and collective defence initiatives. These activities demonstrate that transatlantic security cooperation has remained largely unaffected by the UK's departure from EU institutions. While Brexit changed the UK's relationship with the European Union, it did not undermine NATO's central role in maintaining Western security²⁰. At the same time, the European Union has begun strengthening its own defence capabilities through initiatives aimed at achieving greater strategic autonomy. However, these efforts are generally viewed as complementary to NATO rather than a replacement for it. By improving Europe's military capacity, EU member states can contribute more effectively to collective defence. As a result, the future of transatlantic security cooperation is likely to involve continued NATO leadership alongside stronger European defence capabilities, with the United Kingdom remaining an integral part of this security framework.

Economic and Trade Dimensions

Economic cooperation has long been a central pillar of transatlantic relations, complementing political and security partnerships between Europe and North America. The deep economic integration between the United States and the European Union constitutes one of the most significant economic relationships in the global economy. Transatlantic trade and investment flows span key sectors such as finance, manufacturing, technology, pharmaceuticals, and services, generating substantial economic benefits and reinforcing broader strategic cooperation²¹. High levels of foreign direct investment, strong trade linkages, and regulatory coordination have contributed to the durability of this relationship, even during periods of political disagreement. The transatlantic marketplace represents one of the largest integrated economic spaces in the world. Multinational corporations operate across both regions, creating employment opportunities and facilitating innovation. Additionally, the United States and the European Union have played a leading role in setting global regulatory standards across environmental policy, financial regulation, digital governance, and intellectual property²². These shared economic interests have strengthened the overall stability of transatlantic relations.

Within this framework, the United Kingdom historically functioned as a key economic bridge between Europe and North America. As a major global financial centre, London facilitated significant transatlantic investment flows and financial transactions. Its membership in the European Union allowed it access to the single market, enabling the free movement of goods, services, capital, and labour²³. This arrangement also made the UK an attractive gateway for American companies seeking access to European markets, further enhancing its importance in transatlantic economic relations.

However, Brexit fundamentally altered this economic landscape. The UK's withdrawal from the EU introduced new complexities in trade, regulatory alignment, and market access. By leaving the single market and customs union, the UK lost automatic trade privileges with EU member states, necessitating new agreements to govern economic relations. The EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement, signed in 2020, established a framework for continued trade but introduced new regulatory barriers, customs procedures, and administrative requirements²⁴. These changes have created challenges for businesses, particularly those dependent on integrated supply chains. In response, the United Kingdom has pursued an independent global trade strategy as part of its "Global Britain" agenda. A key priority has been negotiating bilateral trade agreements, including efforts to establish a comprehensive agreement with the United States. However, progress in US-UK trade negotiations has been slow due to regulatory differences and political considerations.

Despite these challenges, strong economic ties persist. The UK continues to maintain robust trade and investment relationships with both the United States and the European Union. While Brexit has reshaped the institutional framework of these relationships, it has not disrupted the underlying economic interdependence²⁵. Instead, the post-Brexit environment is more complex, requiring the UK to balance its economic relations with both partners while adapting to new regulatory and political realities.

Diplomatic dynamics in the post-Brexit era

Brexit has significantly reshaped diplomatic interactions within the transatlantic community, altering the institutional and political dynamics that previously defined cooperation among Western allies. For decades, the United Kingdom played a central role in shaping European Union foreign policy. As one of the EU's largest economies and most influential member states, the UK often advocated policies that supported close transatlantic cooperation with the United States. British diplomats frequently acted as intermediaries between Washington and European capitals, helping align European policies with broader



Western strategic interests. Consequently, the UK's presence within EU institutions helped maintain strong diplomatic coordination across the Atlantic²⁶.

With the UK's withdrawal from the EU in 2020, this institutional arrangement changed significantly. The United Kingdom is no longer directly involved in EU decision-making on foreign policy, security strategy, and diplomatic initiatives. As a result, the internal dynamics of European diplomacy have evolved. Without the UK's influence within EU institutions, some policy discussions now reflect different strategic priorities among remaining member states¹. Countries such as France and Germany have assumed greater leadership roles within EU foreign policy discussions, shaping the bloc's diplomatic agenda on global issues such as climate governance, security cooperation, and relations with emerging powers. The UK's absence has therefore altered the balance of perspectives within the EU's foreign policy framework. Historically, the United Kingdom was considered one of the strongest proponents of transatlantic cooperation within the EU. British policymakers consistently emphasised the importance of maintaining close ties with the United States and ensuring that European foreign policy remained aligned with broader Western strategic interests²⁷. With the UK no longer participating in EU institutions, some analysts suggest that the EU may gradually pursue a more autonomous diplomatic approach.

Indeed, discussions about "strategic autonomy" have gained increasing prominence within European policy circles. Strategic autonomy refers to the European Union's ability to act independently in foreign policy, defence, and international diplomacy⁷. Advocates of this concept argue that the EU should strengthen its capacity to respond to global challenges without relying excessively on external partners. From this perspective, Brexit may create opportunities for the EU to develop a more unified and independent foreign policy agenda.

However, other observers caution that the UK's absence could also pose challenges for transatlantic coordination. The United Kingdom historically contributed significant diplomatic resources, intelligence capabilities, and global networks to European foreign policy initiatives. Its departure from the EU may reduce the bloc's overall diplomatic reach and potentially complicate coordination on issues such as sanctions, crisis management, and international negotiations. Additionally, the UK's close relationship with Washington previously helped ensure that EU foreign policy remained closely connected to American strategic priorities. Despite these changes, the broader transatlantic diplomatic partnership remains intact²⁸. The United States continues to maintain strong diplomatic relationships with both the United Kingdom

and the European Union. American policymakers recognise that both actors remain essential partners in addressing global challenges, including security threats, economic stability, climate change, and international governance. As a result, Washington has continued to engage actively with European institutions while simultaneously strengthening bilateral relations with London¹³.

At the same time, the United Kingdom has sought to develop an independent diplomatic strategy following Brexit. Within the broader framework of the "Global Britain" strategy, the UK aims to enhance its diplomatic engagement with partners worldwide while maintaining strong relationships with both the EU and the United States. British foreign policy now operates through a combination of bilateral diplomacy, multilateral institutions, and strategic partnerships¹⁷. This approach allows the UK to maintain its influence in international affairs despite its departure from EU structures. The post-Brexit diplomatic landscape has become more complex and multi-layered. Rather than a single institutional framework coordinating transatlantic diplomacy, cooperation now occurs through multiple channels. These include bilateral relations between the United States and the United Kingdom, diplomatic engagement between the United States and the European Union, and various multilateral forums such as the United Nations and the Group of Seven. Through these mechanisms, Western allies continue to coordinate their responses to global issues despite the institutional changes introduced by Brexit²⁹.

The diplomatic consequences of Brexit reflect both continuity and transformation within the transatlantic partnership. While the UK's departure from EU institutions has altered the structure of European diplomacy, it has not fundamentally undermined the broader alliance between Western partners¹⁹. Instead, the evolving diplomatic environment illustrates the emergence of a more flexible and decentralised model of transatlantic cooperation, in which multiple actors engage through overlapping networks of bilateral and multilateral diplomacy.

STRATEGIC AUTONOMY AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

The concept of strategic autonomy has gained increasing importance within the European Union, reflecting efforts to enhance its ability to act independently in areas such as security, defence, foreign policy, and economic governance. This idea has emerged in response to evolving geopolitical challenges, including shifting global power dynamics, rising security threats, and uncertainties about the reliability of traditional alliances. Strategic autonomy is therefore seen as a means for the EU to strengthen its



capacity to respond effectively to global crises and safeguard its interests in a complex international environment²³. The growing emphasis on strategic autonomy has been driven by developments such as regional conflicts, cyber threats, and disruptions in global supply chains. These challenges have highlighted the need for the EU to improve its decision-making capabilities and reduce excessive dependence on external actors. As a result, many European policymakers advocate strengthening defence capabilities and expanding diplomatic and economic tools to increase the EU's global influence²⁸.

Supporters of strategic autonomy argue that Europe should develop stronger military and security capabilities, particularly given its long-standing reliance on the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation for collective defence. While NATO remains central to European security, proponents believe the EU should be able to act independently, when necessary, especially in regional crises¹⁶. Enhanced defence cooperation would allow Europe to contribute more effectively to global security and reduce vulnerabilities arising from overreliance on external partners. To advance these goals, the EU has launched initiatives to improve defence collaboration among member states. These include joint military projects, coordinated investment in defence capabilities, and efforts to enhance interoperability among national armed forces. Such measures are intended to strengthen efficiency and build a more integrated European defence framework, enabling the EU to emerge as a more capable security actor².

However, strategic autonomy remains a contested concept. Critics warn that an excessive focus on independence could weaken transatlantic cooperation, particularly with the United States, which has historically been central to European security. They argue that EU defence initiatives should complement rather than replace NATO structures to avoid fragmentation within the Western alliance. Practical challenges also complicate the implementation of strategic autonomy⁴. EU member states differ significantly in their military capabilities, defence spending, and strategic priorities, making deeper integration difficult. These divisions raise questions about the feasibility of achieving full autonomy in the near future. Brexit has further intensified this debate by removing the United Kingdom, a major military power and strong supporter of transatlantic cooperation, from EU decision-making structures. While this has encouraged the EU to reconsider its strategic role, it also highlights the need to balance greater independence with continued cooperation²⁷. Ultimately, strategic autonomy reflects an evolving effort to strengthen Europe's role in global politics while preserving the transatlantic alliance as a cornerstone of international security.

EMERGING CHALLENGES IN TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS

In the twenty-first century, transatlantic relations face a range of emerging challenges that are reshaping the strategic environment in which Western allies operate. While the partnership between Europe and North America has historically been built on shared values, security cooperation, and economic interdependence, contemporary global developments have introduced new complexities¹². These evolving dynamics require transatlantic partners, including the United States, the European Union, and the United Kingdom, to adapt their policies and strengthen coordination in order to address global uncertainties effectively.

A fundamental concern for transatlantic relations is the escalation of geopolitical rivalry among leading states. In recent decades, the global balance of power has shifted due to the emergence of new economies and geopolitical actors, leading to strategic competition across international trade, military influence, technological advancement, and global governance. In the current international landscape, sustaining transatlantic cohesion is vital for upholding stability and the rules-based international order. The transatlantic alliance has faced significant challenges due to contemporary conflicts, notably Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which has bolstered security collaboration among Western partners via coordinated sanctions, military support, and enhanced vows to collective defence⁴.

Simultaneously, rising tensions in the Middle East, encompassing U.S.–Israel military operations against Iran and the overarching regional security crisis, have produced new challenges and strategic discussions within the transatlantic community concerning intervention, diplomacy, and regional stability. These developments underscore the durability and intricacies of transatlantic partnerships in confronting various security threats. Coordinated diplomatic initiatives, economic collaboration, technology partnerships, and strong security alliances are essential for managing geopolitical tensions, averting crises, and maintaining a stable international order. Analysing transatlantic relations in light of the Russia–Ukraine war and the developing U.S.–Israel–Iran conflict offers a thorough understanding of the opportunities, challenges, and future direction of Western strategic collaboration in a progressively multipolar world³⁰.

Technological rivalry represents another important dimension of contemporary transatlantic challenges. Rapid advancements in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, digital infrastructure, and cybersecurity have transformed the nature of global competition. Governments increasingly view technological innovation



as a key determinant of economic power and national security. As a result, transatlantic partners must closely coordinate to set regulatory standards, protect digital infrastructure, and promote responsible technological development⁶. Collaborative initiatives involving research institutions, private-sector companies, and government agencies are essential to ensuring that technological innovation supports economic growth while safeguarding democratic values.

Cybersecurity has become particularly important in this context, as cyber threats increasingly target critical infrastructure, financial systems, and government institutions. Addressing these threats requires coordinated responses that involve information sharing, joint defence mechanisms, and international regulatory frameworks²⁶. Transatlantic cooperation has therefore become a vital component of efforts to strengthen cyber resilience and protect digital networks. Climate change and environmental governance also represent significant areas of transatlantic engagement. Environmental challenges such as rising global temperatures, extreme weather events, and biodiversity loss require collective international action. Both the United States and the European Union have played prominent roles in advancing global climate initiatives and supporting multilateral agreements to reduce greenhouse gas emissions⁹. Cooperation between transatlantic partners is essential for advancing sustainable development, encouraging technological innovation in renewable energy, and strengthening international climate governance frameworks³⁰.

Another critical challenge concerns energy security and the resilience of global supply chains. Recent geopolitical tensions and economic disruptions have highlighted the vulnerabilities associated with reliance on limited energy and critical resource sources. Transatlantic countries have increasingly focused on diversifying energy supplies, investing in renewable energy technologies, and improving supply chain resilience²⁰. These efforts are intended to reduce economic vulnerabilities while ensuring long-term energy stability and sustainability. The issue of supply chain resilience extends beyond energy resources to include sectors such as semiconductors, pharmaceuticals, and critical minerals. Global economic disruptions have demonstrated the importance of maintaining reliable supply networks for essential goods¹⁹. By coordinating industrial policies and trade strategies, transatlantic partners can strengthen economic stability and reduce exposure to external shocks.

In addition to these challenges, political developments within Western societies also influence the trajectory of transatlantic relations. Domestic debates about globalisation, economic inequality, and national

sovereignty have shaped political discourse on both sides of the Atlantic¹⁸. These debates sometimes create tensions over trade policy, defence spending, and regulatory standards. However, despite these differences, the underlying strategic interests of transatlantic partners continue to encourage cooperation and dialogue.

Ultimately, addressing these emerging challenges will require sustained collaboration among transatlantic allies. The interconnected nature of contemporary global issues makes unilateral solutions insufficient. Instead, effective responses depend on coordinated diplomatic engagement, shared policy initiatives, and strengthened institutional cooperation¹⁴. By working together, the United States, the European Union, and the United Kingdom can continue to play a leading role in addressing global challenges and maintaining stability within the international system.

THE FUTURE OF THE TRANSATLANTIC ALLIANCE

Despite the political and institutional disruptions caused by Brexit, the transatlantic alliance remains a resilient and enduring feature of the contemporary international order. Cooperation among the United States, the European Union, and the United Kingdom continues to be grounded in shared democratic values, economic interdependence, and strong security collaboration²⁶. These foundational elements have enabled the partnership to adapt to changing geopolitical circumstances while maintaining its relevance in addressing twenty-first-century challenges.

A key factor contributing to the alliance's resilience is the continued importance of shared political and normative values. Transatlantic partners have historically upheld principles such as democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and open markets. These values have fostered a sense of political community and guided cooperation in diplomacy and global governance²⁵. Even amid disagreements or institutional changes, this shared commitment continues to strengthen the overall relationship between Europe and North America. Economic interdependence remains another crucial pillar of transatlantic relations. The economies of the United States, the European Union, and the United Kingdom are deeply interconnected through trade, investment, financial systems, and technological cooperation⁵. Multinational corporations and integrated supply chains operate across the Atlantic, generating mutual benefits and encouraging collaboration in addressing global economic challenges such as financial stability, trade regulation, and innovation.

Security cooperation further reinforces the alliance's durability. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation continues to serve as the central framework for defence collaboration, providing mechanisms for joint military



planning, intelligence sharing, and coordinated responses to emerging threats. The sustained commitment of all three partners to NATO highlights the ongoing importance of collective defence in maintaining regional and global stability²⁴. However, while the core foundations of the transatlantic partnership remain intact, its structure is undergoing a gradual transformation. Brexit has reshaped the institutional connections between the United Kingdom and the European Union, leading to a more complex and multi-layered system of cooperation.

Rather than functioning through a single unified framework, transatlantic relations increasingly operate through overlapping networks of bilateral, trilateral, and multilateral engagement. Strong bilateral ties between the United States and the United Kingdom persist, while the United States maintains extensive relations with the European Union. Trilateral coordination also occurs through international forums and strategic initiatives. Several factors will shape the future of the transatlantic alliance¹¹. The United Kingdom's "Global Britain" strategy, the European Union's pursuit of strategic autonomy, and the evolving global priorities of the United States will all influence the direction of cooperation. These developments suggest that transatlantic relations will become more flexible and diversified, relying on a mix of institutional and informal mechanisms. Ultimately, the alliance's long-term strength will depend on its ability to adapt to changing geopolitical realities while preserving the shared principles that have historically united its members²¹.

CONCLUSION

Brexit marks a significant turning point in the evolution of European integration and the broader structure of global politics. The United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union fundamentally altered the institutional framework of transatlantic relations. For decades, the UK had played a dual role as both a key member of European integration and a close ally of the United States, acting as an important bridge between Europe and North America. Its withdrawal, therefore, reshaped the mechanisms through which transatlantic cooperation has traditionally operated. Despite these institutional changes, the transatlantic alliance has remained notably resilient. The core pillars underpinning the partnership, shared democratic values, economic interdependence, and security cooperation, continue to provide a strong foundation for collaboration. In particular, defence cooperation within the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation remains robust. NATO continues to function as the primary framework for collective security, with ongoing joint exercises, intelligence-sharing, and coordinated military operations demonstrating the continued strength of transatlantic defence ties.

Economic relations also remain a key component of the alliance. The economies of the United States, the European Union, and the United Kingdom remain deeply interconnected through trade, investment, and financial networks. Although Brexit introduced new regulatory frameworks and required renegotiation of trade arrangements, it did not disrupt the broader economic interdependence linking transatlantic partners. Businesses, financial institutions, and technological networks continue to operate across the Atlantic, reinforcing shared economic interests and enabling cooperation in areas such as innovation, energy transition, and supply chain resilience. Diplomatic engagement remains equally important in sustaining transatlantic relations. The United States maintains strong diplomatic ties with both the United Kingdom and the European Union, while European states continue to collaborate with Washington on global challenges such as climate change, international security, and economic governance. Multilateral institutions and international forums continue to serve as platforms for coordination and collective action.

At the same time, Brexit has introduced new dynamics that require adaptation. The UK's departure from EU institutions has altered the balance of European diplomacy and created a more complex structure of interaction among Western partners. Instead of a single integrated framework, transatlantic relations now operate through overlapping networks of bilateral, trilateral, and multilateral cooperation. Strong bilateral ties between the United States and the United Kingdom coexist with continued US-EU engagement, alongside broader multilateral coordination. These developments, including the EU's pursuit of strategic autonomy, the UK's "Global Britain" strategy, and shifting US global priorities, reflect an evolving and more flexible transatlantic system. Rather than weakening the alliance, Brexit represents a process of transformation. Ultimately, the future of transatlantic relations will depend on Western allies' ability to maintain unity while adapting to changing geopolitical realities, ensuring that the partnership continues to play a central role in global governance and international stability.

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