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PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AS A PILLAR OF UKRAINE'S NATIONAL RESILIENCE AND STRATEGIC SECURITY

Ukraine's public diplomacy, as a key instrument of foreign policy intentions and the protection of national interests, underwent radical changes after February 24, 2022. The full-scale russian invasion transformed it into a vital mechanism for countering hybrid threats and information warfare, mobilizing international support, and shaping a resilient international image of a state fighting for its existence.

This study aimed to analyze the Public Diplomacy Strategy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine for 2021–2025, its key components (goals, principles, directions, instruments), and practical examples of its implementation, with an emphasis on adaptation to the conditions of war, to assess its effectiveness in promoting national interests and shaping Ukraine's global image.

In the context of geopolitical changes, the events of 2014 in Ukraine catalysed revisions to Ukraine's foreign policy and strengthened the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' role in advancing national interests on the international stage. The annexation of Crimea by russia and the war in Donbas created serious threats to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. This led to a deterioration of the country's international image and required active measures to counter russia's aggressive foreign policy. In addition to diplomatic efforts, there was a need to systematically strengthen Ukraine's international image through public diplomacy and enhanced information support [3, p. 56].

In this context, the main types of public diplomacy are branding, or cultural communication, in which a country seeks to improve its image without pursuing support for any immediate political goal, and political advocacy, which encompasses various strategies aimed at quickly achieving results by attracting foreign support for the nearest political objective. State documents adopted before the start of russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 identified the primary tasks of public diplomacy as creating Ukraine's branding, raising awareness about Ukraine in the world, its successes and potential opportunities, forming a positive image of the country, and drawing attention to its economic, investment, or tourist attractiveness. Since regaining independence, Ukraine has faced the task of forming its own identity, ensuring recognition, and separating itself from russia, with which Ukraine was identified by citizens of both European states and most countries of the world [1, p. 187].

To this end, in 2021, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs developed and approved the Public Diplomacy Strategy for the first time in Ukraine's history. The main objectives of the Strategy were defined as follows: raising awareness and understanding of Ukraine among foreign audiences; positioning Ukraine as a democratic European country moving towards full membership in the EU and NATO in the face of external aggression; creating an effective system to counter harmful narratives and actively promoting its own identity through positive narratives. Additional goals included: shaping an objective image

abroad; presenting Ukraine as a strong security partner; countering disinformation and protecting the information space; strengthening national security, including information security; promoting economic, political, and strategic goals through the diaspora; and facilitating dialogue on security, ecology, and a conflict-free future. [2, p.12].

In addition, the Strategy covers seven key areas of public diplomacy: cultural, expert, economic, culinary, digital, scientific and educational, and sports diplomacy, aimed at intercultural dialogue and promoting achievements [2, p. 10].

The Strategy is based on five main principles: project management, innovation, respect for cultural diversity, people-centeredness, and responsibility, with an emphasis on synergy, partnerships, interaction with state and non-state actors, and a “single voice” for coordinated communication [2, p. 15].

Although Ukraine's Public Diplomacy Strategy (2021–2025) was developed with an emphasis on shaping a positive image of the country as a democratic European state and promoting economic and cultural interests in peacetime, full-scale Russian aggression requires a shift in the priorities of public diplomacy from branding to political advocacy of defense needs, which involves strengthening support for Ukraine in the world by widely informing the public abroad about Russian crimes, the resilience and heroism of Ukrainians, countering Russian disinformation, conducting rapid response campaigns to Russian hybrid attacks, and consolidating efforts to secure broad global support and concrete actions by partners to counter the invaders. The priority is not so much to create the right conditions for long-term cooperation, but rather to quickly achieve the goal of defending the country against the aggressor in the face of existential threats [1, p. 189].

Thus, Ukraine's public diplomacy in the context of contemporary global challenges, especially after Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022, has become strategically important for ensuring national security, strengthening the country's international position, and forming a stable, positive image in the world. For Ukraine, it has become not only a means of promoting national interests but also an element of national resilience, international mobilization, and the formation of a global understanding of why Ukraine's struggle is a struggle for the democratic values of the entire civilized world.

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