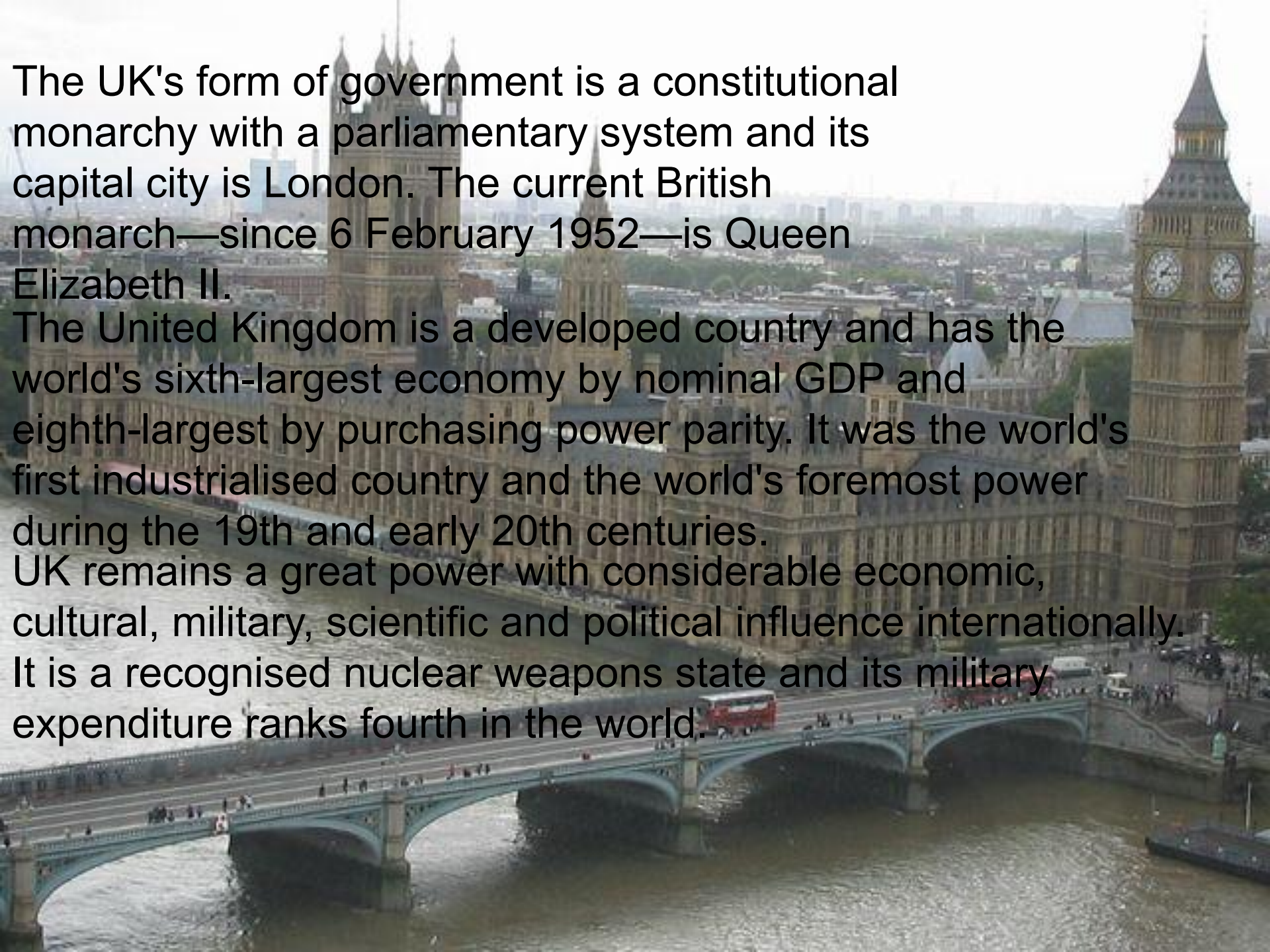


The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland



The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, is a sovereign state located off the north-western coast of continental Europe. The country includes the island of Great Britain , the north-eastern part of the island of Ireland, and many smaller islands.

The United Kingdom consists of four countries: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The latter three have devolved administrations, each with varying powers, based in their capital cities, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast, respectively.

An aerial photograph of London, United Kingdom, showing the River Thames flowing through the city. In the foreground, the Westminster Bridge spans the river, with a red double-decker bus visible on it. To the right, the iconic Big Ben clock tower stands tall. The background features the Houses of Parliament and other historic buildings under a slightly overcast sky.

The UK's form of government is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system and its capital city is London. The current British monarch—since 6 February 1952—is Queen Elizabeth II.

The United Kingdom is a developed country and has the world's sixth-largest economy by nominal GDP and eighth-largest by purchasing power parity. It was the world's first industrialised country and the world's foremost power during the 19th and early 20th centuries. UK remains a great power with considerable economic, cultural, military, scientific and political influence internationally. It is a recognised nuclear weapons state and its military expenditure ranks fourth in the world.

