



## DEBATE PACK

Number CDP 2015/0136, 29 December 2015

# Relationship between the UK and Kazakhstan

Tim Robinson  
Ben Smith

Westminster Hall Debate

5 January 2016 at 1.30pm

A Westminster Hall debate on the **Relationship between the UK and Kazakhstan** has been scheduled for Tuesday 5 January 2016 at 1.30pm.

The member in charge of the debate is Bob Stewart.



Map courtesy of University of Texas

The proceedings of this debate may be viewed on [parliamentlive.tv](http://parliamentlive.tv)

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The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

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# 1. Summary

“Kazakhstan is on the front lines of the ongoing struggle for a new international order.”<sup>1</sup>

Mineral-rich Kazakhstan is about the size of Western Europe. Its economic potential has been obvious for some time, but the Chinese New Silk Road initiative has brought the biggest and richest Central Asian state into new focus. Kazakhstan is right in the middle of China’s ‘one belt, one road’ and, although Russia and China may be collaborating in forums such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, they are also rivals for dominance in this former Soviet republic.

Western countries, including the US, have a more limited role given Kazakhstan’s location. But visits such as that of the Kazakh president to the UK in November 2015 have been the occasion for announcement of significant trade deals.

According to human rights organisations the repression in Kazakhstan is getting worse. Nursultan Nazarbayev won the 2015 presidential election with more than 97% of the votes, according to official results. The OECD dismissed the campaign as “[largely indiscernible](#).”

<sup>1</sup> Kemal Kirişçi and Philippe Le Corre, ‘[The great game that never ends: China and Russia fight over Kazakhstan](#)’, Brookings Institution, 18 December 2015

## 2. Press Articles

The following is a small selection of recent press and media articles relevant to this debate.

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Daily Telegraph (Travel)

[\*\*19 things you didn't know about Kazakhstan\*\*](#)

Hugh Morris

15 December 2015

The Independent

[\*\*Why Kazakhstan holds the keys to the global economy\*\*](#)

Vladislav L. Inozemtsev

9 November 2015

Financial Times

[\*\*Closer links between Kazakhstan and the UK are essential as we face a coming storm\*\*](#)

Nursultan Nazarbayev

3 November 2015

The Independent

[\*\*UK secures £3bn in business deals with Kazakhstan despite human rights and corruption concerns\*\*](#)

Charlie Cooper

3 November 2015

The Astana Times

[\*\*Annual Human Rights Report presented, improves each year, says rights official\*\*](#)

Aiman Turebekova

22 October 2015

The Huffington Post UK (Blog)

[\*\*Kazakhstan - A Country to Watch\*\*](#)

Tobias Ellwood

21 October 2015

RT.com

[\*\*Kyrgyzstan becomes 5th member of Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union\*\*](#)

5 August 2015

The Guardian

[\*\*One after another, Kazakhstan shuts down independent media outlets\*\*](#)

Casey Michel

8 July 2015

The Astana Times

**[Kazakh, British Cooperation Priorities Have Expanded with Recent Election, Says Kazakh Ambassador](#)**

Gulbarshyn Sabayeva

4 May 2015

The Guardian

**[Kazakhstan is an abusive dictatorship – the UK should not court it](#)**

Aigerim Dzhakisheva

21 May 2014

Mail Online (Peter Hitchens's Blog)

**[First Steps in pragmatism, or 'ethical foreign policy meets oilfield' - Mr Slippery goes to Kazakhstan](#)**

Peter Hitchens

(This blog post links to two further articles on Kazakhstan by Peter Hitchens)

1 July 2013

### 3. Press releases

#### [The Prime Minister met the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, at 10 Downing Street for talks](#)

Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street  
3 November 2015

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

“The Prime Minister held bilateral talks with the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, this afternoon. The Prime Minister and President discussed bilateral relations, including economic issues and Kazakhstan’s progress on political and societal reform, including creating a more permissive environment for NGOs (non-governmental organisations).

On foreign policy, they discussed Russia and Ukraine, agreeing on the importance of seeing the Minsk Accord fully implemented.

They also discussed Syria, and the vital importance of finding a political solution to the conflict. On ISIL, the Prime Minister and President agreed violent Islamist extremism posed one of the most significant threats to our generation and that comprehensive efforts to defeat it must be made.

“On Afghanistan, the Prime Minister and President agreed rebuilding the economy would be a key guarantor of the country’s future stability.”

## 4. PQs

### [Military Attaches](#)

22 Oct 2015 | 12325

**Asked by: Andrew Smith**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, in which countries UK defence attachés are posted.

**Answering member: Julian Brazier | Ministry of Defence**

There are resident Defence Attachés in the following countries:

[...]

Kazakhstan – Astana

[...]

### [Armed Forces: Training](#)

02 Jul 2015 | 4646

**Asked by: Stephen Doughty**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, in which countries the armed forces are providing training to (a) security forces and (b) armed forces.

**Answering member: Penny Mordaunt | Ministry of Defence**

[...]

Countries or territories in which UK Armed Forces have provided training to either security or armed forces personnel since January 2014 are:

Algeria, Afghanistan, Armenia, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, British Virgin Islands, Brunei, Burma, Burundi, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Cook Island (New Zealand), Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Gibraltar, Hungary, India, Iraq, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, **Kazakhstan**, Kenya, Kosovo, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Macedonia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Moldova, Morocco, Namibia, Nepal, Nieu (island near New Zealand), Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Philippines, Qatar, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Thailand, Tonga, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

[Tony Blair](#)

**10 Feb 2015 | 222872**

**Asked by: Andrew Bridgen**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether Tony Blair has been provided with (a) transport and (b) accommodation in posts in (i) Azerbaijan, (ii) Kazakhstan, (iii) Kuwait, (iv) Abu Dhabi, (v) Albania and (vi) Libya since Mr Blair left office.

**Answering member: David Lidington | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We have searched the available records to provide this answer. To search archived records would incur disproportionate cost.

From the information available, there is no record of Mr Blair having been provided with transport or accommodation in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Abu Dhabi, Albania or Libya since leaving office.

[Tony Blair](#)

**09 Feb 2015 | 222871**

**Asked by: Andrew Bridgen**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations his Department has received from Tony Blair on (a) Kazakhstan, (b) Azerbaijan, (c) Kuwait, (d) Abu Dhabi, (e) Albania and (f) Libya since Mr Blair left office.

**Answering member: David Lidington | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We have searched the available records to provide this answer. To search archived records would incur disproportionate cost.

There is no record of representations received from Mr Blair on (a) Kazakhstan, (b) Azerbaijan, (c) Kuwait, (d) Abu Dhabi, (e) Albania or (f) Libya since he left office.

[Tony Blair](#)

**09 Feb 2015 | 222869**

**Asked by: Andrew Bridgen**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether any official visits from (a) Kazakhstan, (b) Azerbaijan, (c) Kuwait, (d) Abu Dhabi, (e) Albania and (f) Libya were arranged or accompanied by Tony Blair since Mr Blair left office.

**Answering member: David Lidington | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is not aware of Mr Blair's involvement in any official visits from (a) Kazakhstan, (b) Azerbaijan, (c) Kuwait, (d) Abu Dhabi, (e) Albania or (f) Libya. That would be a matter solely for Mr Blair and the governments of those countries.



[Kazakhstan](#)

01 Sep 2014 | 206427

**Asked by: Jim Shannon**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions Ministers in his Department have had with the government of Kazakhstan on violation of fundamental labour rights and exploitation of child labour.

**Answering member: Mr Tobias Ellwood | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We were deeply concerned by the labour clashes in western Kazakhstan in December 2011.

In November in a meeting with the Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan the then Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Member for Richmond (Yorks) (Mr Hague), encouraged Kazakhstan to sign up to the Voluntary Principles on Business and Human Rights, which aim to reduce the risk of human rights abuses connected to the extractives industry.

We are funding a project to promote the implementation of the United Nations "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework and guiding principles on business and human rights in Kazakhstan.

Finally, we welcome and support Kazakhstan's efforts to implement its 2012-2014 Joint Action Plan and Joint Work Plan for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, and meet its international obligations in this field.

[Kazakhstan](#)

01 Sep 2014 | 206426

**Asked by: Jim Shannon**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions Ministers in his Department have had with the government of Kazakhstan on human rights, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and freedom of religion.

**Answering member: Tobias Ellwood | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The Prime Minister, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Member for Witney (Mr Cameron), visited Kazakhstan last year and had a wide ranging discussion on human rights with President Nazarbayev. The former Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Member for Richmond (Yorks) (Mr Hague), raised human rights concerns with the Kazakhstani Foreign Minister during the latter's visit to London in November last year. My Rt. Hon. noble Friend the former Senior Minister of State Baroness Warsi visited Kazakhstan in April and discussed a number of human rights issues with Kazakhstani interlocutors, building on previous visits and conversations.

We continue to raise our concerns about human rights, freedoms of expression, assembly and religion directly with the Government of Kazakhstan, and in relevant international fora, at every appropriate opportunity.

**[Kazakhstan](#)**

**05 Jul 2013 | 163520**

**Asked by: Jeremy Corbyn**

To ask the Prime Minister what human rights issues were raised during his visit to Kazakhstan; and if he will make a statement.

**Answering member: The Prime Minister**

The UK has a range of interests in Kazakhstan covering prosperity, security and values, and is looking to secure a step-change in its bilateral relations. The Strategic Partnership that I signed during my visit sets out important areas of mutual interest, including the promotion of democracy and human rights, and provides a structure to make progress.

We have a strong record of funding human rights projects and raising issues of concern with the Kazakh Government, and I discussed these issues with the President.

## 5. Written Ministerial Statement

### [Written statement on Gifting Package \(Republic of Kazakhstan\)](#)

26 Jun 2014 | 583 cc24-5WS

#### **The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Philip Hammond)**

I have today laid before Parliament a [Ministry of Defence departmental minute](#) describing a gifting package which the UK intends to make to the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Central Asia is a region of growing importance to the UK's security and prosperity. The UK and the international community must continue to influence and engage with the Republic of Kazakhstan, and the other central Asian republics, on a range of issues, including counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics and border security, if we are effectively to promote wider regional security and stability.

The Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan have played a constructive role supporting ISAF operations in Afghanistan. Kazakhstan will face increased security challenges once ISAF has withdrawn from Afghanistan; the international community has a part to play in preparing its security forces for these challenges. Kazakhstan also aspires to develop and deploy its troops in support of UN peacekeeping tasks. The departmental minute, which I have today laid before Parliament, describes a gifting package to the Republic of Kazakhstan of surplus quad bikes with trailers and handheld night vision equipment that is intended to contribute to this. Both items have been examined and cleared against the consolidated EU and national arms export licensing criteria, which includes an assessment of whether the equipment might be used for human rights violations or internal repression, the risk to UK forces and the risk of diversion to an undesirable end user. Subject to completion of the departmental minute process, delivery is expected to be undertaken during the summer of 2014.

## 6. Further reading

[Human Rights and Democracy Report 2014](#), *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, 12 March 2015

[Human rights and democracy report 2013](#), *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, Updated 24 June 2014

[The FCO's human rights work in 2013](#), *Foreign Affairs Committee*, HC 551, 27 November 2014

[Written evidence from Aigerim Dzhakisheva concerning Kazakhstan](#), from 'The FCO's human rights work in 2013', HC 551

[UNHCR: Kazakhstan](#)

[Republic of Kazakhstan: Early Presidential Election 26 April 2015](#), *OSCE/ODIHR*, 29 July 2015

[Amnesty International: Kazakhstan](#)

[Kazakhstan report](#), Amnesty International

[Human Rights Watch: Kazakhstan](#)

[World Report 2015: Kazakhstan](#), Human Rights Watch

[Overview of key human rights concerns in Central Asia: Kazakhstan](#), *Human Rights Watch*, October 2015

[Freedom in the world 2014: the democratic leadership gap](#), *Freedom House*, 2014

[Freedom of the press: Kazakhstan](#), *Freedom House*, 2015

[2014 UK Annual Report on the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights](#)

[Kazakhstan, human rights and the rule of law](#)

[All-Party Parliamentary Group for Kazakhstan](#)

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