



**Introduction by  
Rt Hon Lord Hurd  
of Westwell CH CBE PC  
Chairman of the FIRST  
Advisory Council**

I have great pleasure in introducing this official FIRST report on Kazakhstan to mark the visit of David Cameron, Prime Minister to Kazakhstan. We are particularly grateful to HE Kairat Abusseitov, Kazakhstan's Ambassador to London for all his assistance as well as the support of the Kazakh and United Kingdom authorities.

The Prime Minister's visit is particularly timely and will help focus the attention of international business leaders and policy makers on the many investment and trade opportunities that exist in Kazakhstan. The two day official visit will be the first by a serving British Prime Minister and the trip will include meetings with oil and gas companies and involve visits to the cities of Atyrau, Astana and Almaty.

Kazakhstan with its strategic geographic location and dominant position in Central Asia has developed a significant international role during the last two decades. Since declaring independence in 1991, the last Soviet Republic to do so, it has steered a careful course from a command economy to an open market-led economic structure. President Nursultan Nazarbayev has wisely placed much emphasis on establishing stable relationships with Kazakhstan's neighbours.

Kazakhstan now plays an increasingly prominent international role as a member of the United Nations, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and the NATO Partnership for Peace Programme, as well as being a member, and held the chairmanship of the OSCE. Kazakhstan is also an active member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Economic Cooperation Organisation and the Shanghai Cooperation

Organisation (SCO). In cooperation with Russia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, Kazakhstan has also become an integral partner of the Eurasian Economic Community in working to create a free trade zone under a Customs Union. Kazakhstan is also making good progress on its ambition to accede to WTO membership.

Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the OSCE in 2010 helped enhance its international profile. The summit gathered world leaders from the OSCE membership and provided an opportunity for Kazakhstan to demonstrate its international role and the range of trade and investment opportunities available. Kazakhstan will almost certainly play a key role in the withdrawal of military hardware and equipment from Afghanistan in 2014, as increasing regional instability means that the overland route through Central Asia will provide the safer and more reliable exit.

Perhaps one of Kazakhstan's most important achievements since independence was the President's authorisation to shut down the Soviet nuclear test site at Semipalatinsk in 1991. Fourteen hundred nuclear warheads, intercontinental ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and heavy bombers were returned to Russia for disposal under the START 1 Treaty. Weapons grade uranium was downblended and weaponisable plutonium was safely disposed of, the reactors were decommissioned and the test site was closed. In so doing Kazakhstan established the principle that States can undergo nuclear disarmament without compromising their security.

Kazakhstan's international role has also been bolstered by strong economic growth rates in recent years – a result of its booming energy sector as well as

economic reforms, good agricultural harvests and increasing foreign investment. Kazakhstan's energy export capacity has been significantly increased with the opening of the Caspian Pipeline Consortium in 2001. The Atasu-Alashankou portion was completed in 2006 and the Kenkiyak-Kumkol section of the pipeline to China in 2009. The country has also embarked on an industrial policy designed to diversify the economy away from an over-dependency on the oil and mining sectors towards the development of its manufacturing potential.


The UK and Kazakhstan enjoy a strong trade and investment relationship based on free market access and very significant two way trade and investment flows. Regular high level dialogue is conducted between the two countries in order to maintain the momentum of this investment and a strong British Embassy is led with distinction by HE Dr Carolyn Browne, the Ambassador.

Major companies such as BG, Shell and Rio Tinto have important investment interests alongside some of the UK's large contracting companies including AMEC and Invensys. UK exports to Kazakhstan amounted to £530 million in 2011 and UK imports from Kazakhstan were £459 million. Historically the UK is a major investor in Kazakhstan and major companies from Kazakhstan are listing on the London Stock Exchange in significant numbers. Kazakhstan will also host EXPO 2017 in Astana which will also provide many business opportunities for British companies.

The years of independence have witnessed significant changes in Kazakhstan and President Nursultan Nazarbayev has overseen dramatic improvements in the living standards

of the people of Kazakhstan – per capita GDP has increased more than twelve times since 1994 and there has been a major programme of investment in schools and universities as well as hospitals.

David Cameron's Visit to Kazakhstan, while providing an opportunity for private discussions, will give us all the opportunity to study the significant developments in Kazakhstan and to weigh carefully the many opportunities to work together even more closely. The Prime Minister leads an important delegation of business leaders seeking trade and investment opportunities. A strategic partnership between the two countries is also to be signed.

We at FIRST are delighted to have been asked to produce this official publication to mark David Cameron's visit and hope that it contributes, in a small way, to its success and the further development of the bilateral relationship, especially in the areas of trade and investment. 

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HE Nursultan Nazarbayev, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Rupert Goodman, Chairman and Founder of FIRST

