

An important ally

By GENERAL THE LORD RICHARDS OF HERSTMONCEUX GCB CBE DSO DL

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD AND DIRECTOR OF EQUILIBRIUM



GENERAL RICHARDS has led operations in Northern Ireland, East Timor, Sierra Leone, and Afghanistan. Having first commanded the British Army, in 2010 he became Chief of the Defence Staff, as well as the Prime Minister's military adviser. He retired in July 2013. His operational awards include a Mention in Despatches, Commander of the British Empire, Distinguished Service Order and Knight Commander of the Bath; the first officer to receive an operational knighthood since World War 2. He was created Baron Richards of Herstmonceux, in February 2014.

H.E. President Nursultan Nazarbayev and the then UK PM David Cameron in Astana in 2013

For a young, dynamic nation Kazakhstan has successfully reached many milestones this year; something that the hard-working people of Kazakhstan, under the wise leadership and guidance of Nursultan Nazarbayev, should take great pride in. Firstly, congratulations to both Kazakhstan and the United Kingdom for celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of UK-Kazakh relations. This ties in perfectly with my second reason to congratulate Kazakhstan. It is a tremendously exciting time for the country as last year, the twenty-fifth anniversary of Kazakh independence, coincided with Kazakhstan successfully being elected to a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council for 2017-2018. This is a particularly impressive feat. Kazakhstan is the first ever Central Asian nation to hold a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council.

In my foreword for President Nursultan Nazarbayev's book, *Leadership Perspectives*, I remarked that Kazakhstan is the closest Central Asian ally to the UK. Our ever-strengthening military relationship is best demonstrated by Operation Steppe Eagle. For those who are not familiar with this politically and militarily important deployment, which is now in its fourteenth year, it is the United Kingdom's largest bilateral defence exercise. In alliance with the United States of America and Kazakhstan, 800 soldiers took part this year.

Operation Steppe Eagle is symbolic of the importance the United Kingdom attaches to its strategic friendship with Kazakhstan. It is a crucial relationship for both countries, not only for military reasons but also for commercial and diplomatic reasons. Given my defence and strategy background, it was a particular pleasure to see relations between Kazakhstan and the United Kingdom being strengthened more formally when our two nations signed a Memorandum of Understanding on military technical co-operation in 2016.

There is no doubt that Kazakhstan's role on the world stage is growing, evidenced by its election to the United Nations Security Council. In looking for areas to influence in the future, Kazakhstan has much to offer other countries by focusing its efforts within the Security Council on peacekeeping and stabilisation. Kazakhstan is rightly considered to be a beacon of stability in Central Asia, something that

should not be underestimated in this unpredictable age. It has much to teach other nations. Operation Steppe Eagle, a peacekeeping exercise, will further enhance the country's reputation for excellence in this key area of activity. Developments like this will allow Kazakhstan to play an increasingly influential role in the United Nations Security Council and on the world stage.

In today's highly complex world strategy, statecraft and statesmen are needed more than ever. I am always reminded of Sun Tzu's greatest observation; *Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory.*

Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat

At Equilibrium Global, by bringing together people of unparalleled experience and wisdom combined with a geo-strategic process, we believe we have helped countries develop lasting strategies that will help carry them through this turbulent time. As Chief of the Defence Staff I always sought to apply Sun Tzu's advice and it is also our motto at Equilibrium.

While I may not be contributing, I look forward to our successors celebrating 50 years of ever closer cooperation and friendship between the United Kingdom and Kazakhstan in 2042!

