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## DETAILS OF TONY BLAIR'S DEALINGS WITH KAZAKHSTAN LEAKED

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Leaked documents show Blair and his coterie sold their services to the Kazakhstani government for millions of pounds annually.

For years, a single question has swirled around Tony Blairs work as an official adviser to the Kazakhstani government: How much is the deal between Blair and Astana worth? The relationship, now entering its sixth year, has seen estimates range as high as \$27 million, but Blairs team has stated that any financial information remains obviously confidential.

A new series of documents, however, can help shed a bit more light on the financial remuneration Blair and his camp have received in return for their service in massaging Kazakhstans image for Western audiences. According to emails leaked to The Daily Mail, Blairs team pitched their efforts to President Nursultan Nazarbayev for £5.3 million a year. Among the items included within Blairs package are a Political Advice and Positioning Module, tagged at £1.85 million annually, and £1.78 million annually for helping Nazarbayev □ the Soviet-era leader who recently won reelection with 98 percent of the vote □ maintain the rule of law. The documents show that Tony Blair Associates, Blairs advisory vehicle, also wanted a further £770,000 for running a civil service academy.

The information, coming via a tranche of some 30 leaked emails, also shows that Blairs team placed the onus on Astana for providing all travel arrangements for visits by Tony Blair, including first-class hotel accommodation, all transportation \* [and] appropriate catering and any other costs when Blair visited the country. One of the emails from Jonathan Powell, Blairs former chief of staff, noted the former prime minister would could meet with Nazarbayev every three to six months, though it is unclear if this pace has come to pass. Another document touts Nazarbayevs relationship with Austrias former chancellor, Alfred Gusenbauer, who has lobbied on Kazakhstans behalf in Europe for years.

Still, the financial details, staggering as they may be, do not necessarily provide the most damning information carried within the leaks. For a while, those following Blairs relationship with Kazakhstan have known that the former prime minister helped Nazarbayev attempt to spin the 2011 Zhanaozen massacre in which Kazakhstani security services killed at least 14 individuals in the countrys west. Now, we know that Blair apparently went to even further lengths to help

Nazarbayev retain strong relations with the West following Kazakhstans bloodiest crackdown in the post-Soviet period.

One of the emails contains a proposed letter from 2012 to Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The text of the letter [ ] which was seen and approved by Mr Blair, according to Blair aide Michael Roberts [ ] instructed Astana to claim that it has not been possible to involve outside, independent experts, eg from the UN, in the investigation into what happened [in Zhanaozen]. That is not for want of trying. But the Prosecutor-General has completed a thorough and comprehensive investigation into all the events that took place during the massacre.

The investigation, of course, carried little traction for both international legal and human rights organizations, and the UN has continued its calls, years later, for Kazakhstan to allow an international investigation into the massacre. But Astana has shown little inclination to allow any such examination upon, it seems, Blairs recommendation.

The leak is but the latest round of news displaying the financial largesse Astana has tossed towards Blairs network over the past few years. But for the broader populace, it remains increasingly clear that Blairs work with Nazarbayev has coincided with [ ] or abetted [ ] the countrys collapse in domestic rights protections. Since Blair began his work with Kazakhstan, the country has fallen eight places in Reporters Without Borders World Press Freedom Index, to 160 out of 180, and a remarkable 18 places in Transparency Internationals Corruption Perceptions Index, to 123 out of 167.

All the while, Blair and his coterie have sold their services to the Kazakhstani government for millions of pounds annually [ ] and gone to marked lengths to help the government whitewash the countrys darkest moment since independence.

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