

# Former Top British Military Chief Backs Trump, Trashes Hillary Clinton; Says “Jihadis” Have Lost and Should Leave Aleppo

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*Former Chief of British Defence Staff calls for dialogue with the Russians, rejects idea of no fly zone in Syria as threatening war, says Jihadis should be told to leave Aleppo, and calls for alliance with the Russians against ISIS.*

Lord Richards of Herstmonceux, who has been successively Commander in Chief, Land Forces of the British Army, Chief of the British Army's General Staff, and from October 2010 to July 2013 Chief of the Defence Staff (ie. the professional head of the British armed forces), has broken ranks with the British political class's antipathy to Russia, and has called for the US and Britain to agree to the Syrian government's recapture of eastern Aleppo.

Lord Richards's comments, made in a parliamentary debate in the House of Lords where he sits as an independent, could not be clearer. Since they are so unusual I reproduce them in full as they have been [provided by the Independent newspaper](#).

Firstly Lord Richards criticised the present ideological crusade against Russia, and spoke of Donald Trump as someone who as President might restore dialogue with Russia, thereby securing world peace.

In doing so Lord Richards also made the point that the greatest danger presently does not come from Russia but from groups like ISIS and that it is in everyone's interest that the US and Russia come together to fight this common enemy

In the Cold War era states coalesced and they had this understanding and it worked – even though there was a massive amount at stake, communications and mutual understanding between Russia and America wasn't too bad.

It's non-state actors like Isis that are the biggest threat to our security. If countries and states could coalesce better to deal with these people – and I think Trump's instinct is to go down that route – then I think there's the case for saying that the world certainly won't be any less safe.

It's that lack of understanding and empathy with each other as big power players that is a risk to us all at the moment.

Therefore I think he would reinvigorate big power relationships, which might make the world ironically safer.

The comments, which correspond exactly to things said by us in The Duran, most eloquently

by our contributor Adam Garrie, will cause great anger within the powerful neocon lobby in Britain. What Lord Richards had to say about Syria, and about Aleppo in particular, will have made them more angry still.

Before discussing what Lord Richards had to say about Syria, it is important to remember that he is an exceptionally well-informed observer of the Syrian war. As a top ranking military officer for many years, and as Chief of the Defence Staff from October 2010 to July 2013, Lord Richards was heavily involved in the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya, and drew up plans to arm the Jihadis in Syria. He is therefore highly experienced about the realities of the various Middle East wars – including the Syrian war – and he knows what he is talking about when he discusses them.

On the subject of Aleppo he was crystal clear: the only proper and humanitarian thing to do is to persuade the Jihadis to leave eastern Aleppo, [as Putin has told them to do](#), and to agree to its recapture by the Syrian government

If the humanitarian situation in Syria is our major concern, which it should be – millions of lives have been ruined, hundreds of thousands have been killed – I believe there is a strong case for allowing Assad to get in there and take the city back.

We want the humanitarian horror of Aleppo to come to a rapid halt. The best and quickest way of doing that is to encourage the opposition groups to leave. The Russians are undoubtedly using their weapons indiscriminately. If they're going to attack those groups then there is inevitably going to be civilian casualties.

(bold italics added)

If he made this point in the starkest and clearest possible way, Lord Richards also spoke the unvarnished truth about the total impracticality and utter foolishness of even discussing a no fly zone. In doing so he spoke scathing about Hillary Clinton

Unless she (NB: Hillary Clinton – AM) is prepared to do this properly and go to war with Russia, she shouldn't talk about no-fly zones and nor should we. We would have to shoot down Russian aircraft in order to impose it. Do we really want to go to a shooting war over Aleppo?

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The alternative is for the West to declare a no-fly zone and that means you've got to be prepared to go to war with Russia ultimately.

I see no appetite for that and nor, frankly, do I see much sense in it. It sticks in my throat to say it because I have no love for Assad.

The fact is, the only way to get it to stop now is to allow Assad to win and win quickly and then turn on Isis with the Russians.

(bold italics added)

Expressed with such brutal clarity these comments are guaranteed to provoke howls of

outrage in Britain's neocon/regime change circles, though because of the wide knowledge in political circles that the British public actually agrees with Lord Richards these are more likely to be expressed privately than in public. What will make the anger especially great is that Lord Richards's arguments are actually unarguable.

The big question is whether Lord Richards is speaking only for himself or whether his comments signal a wider discussion within the British government and the British army?

Obviously I do not know the answer to this question. However, for what it's worth, my opinion is that it is most unlikely that a former Chief of the Defence Staff would talk publicly in this way unless he was sure his views were widely shared within the British military.

Indeed I suspect that Lord Richards is speaking out on the British military's behalf, knowing that as a retired officer he is free to say things that serving officers bound by military discipline can't. Most likely there has been a lengthy round of private conversations about the prospect of war in Syria within the British military, and Lord Richards's speech is the way the British military is making its opinions public and known to the country's political class.

If so then Lord Richards's speech to the House of Lords should be seen for what it almost certainly is: the public expression of the grave doubts many serving British officers surely have about Boris Johnson's [crackpot scheme for a "no bombing" zone](#) in Syria and for the various other equally harebrained schemes for military intervention in Syria that get all too frequently talked about in the British media and in the British parliament.

The US military has made it quite clear that it [adamantly opposes military intervention in Syria](#) given the sophisticated air defence system the Russians have set up there. Judging from Lord Richards's comments, that is the view of the British military as well. As discussed previously, the opposition of the military means [Western military intervention in Syria simply isn't going to happen](#), whether Hillary Clinton is elected President or not.

Whether the Jihadis fighting in Aleppo or elsewhere in Syria understand this is another matter. Whether they understand it or not, the fact however is that as the Syrian and Russian militaries close in on them, they are on their own.

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