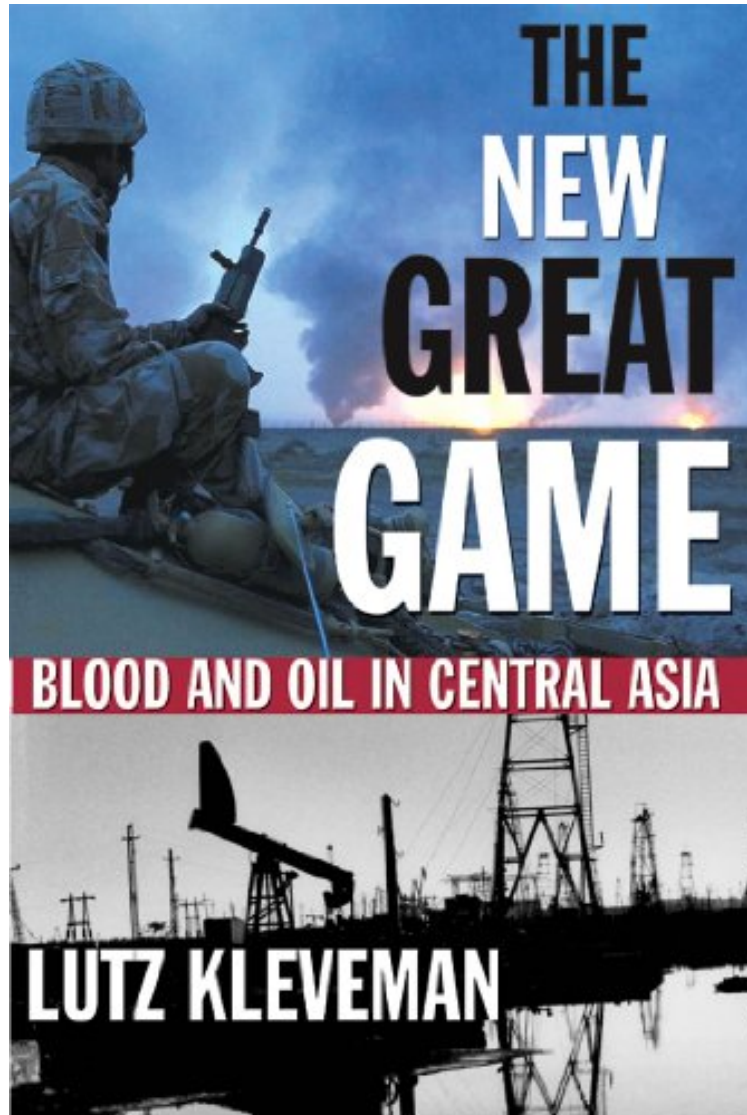


## The New Great Game: Blood and Oil in Central Asia

*Lutz Kleveman*

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**Lutz Kleveman : The New Great Game: Blood and Oil in Central Asia** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The New Great Game: Blood and Oil in Central Asia:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. While in the past this competition was waged between Great Britain and Imperial Russia over invasion routes to IndiaBy AC KatenOutstanding reporting of the reemergence of a centuries old "Great Game" played for political supremacy of Central Asia. While in the past this competition was waged between Great Britain and Imperial Russia over invasion routes to India, today's contest involves access to fossil fuel resources and associated transport corridors. Kleveman tells the stories of the "stans" -- the former Soviet Republics that are struggling to find their way as independent countries, but which are still held in the orbit of the great powers.

Though generally ignored by Western media these days, Central Asia has long served as the center of the world's grand strategic chessboard — the "geographic pivot of history," in the words of one legendary geostrategist. History rhymes and geography endures — and Central Asia may regain the focus of the world's geopolitical spotlight in the coming decades. For readers interested in a preview of this future, "The New Great Game" is the book to read. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great Orientation...Needs an Update By J. A. Walsh Writing the review on a day when Russian authorities attribute suicide bombings of their Metro system to extremists in the disputed North Caucasuses, I cannot help but admire both the insights that Kleveman provides in this book and also his foresight in having written it years ago, before this new domino game between the US, China, Russia, India, Iran and others began in earnest in Central Asia. The March 29 bombings at Lubyanka and Park Kulturyi are a fascinating case study in exactly Kleveman's analysis. Even as media reports indicate that President Obama immediately called President Medvedev to commit US help in bringing the perpetrators (and common enemies) to justice, readers cannot help but wonder what other puzzle pieces are at play, the characteristic of the "great game." Sure, America and Russia do seem to share a common enemy in the form of radical Islamic terrorists that reside or find harbor across Central Asia. But, in disputed places like Chechnya, Abkhazia, South Ossetia; and, in former republics like Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan, the US has been supportive of many of these same "enemy" elements as they have set out to distance themselves from the Russian sphere of influence (that only imposed itself in the form of bygone Soviet hegemony) and to find independence from Russian control or influence over the energy resources of the Caspian region. Kleveman's work lays this out, focusing heavily on the Western private companies that entered the region first, as proxies for Western governments. But, as Kleveman's research, travel and journalism point out, the governments were never far behind in an advisory and advocacy capacity. Well, now, it's getting real. The history of the various nations that emerged from the post-Soviet scum is compelling and provides a great orientation to the region's politics. However, Kleveman's book does need some updating to make it a solid go-to for the region today. For example, his book recounts the travails of the more moderate and vaguely secular Khatami (forgive my spelling please) administration in Iran, which predated the current move toward a harder line represented by the rise of the Ahmedinijad regime and the coalescence of the mullahs and the seat of secular government. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Should be required reading for anyone interested in central asia By Farrah Excellent read with well portrayed events that are well documented and referenced. Some of the information is first hand or referenced from government documents makes compelling case for authors points. Last few pages a bit more opinionated and rushed. Would love to see another book from the author about the last 10 years from where book left off.

Crude oil, once seen as a wealth-creating blessing for mankind, is fast turning into the devil's tears. The struggle to control the world's remaining energy reserves increasingly culminates in bloody conflicts and the killing of innocent civilians, with the war in Iraq being only the latest example. In *The New Great Game*, Lutz Kleveman gives us a fearless, insightful, and exacting portrait of a new battleground in the violent politics and passion of oil: Central Asia, known as the black hole of the earth for much of the last century. The Caspian Sea contains the world's largest amount of untapped oil and gas resources. It is estimated that there might be as much as 100 billion barrels of crude oil in the former Soviet republics of Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan alone. Using the concept of the "Great Game" that Rudyard Kipling immortalized in his novel *Kim*, Kleveman argues that now a New Great Game rages in the region, a modern variant of the nineteenth-century clash of imperial ambitions of Great Britain and Tsarist Russia. Only this time the stakes are raised. Desperate to wean itself from dependence on the powerful OPEC cartel, the United States is now pitted in this struggle against Russia, China, and Iran, all competing for dominance of the Caspian region, its resources and pipeline routes. Complicating the playing field are transnational energy corporations with their own agendas and the brash new, Wild West style entrepreneurs who have taken control after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Traveling thousands of miles, from the Caucasus peaks across the central Asian plains down to the Afghan Hindu Kush, Kleveman met with the principal Great Game actors between Kabul and Moscow: oil barons, generals, diplomats, and warlords. Based on extensive research and travel in the Caucasus, the Caspian, and Central Asia, *The New Great Game* is a gripping narrative and a savvy and incisive analysis of the power struggle for the world's remaining energy resources.