



Thinking Strategically: The Major Powers, Kazakhstan, and the Central Asian Nexus (American Academy Studies in Global Security)

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More than ten years after the breakup of the Soviet Union, none of the major powers, including Russia, has developed a cohesive geopolitical strategy for dealing with the countries and regions that once made up the USSR. Even after September 11 and the sudden importance of Central Asia in the struggle against global terrorism, the United States continues to deal with the region in fragmented and incomplete ways. *Thinking Strategically*, the first volume in a series focusing on security challenges posed by the former Soviet Union, addresses the economic, political, and security interests at stake in Kazakhstan for Russia, the US, China, Europe, and Japan. Kazakhstan presents an interesting case study both because of its role as a pivot point between Russia and the world beyond and because of its position in Central Asia. The contributors to this book call it variously a buffer, a meeting place, a bridge, a gateway, and a strategic arena. Because of its internal problems -- which include great economic uncertainty despite vast oil wealth, a disintegrating infrastructure, and the potential for internal instability -- and its geopolitical position, Kazakhstan and the region of Central Asia present a complex set of opportunities and dangers for the major powers. The authors of each chapter, who come from Russia, the United States, China, the United Kingdom, Japan, and Kazakhstan, address the security challenges posed by Kazakhstan and Central Asia from the point of view of their respective countries or regions. From the Russian perspective, for example, Kazakhstan itself is central -- as a bulwark against instability and a close economic partner -- and Central Asia subordinate; other countries tend to view the entire Central Asia region strategically.

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