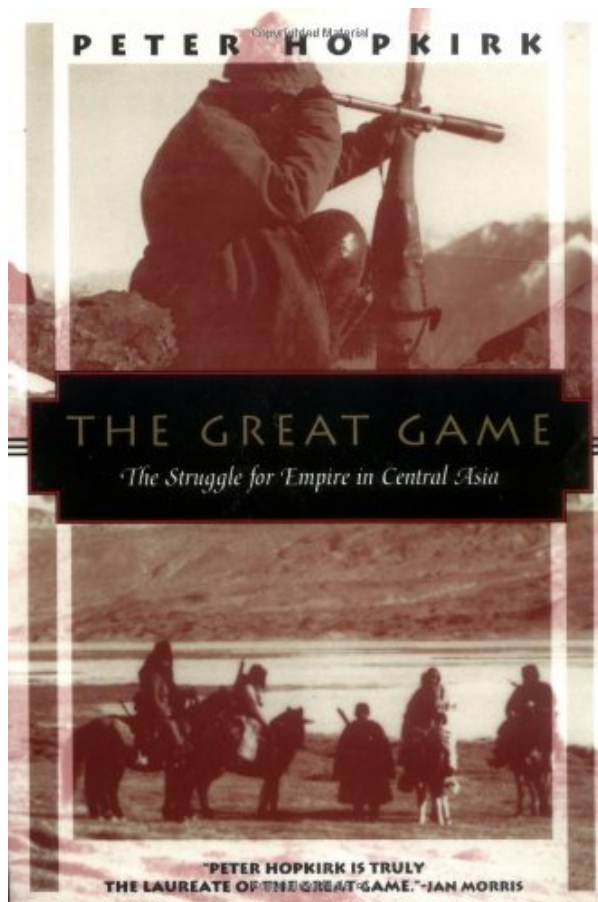
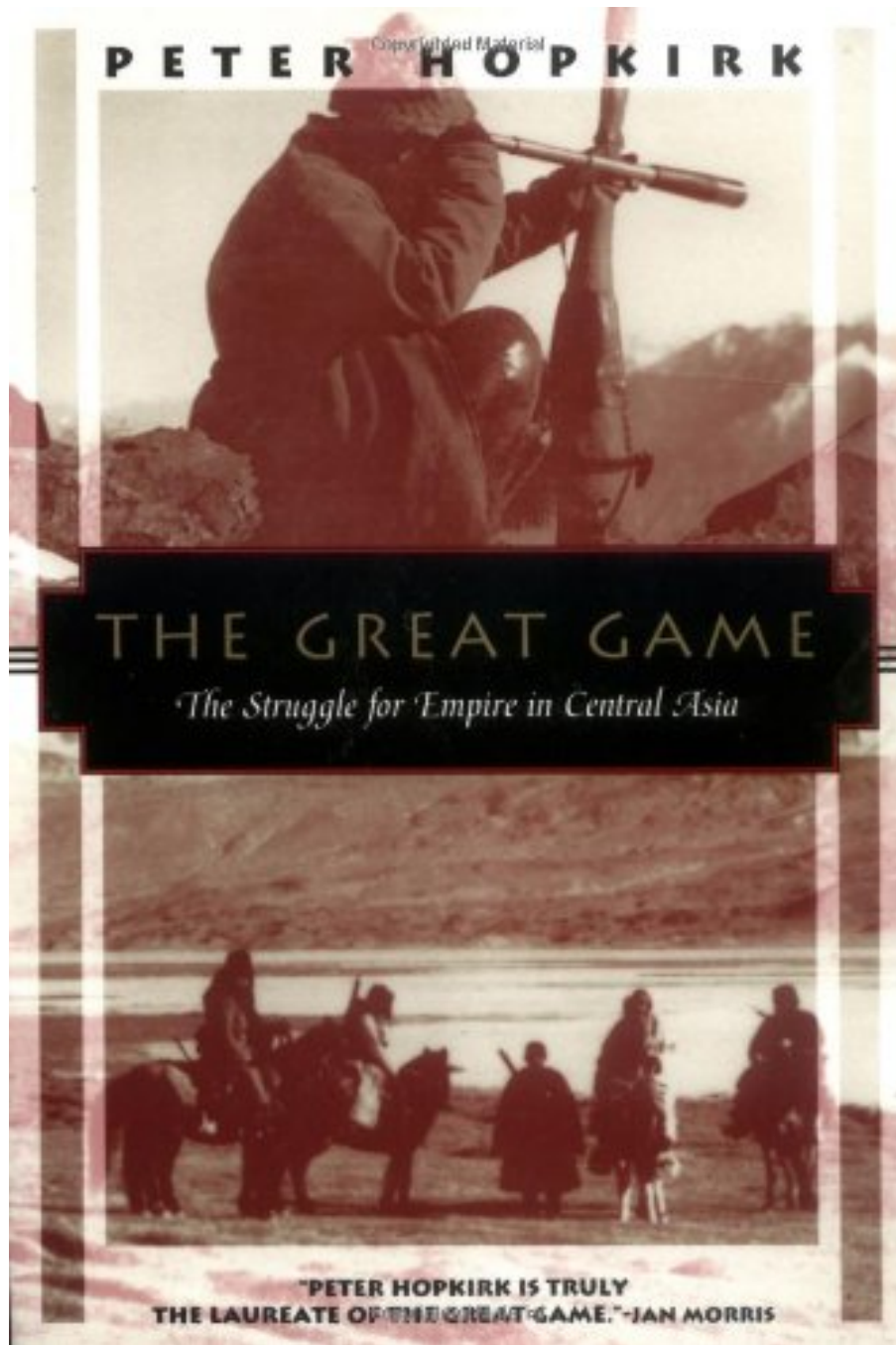


THE GREAT GAME: THE STRUGGLE FOR EMPIRE IN CENTRAL ASIA (KODANSHA GLOBE) BY PETER HOPKIRK



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Amazon.com Review

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From Publishers Weekly

Chronicles the imperial struggle for power in Central Asia between Victorian England and Czarist Russia. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Review

'Fans of political history and adventure are in for a treat as publishing house John Murray reissues its Peter Hopkirk series' -- Sian Gibson, Geographical Magazine 20060601

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THE GREAT GAME: THE STRUGGLE FOR EMPIRE IN CENTRAL ASIA (KODANSHA GLOBE) BY PETER HOPKIRK PDF

THE GREATGAME: THE EPIC STORY BEHIND TODAY'S HEADLINES

Peter Hopkirk's spellbinding account of the great imperial struggle for supremacy in Central Asia has been hailed as essential reading with that era's legacy playing itself out today.

The Great Game between Victorian Britain and Tsarist Russia was fought across desolate terrain from the Caucasus to China, over the lonely passes of the Pamirs and Karakoram, in the blazing Kerman and Helmand deserts, and through the caravan towns of the old Silk Road—both powers scrambling to control access to the riches of India and the East. When play first began, the frontiers of Russia and British India lay 2000 miles apart; by the end, this distance had shrunk to twenty miles at some points. Now, in the vacuum left by the disintegration of the Soviet Union, there is once again talk of Russian soldiers "dipping their toes in the Indian Ocean."

The Washington Post has said that "every story Peter Hopkirk touches is totally engrossing." In this gripping narrative he recounts a breathtaking tale of espionage and treachery through the actual experiences of its colorful characters. Based on meticulous scholarship and on-the-spot research, this is the history at the core of today's geopolitics.

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- Dimensions: 5.60" h x 1.60" w x 8.10" l, 1.61 pounds
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- 564 pages

Features

- Great product!

Amazon.com Review

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Most helpful customer reviews

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

Sweeping and Engaging History of a Century of British and Russian Conflict over the Middle East

By Wesley Bob

I've never read or studied a lot about the exploits and conflicts of the British Empire and Russian Tsars in the 19th century. But I am a fan of well written history and was intrigued by this era of conflict known as "The Great Game". If there is a book out there that better tells the tale of the successes, failures and misadventures of the British and Russians over this century, I have a hard time imagining what it would be as Peter Hopkirk's book by the same title is stellar. Hopkirk is a strong and accessible writer who cut his teeth as a journalist working extensively in the Middle East and then went on to write a handful of histories about noteworthy eras in that region. This book is sweeping in scale as it tells the far ranging and extensive conflict between Russia and Britain, primarily a cold war that occasionally turned hot, as they vied for influence in the areas between Russia and India. The English primarily worried about defending their profitable colony, India, from Russian conquest. The Russians were primarily interested in extending their influence south into the Middle East to expand trade and also pushing toward Constantinople and access to the Mediterranean. Hopkirk excels at veering between the very specific stories of individuals who "played the great game" and then how their actions helped shape the more strategic actions and decisions of the two governments. Hopkirk also skillfully navigates the twisting tides as changes in leadership and influence in both governments shaped The Great Game. All of the detailed exploits of the many individuals are thrilling and enthralling. The hardships that many faced; whether scorching deserts, mountainous snowy passes, or duplicitous counterparties; are inspiring and amazing in their intensity. Although told more from the British point of view, Hopkirk gives an honest reading of the actions and motivations of the English but also does so with the Russians. In addition, he shows great insight and perspective on the various natives that are equal players of the great game. There are numerous Shahs and Emirs and others that had a significant impact on The Great Game, some for the good and some for the worse. Throughout the story there are many stories of heroism and sadism that give the tales dramatic punch and Hopkirk deftly handles all of these. As I worked my way through this sweeping tale, I kept thinking about the current state of relations throughout the Middle East and about some of the recent dealings with Russia. There are numerous lessons to be gleaned from The Great Game for our current relations with many countries in the Middle East and around the world and for that matter our own perspective on American influence. I won't take the time to detail the ones that I gleaned from the book but offer that if you embrace this book you will find a very enjoyable read but also

come away from it with a better perspective on some of the issues our nation faces today.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

A Pure Delight for Great Game Aficionados

By RachelB

Words cannot express the invaluable service that Peter Hopkirk has rendered to students of the Great Game with this impressive volume. Starting heartrendingly with the 1842 execution of Colonel Charles Stoddart and Captain Arthur Conolly at the hands of the villainous Emir of Bokhara, climaxing with Francis Younghusband's meeting with the Russian Captain Gromchevsky in the Pamirs that almost ignited a war, and ending with the ill-fated British mission to Lhasa, *The Great Game* keeps the reader in a constant state of suspense. During Hopkirk's research, he came across a rare photograph of Younghusband and Gromchevsky's 1889 meeting north of Hunza that almost came to disaster, which is included in this volume. Along the way, the reader is introduced to such personalities as Yakub Beg, Frederick Burnaby, James Abbott (namesake of the infamous Abbottabad of Bin Laden fame), Alexander Burnes, Colonel Nikolai Prejevalsky, Sir William Macnaghten, intelligence agent extraordinaire who was the [US Ambassador] Christopher Stevens of his day), and the terminally choleric Emir of Bokhara--all players in the Great Game. As a testament to Hopkirk's skill as a writer, *The Great Game* reads more like an espionage novel than a dry history. It is, in fact, a pure delight as well as a cautionary tale for our generation.

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful.

Comprehensive, a little slanted, not an easy read

By Dennis J. Boccippio

Having first read Hopkirk's "Foreign Devils on the Silk Road" I can't help but rate this in comparison. For those interested in the history of this part of the world, TGG is a worthwhile read but will, I think, require some energy and commitment. Due to the complexity of the history and the number of players, this is a drier read than *Foreign Devils*, whose narrative benefitted from a much smaller cast of "characters" and much simpler story to tell.

Other reviewers have pointed out that it's also not an entirely unbiased telling, with a certain amount of positive flourish added to the British viewpoints rather than the Russian ones. I found the first half of the book to be fairly neutral, but it definitely drifted in tone by the end. The bias wasn't fatal but slightly distracting. Some allowances should probably be given due to the time period in which it was written, when access to Russian (or Soviet) historical source material might have been limited.

The portions of the history centered around Afghanistan's role in the Great Game were, I think, particularly interesting and valuable as they provide historical context to both Soviet and current era conflicts there that modern readers may find useful.

Overall, a book I would recommend to the interested but not one I would gush over...

Postscript: Something I should add (after reading reviews of "Tournament of Shadows", a similar history): The book would have been well served to make better use of maps; there are a couple of stylized "Tolkien-esque" maps included (which are virtually worthless in the Kindle edition), but especially for this topic (where many locations will only be familiar to experts, and where the evolution of boundaries over time was a critical factor), a full inclusion of maps into the narrative would have made a big difference.

Final nit, this was the first e-book I read in Kindle rather than iBooks format. Perhaps because of its age, there are a nontrivial number of OCR scanning errors which were not edited or corrected. Sloppy. Not enough to get in the way of understanding the content, but enough to be very irritating while reading.

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