



The Great Game: Britain and Russia in Central Asia

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The Great Game: Britain and Russia in Central Asia is a collection of key works written in the course of the nineteenth century, when Central Asia was the focus of a political and diplomatic confrontation between Britain and Russia.

While the confrontation lasted, commentators on both sides wrote voluminously about their perceptions of the opposing threat. Soldiers and other adventurers also traversed the region, to gather intelligence and engage with local rulers, and their accounts of their travels are an important part of the picture. Official documents are also a vital source of insights into the private perceptions of both governments. In selecting items for this collection, the aim has been to include those that are both important in themselves and representative of others of a similar type. There were, for example, a large number of British writers who expatiated at length on the Russian threat, and it would be superfluous to include other than those whose works were of a seminal nature.

The era of the 'Great Game' divides itself conveniently into three parts. The first stretched from the early years of the century to the disastrous intervention in Afghanistan which is known as the First Anglo-Afghan War, 1839-42. The second spanned the period between that conflict and the Second Anglo-Afghan War, 1878-80, while the third terminated with the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, which effectively marked the end of the confrontation.

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