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From the "forgotten region" to the "great game" region: On the development of geopolitics in Central Asia

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Abstract

Only eight years ago, Central Asian¹ region was characterized as being "largely ignored as a scholarly backwater of the defunct communist world system".²

Since then the situation has changed; and the role of the Central Asian region in international affairs has increased considerably. Several developments within the region ushered in new geopolitical approaches, echoing international rivalries for the dominance in the ex-Soviet republics. Kazakhstan's oil export and the Kyrgyz Manas military bases are among those international disagreements that echoed in the "Great Game" vision of Central Asia in the world literature.

Could geopolitics be the key approach to frame complex developments in the region? Or is this the case when particular methodological "lenses" through which one could consider the world are counter-productive?



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Keywords

Central Asia; Geopolitics; Oil; Civil uprisings; International confrontation; CSTO

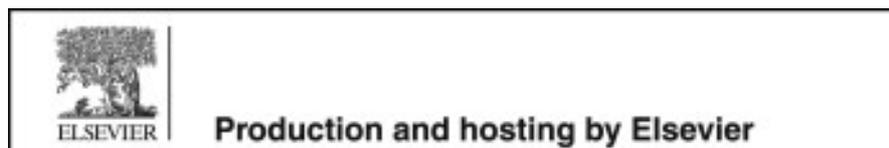
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¹ In this article Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are referred as Central Asia.

- 2 Luong, P. (2002). *Institutional Change and Political Continuity in Post-Soviet Central Asia*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. In Pacek, A.C. (2008). Book Review: *Institutional Change and Political Continuity in Post-Soviet Central Asia*, *The Journal of Politics*, 65.
- 3 Baylis, J., Smith, S., and Owens, P. (2005). *The globalization of world politics: an introduction to international relation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.3.

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