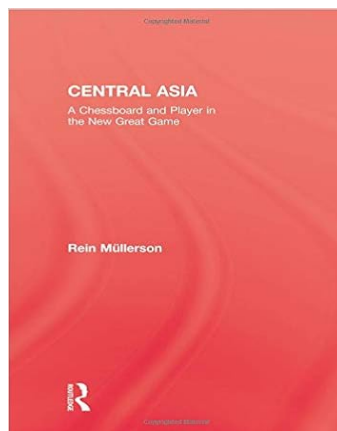


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**Beschreibung:**

This is an important analysis of a key but little-known region, in the wider context of world politics. Central Asia has huge oil and gas resources, divided between five independent states - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan - each with their own problems and interests. The region is energy-rich and, being situated between Russia and China and close to Afghanistan and other potential trouble-spots, it has acquired immense geo-strategic importance. History is seen and felt everywhere. Old legacies, whether they go back to Genghis Khan or stem from the recent Soviet past, have a profound effect on contemporary issues and political choices. Concentrating on today's problems against a complex historical background, the book draws on the author's extensive involvement with the region. Considerable attention is paid to Central Asian Islam, human rights issues in the region, and Central Asia's place in the 'war against terrorism'.