

The New Great Game and the new great gamers: disciples of Kipling and Mackinder

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1. Introduction: concepts, structure, outline

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 one theme that has become fundamental part of the analysis of the politico-military and economic situations of the Caucasus and Central Asia has been the question of a New Great Game within, though not limited to, these regions. Though the idea will be explored later in greater depth, the concept of a New Great Game has been used as shorthand for competition in influence, power, hegemony and profits, often referring to the oil and gas industries and reserves in Central Asia and the Caucasus.¹ It is not limited to these aspects, however, with references being made to religious, cultural and military competition in areas as far apart as Turkey and China, Iran and India, Georgia and Siberia with actors at state, multinational, transnational, local and regional levels. As ‘the romance of Caspian oil struck Western media, industry and government’² this concept of a ‘New Great Game’ became such an integral part of reporting on the region, whether implicitly or explicitly in academic journals, news bulletins, economic analysis or government reports that its use has gained a world-wide following, which has not decreased since the events of 11 September 2001 and the subsequent US-led intervention in Afghanistan.

The growing use of this concept has coincided with—or perhaps been caused by—a revival of the interest in and use of geopolitics as a tool for politico-security analysis. The linking of these two ideas has, in some cases, been explicit and the New Great Game concept can be used to illustrate the contemporary use of geopolitics in this region.

This paper therefore proposes to undertake a study of the New Great Game concept, comparing it to the original Great Game by use of historical, thematic and theoretical comparisons, to see if the term and concept has any value in analysis and as an analytical tool. It is then intended that the concept will be

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The author would like to thank Dr Dov Lynch and Dr Shirin Akiner for all their time and valuable advice. This paper is an amended version of his MA dissertation, undertaken at the War Studies Department of Kings College London, 2001–2002.

related to ideas of geopolitical theory to see if there are any similarities between them. It should be noted that this is a study of one part of geopolitics in one region at one time; it is not intended that a judgement be made upon the discipline as a whole or on its value as an analytical tool.

2. The original 'Great Game'

The term 'the Great Game' was coined in the 1830s, although its use was not to become widespread and popularised until the first years of the 20th century in the novel *Kim* by Rudyard Kipling.³ Although fictional, the basis for the events and occurrences that it described were real, describing the 'shadowy struggle for political ascendancy'⁴ that took place for most of the 19th and early 20th centuries between the British and Russian empires over Central Asia.

The nature of the Great Game was clear. It was a struggle for political dominance, control and security, conducted by two Imperial powers over land and populations whose value lay in their location between the Russian and British Empires. The Great Game, as this was termed, consisted of three phases.⁵

The first began with the expansion of the Russian Empire into the Caucasus and Central Asia during the late 18th and early 19th centuries that raised alarm bells at the East India Company, *de facto* power in India. Driven by fears about Russian intentions, the Company sent officers to explore the overland approaches to the northern borders of India. During the 19th century the involvement of the British government increased, turning the Great Game from a private venture into part of imperial defence, foreign and colonial policy. The methods used were those of secret agents, coupled with overt military action upon occasion.⁶ The first phase of the Great Game ended in 1907 with the signing of the Anglo-Russian Convention.

The second phase consisted of the *Drang nach Osten* undertaken by Wilhelmine Germany. The operational method—secret agents attempting to manipulate local tribes and peoples—were the same as in the first phase, as was the aim—control of India.

The third phase occurred following the 1917 Russian Revolution when the Bolsheviks under Lenin set out, 'by means of armed uprisings, to liberate the whole of Asia from imperialist domination'.⁷ The eventual result of this third round was the consolidation of Bolshevik power over the old Tsarist domains.

Territorial control, or at the least hegemony over territory, was key to the aims of the Great Game, with the stakes being imperial domination. Irrespective of the individual aims and fluctuating fortunes of the players, the prime objective—imperial security and power—remained constant.

3. The New Great Game

'When every one is dead the Great Game is finished. Not before.'

Rudyard Kipling, *Kim* (1901)

It would appear to be a self-evident fact from all the material that has been written on the New Great Game that the words of Hurree Chunder Mookerjee to Kim were correct. According to this material, a New Great Game has emerged, one that is a competition for influence, power, hegemony and profits in Central Asia and the Transcaucasus. It has been argued that 'Central Asia, scene of the Great Game between England and Russia in the nineteenth century, is once more a key to the security of all Eurasia',⁸ as Russia, 'geostrategically on the defensive, ... is engaged in complex geopolitical manoeuvres and enmeshed in geo-economic competition into its contiguous "Great Space" '9 because 'the West does not want to see any structure in Eurasia that permits Russian hegemony'.¹⁰ 'Caspian petroleum [has come] to be a focal point of power in world politics'¹¹ with 'access to that resource and sharing in its potential wealth represent[ing] objectives that stir national ambitions, motivate corporate interests, rekindle historical claims, revive imperial aspirations and fuel international rivalries'.¹² As 'the struggle for Eurasian oil is a multi-dimensional security, geopolitical and economic game ... this Great Game is quickly becoming a paramount challenge for American policy making toward the year 2000 and beyond'.¹³ The general theme underlying this concept is one of competition; competition for influence, whether at political, economic or cultural levels. While the term 'the New Great Game' may not be used explicitly, this competitive element is one that is present in much analysis of the region, with the New Great Game being summarised thus:

Six new republics, predominantly Islamic but vibrantly distinct, are grouped around the Caspian Sea, the current landlords of untapped oil and natural gas reserves that rival those in the Persian Gulf. Pipelines, tanker routes, petroleum consortiums, and contracts are the prizes of the New Great Game. India and China, each with exponentially growing energy needs, are vying for access, along with Russians, Europeans, and Americans. Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan have their own political, economic, and cultural interests in the former Soviet republics, where slumbering rivalries have abruptly awakened among Azeris, Armenians, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Turkmen, and other long-subject peoples ... it is a bloody muddle, made worse as before by outsiders.¹⁴

The issue of traditional politico-military hegemony is an aspect of the concept, focusing especially on Russian attempts to reassert political influence over the former Soviet states.¹⁵ Since 1991 there has been a 'widespread view ... that most geopolitical issues in the region could be reduced to either favouring or opposing Russian hegemony'.¹⁶ It is an integral part of the New Great Game concept that the former Soviet states are the subject of competition between Russia and her opponents, most notably the USA, with each trying to ensure that they have the greatest influence; an act of what has been termed 'great-power chauvinism'.¹⁷ The example given of this traditional politico-military game is the Caucasus where the presence of the Russian military and the role it has played in the conflicts within the Transcaucasian states has convinced many analysts that a struggle for influence is taking place, with it being 'naïve, to say the least,

to expect that Russia will abandon its ambitions in the Southern Caucasus¹⁸ to an increasing American or Turkic presence.

Although this aspect has been analysed, the greater focus has been on energy politics and the competition for the oil and gas of the region, though the two—political influence and economic influence—are often linked. From 1994 the issue of oil and gas and the potential rewards that it could bring dominated the analysis of Central Asia.¹⁹ The overall impression was of untapped wealth that would, within a few years, literally come gushing out of the region.²⁰ With the profit motive, international companies became involved, with one analyst commenting that ‘a number of energy companies are jumping on the bandwagon to Central Asia’.²¹ The question of pipeline access to reserves—what route should they take, who should be responsible for their construction and safety, who charges and profits from them—and the composition of the consortia and firms responsible for this—is seen as a whole subsection of the New Great Game hypothesis.²² This struggle for influence in the pipeline and oil consortia—famously the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC) and Azerbaijan International Operating Company (AIOC)—is an integral part of the New Great Game hypothesis, with both companies and states involved.

With ‘oil remain[ing] a strategic commodity critical in the global balance of power’²³ the issue of secure supplies of oil, gas and other energy sources became of paramount concern post-Gulf War, with ‘ex-Cold Warriors [being] enamoured of the idea that vast oil riches could easily be snatched from the former Soviet empire’.²⁴ Both Russian and American administrations stressed the need to be involved in the area; a Russian Security Council report emphasising that by 2005 Russia dependence on CIS energy resources would have increased and that it would be an issue of ‘vital interest’ to have access to these areas.²⁵ Reports under the Clinton administration stressed the need to be active in the region while the energy plan of the Bush administration concluded that ‘America twenty years from now will import nearly two of every three barrels of oil—a condition of increased dependency on foreign powers that do not always have America’s interests at heart’,²⁶ recommending that policy makers ‘devote ... much effort to securing additional foreign supplies of energy’,²⁷ referring explicitly to the Caspian Sea Basin.

The involvement of non-regional governments in the concept is complicated further by the involvement of China, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey and Israel, whose governments and companies are active in pursuing their own national interests in a variety of areas. At an economic level it is currently China that receives the most attention with recent plans for pipelines from Xinjiang province to Shanghai raising the potential prospect of a Chinese route exporting gas from Central Asia and another pipeline from eastern Siberia raising the potential for the export of Siberian oil.²⁸

Economic security and primacy is not the only facet of the New Great Game. At the beginning of the 1990s it was widely anticipated that there would be a struggle for cultural influence in Central Asia; ‘by far the most fateful and fiercest competition on the soul of the emerging Central Asian Muslims is the

one waged between Iran and Turkey'.²⁹ These two states, it was argued, had historical, religious and cultural ties with the states of Central Asia and given the weakness of the new ex-Soviet regimes it was natural that they would gravitate towards being the junior partners in a region bloc dominated by one of the regional powers.³⁰ A second subset of this cultural aspect of the New Great Game was fought by Pakistan and India with both vying for influence in Central Asia as part of an extension of their own strategic rivalries. This, however, was perceived to be a sideshow as 'both are minor players with weak hands. And the game is picking up as the major players are moving closer.'³¹ Furthermore, the New Great Game was argued to spread towards the Persian Gulf³² and South Asia.³³

While economic and cultural competitions were—and are—an integral part of the New Great Game hypothesis, the question of hard security has gained importance.³⁴ In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and the subsequent American-led military action in Afghanistan, the whole question of a 'New Great Game' was revisited.³⁵ With Western troops active in Afghanistan and the USA being granted basing rights in Central Asia, the question of the impact on regional political influence was raised. The idea of a challenge to the perceived Russian hegemony was raised in the press and academic circles, while the expansion of the 'war against terror' into Georgia was seen as another move into Russia's geopolitical space.³⁶ The US presence in Central Asia, however, has in some circles been perceived as less of a military action, having a different intention; 'It is an article of faith among old left and deep green fundamentalists ... that the Afghan war is really, somehow, about maintenance of US access to oil supplies to slake its obscene thirst. Drill deeply enough through the layers of lies, damned lies and excuses and you'll eventually hit the gusher.'³⁷

Further security aspects in the game have also been alluded to. The question of arms sales to the region is viewed as competitive,³⁸ while the influence of out of area states becoming involved in regional security situations has not been confined to Russia and the USA. There have been, for example, reports of Israel undertaking military co-operation with Uzbekistan.

The above illustrates the type of actors in the New Great Game. Multinational companies have been present in the oil tendering process, state governments by the diplomatic positioning of the 1990s and since 11 September, transnational organisations, both governmental³⁹ and non-governmental organisations,⁴⁰ and substate influences, such as local warlords and factions have all allegedly been part of this New Great Game.⁴¹

Therefore the perceived wisdom is that the New Great Game, emerging in the early 1990s and continuing until the present day, is multifaceted, covering a range of sectors from economic to social and cultural and questions of hard security, with a variety of actors playing the game in a number of geographical areas. The hypothesis is that while the original Great Game has ended, a New Great Game has taken its place.

4. The analytical utility of the New Great Game concept

(i) *Labelling of 'the New Great Game'*

The use of 'the New Great Game' as shorthand for covering some, many or all of the situations described is well documented. There are two issues, however, that must be discussed; the first is regarding the applicability of the term and the second is the accuracy of the concept behind the term. Analysing and comparing the New Great Game with the original Great Game is a process by which it would be possible to see the applicability of the term as a label. This analysis can be conducted at a number of levels, including location, actors, aims and means.

Location. It is location that provides a continuation between the two Great Games. Clearly there are geographical similarities over where the games were and are played, notably in Afghanistan, through the exact space of the area referred to in much of the New Great Game literature is that of the Caspian Basin, hundreds of miles to the west. There is no exact match in the geographical location, though there is enough of a rough similarity to provide a limited frame of reference. References to the New Great Game have been made at levels from the very specific—the Pankisi Gorge—to the very general—the Eurasian continent. This ambiguity means some overlap in the geographic context between the new and original games is inevitable.

Actors. The contrast between the original Great Game and the new Great Game in terms of the actors involved is one of the most striking differences in concept. In the 19th century the Great Game was played by two Imperial powers, the British and Russian empires. Any actors over whom the game was played over—such as indigenous populations, local rulers and subjects—were treated as subservient to the aims of the powers.

The New Great Game contrasts to this, with the type and numbers of actors involved in the game having transformed and grown. The British Empire has disappeared and the Russian Empire, emerging via the Soviet Union, has disintegrated. The British role of sole competitor with Russia has been replaced by several states including China, Pakistan, Israel, Iran, Turkey and the USA. At the state level, new actors have appeared in Central Asia and the Transcaucasus. Five new states in Central Asia and three in the Caucasus, each with their own aims, objectives and methods, have radically transformed the concept of a New Great Game. They are not cipher states; they are their own actors who can play the game for their own advantage and for their own motives and interests, and 'it is a mistake to treat issues in which third parties are embroiled as if these countries were pawns in a global balancing game, instead of dealing with the issues' intrinsic merits and the nations' interests'.⁴²

Analytically, the similarities in the typology of politics involved in the two games has been questioned: 'The Great Game was a game of high politics—a

game of colonization and military contest between the two empires ... the New Great Game has nothing to do with high politics of the two imperialist powers. The New Great Game, if at all it could be described as such, pertains to low politics. It is about creating niches of influences in Central Asia by neighbouring countries.⁴³ It could be argued then that there is a second level of the New Great Game, one between the regional states 'seeking to define their roles in their regions and the world',⁴⁴ and not just one between the global competitors.

In addition to these state actors, non-state bodies are active in the game; NATO, the UN and the OSCE at the supra-state level, while, at sub-state level multinational companies, corporations and conglomerates, non-governmental organisations, pressure groups, diasporas, political factions, terrorist groups and criminal organisations are all involved.

Aims. The objectives of the original Great Game were ones of competing forms of Imperialism,⁴⁵ the aim being for geopolitical dominance in the region in the form of a zero-sum game; a rise in Russian control of the region could only be accomplished to the detriment of British control and visa versa. Imperial control—whether direct rule, hegemonic influence or ideological favourable alliance—was the aim of the Game.

The range of aims of the New Great Game is far more diverse, including; at state actor level the establishment of a form of neo-imperialist hegemony, the formation of cultural allegiances and influence and the promotion of state security concerns; at non-state actor the maximisation of profits, securing of contracts and dominant shares in consortia and the securing of local influence and politico-religious aims.

Means and scope. The original Great Game was, in the main, a struggle behind the scenes, a war of operatives working alone or in small groups, sometimes on their own initiative, at the very edges of control and supervision by their superiors. Military force, however, was countenanced upon occasion as an adjunct to reinforce hegemony and control. The variety of aims in the New Great Game means that a correspondingly greater variety of methods have been used to reinforce political influence, ranging from the formation of corporate alliances, press manipulation and diplomatic negotiation to the stationing of troops. The concept, however, of secret agents operating alone per se is laughable, with the New Great Game being conducted as much in business negotiations in New York, London and Moscow as it is in Central Asia and the Transcaucasus.

The overt use of 'power' within the New Great Game has been more restrained, though this is difficult to quantify. No longer is it acceptable to use naked, dominating aggressive power in the international system. While there are still some demonstrations of force, the degree to which force can be used without acceptable justification has diminished in the years between the two games.

In the international system, the original game was conducted as a direct

competition between the two powers with no other interference brooked, or indeed possible. The international system of the era, with empire building and expansion, meant that changes in the borders of states, the dissolution of states and their open manipulation and control was permitted and used as a tool of policy. The states over whom the game was played had no protection from either of the Imperial powers and were treated as mere proxies and ciphers.

Within the context of the international system, however, the competition of the New Great Game is very different. The worldwide dissolution of empires after the Second World War, coupled with the creation of the United Nations and the international legal system, put in place a system of protection for states that meant that their borders, integrity and sovereignty were to be respected under international law with the equality of states enshrined as part of the United Nations charter. Given this dramatic change in the international system the implications for any New Great Game are considerable; states cannot be violated, controlled, dissolved or destroyed in a manner similar to the past.

It has been said that one of the most interesting and curious features of the original Great Game was that ‘the game itself was odd. The object was not to win; but not to lose.’⁴⁶ Within this context it was recognised by at least some of the players that there could be no end to the original Game if the geopolitical situation and international system was not radically altered—as it was ultimately by the First World War. The New Great Game, however, may have a very distinct object; to win whatever the specific prize.

The cost–benefit analysis of the Great Games are very different.⁴⁷ The original benefit was in the enhanced security and prestige that territorial control gave while, overall, the costs of gaining that territory were much higher than the benefits that it realistically could give.⁴⁸ The payoffs of the new Great Game are more obvious and plentiful; monetary profit, security of energy supplies, national economic growth reinforcing state independence, an Islamic cultural revival, enhanced politico-military position as well as other lesser benefits, while the costs can correspondingly be measured in billions of dollars in addition to non-quantifiable security concerns.

Therefore, given the above differences and the limited similarities between the original Great Game and the New Great Game (assuming that the analysis of the situation by the commentators and academics promoting the New Great Game is correct) should the term ‘the New Great Game’ therefore be used to describe the situation? It could be argued not. The political, cultural, economic and military situation is radically different. The aims are different as are the means and methods used. The only real similarities—and these are limited—are in the geographical location and in the romantic, exotic, obscure and remote perspective given by some commentators to the events occurring in Central Asia and the Transcaucasus.

Given the links between the two Games and only limited qualification or explanation offered when ‘the New Great Game’ term is used, there is the real danger that the full implications and current meaning of the term will not be fully understood and appreciated. Given this loose usage it can hinder analysis

and be detrimental to the understanding of the situation. The analytical value of the concept, especially when used merely as a label as is often the case, becomes negative, insignificant and to the detriment of any detailed study at either a conceptual or a practical level.

(ii) *Is the concept valid?*

There is a more fundamental issue to be raised; whether the interpretation that has been placed on events in depicting a New Great Game is correct. Despite being accepted as perceived wisdom by many academics, commentators and analysts, the question of whether or not there actually is a New Great Game (with its disparate meanings as discussed previously) is not one that has been definitively answered. By implication those who write and use the term without reservation or qualification are promoting the view that they agree with the concept. There are those, however, who openly dispute it.

The mix of wildcatters, Western major oil companies and political jockeying bears far more resemblance to the initial scrambling for concessions in Saudi Arabia nearly 100 years ago than to the ‘Great Game’ of the nineteenth century that is so commonly cited in the case of Caspian resources.⁴⁹

The geo-politics of contemporary Central Asia will thus be qualitatively different from the nineteenth-century Great Game. ...⁵⁰

Recently it has become popular to see a ‘New Great Game’ shaping up in this region ... this image is misleading. ...⁵¹

For there to be a discernible situation in the former Soviet Union that can be called the New Great Game, there has to be a qualitatively different reality in economic and political commerce to any other situation in contemporary times: that is, to use the New Great Game meaningfully as a label, it must refer to a situation that is unique. This is not the case as actors manoeuvring for the greatest influence is an integral part of the international economic and political system; actors ‘act according to long standing tenants of realism and realpolitik’,⁵² and, indeed, real-economics. Many of the measures taken that have been labelled as tools designed to increase political influence can be traced back to market economics. While Russia has used access to its oil and gas pipeline network as a tool of political policy upon occasion, the reality is that the economics of oil and gas reserves and the costs of the extraction situation are such that it is, for Russia, a disadvantage to allow the overwhelming export of oil and gas from Central Asia. Given the gas reserves available in Turkmenistan, for example, it would be an act of economic folly for Russia to allow Turkmenistan total access to the gas pipeline exporting network.⁵³

Within Central Asia ‘the idea of “power vacuum” and a scramble for the increase of influence by countries, other than the former metropolis Russia, is as irrelevant as it was in the case of other Afro-Asian countries’⁵⁴ (who went through decolonisation). The process of the former imperial power trying to

retain some influence while disengaging is not one that is unique in world history; neither is the process of the newly independent states asserting themselves or of other states trying to use them in political manoeuvring.

The events depicted in the New Great Game, however, are not confined to Central Asia, raising issues of whether or not they can be isolated from the normal process of the international system, market economics and political realities. Using the most common exemplifier of the New Great Game—the struggle over oil and gas concessions—it can be argued that situations such as these take place in all energy producing areas, often with the very same actors or types of actors as are involved in Central Asia.⁵⁵ Commercial interactions similar to those in Central Asia have been seen in Saudi Arabia in the early 20th century and Venezuela and Nigeria in the last decades; the initial manoeuvring to gain influence that occurred in the early 1990s can now be seen replicated to a degree in Iran and Libya. Further to this, the situation described—that of companies working to gain influence in order to secure contracts and being in direct competition with each other—is hardly unique to the oil and gas industries. In every commercial situation where two or more companies compete there will be a process by which they compete to gain an advantage and to ingratiate themselves with the client. It could easily be argued, using the model provided by those promoting the New Great Game, that there are ‘New Great Games’ in progress throughout most of the world. If this is the case, it cannot be argued that the situation in Central Asia is unique.

A sub-tenant of the Great Game thesis, sometimes explicit, more often implicit, is that the actions by private companies, such as oil majors and gas multinationals, to secure commercial, exploration and extraction rights are in some way linked to the benefit of the state to which they belong; securing rights for an American multinational link to American national interest, rights gained by Russian companies link to Russia’s concerns in the area. While this may be true of state run companies, the idea that there is an automatic correlation between the private sector and the national interest is erroneous. Although multinational companies may be registered in one country, the reality is that they are owned by shareholders which in the case of multinationals may include global institutions and foreign owners and that they are run by their directors and executives, possibly of differing nationalities. Within the sub-question of pipeline routes, ‘companies are basing their decisions on the most financially affordable and timely route rather than complying with the geo-strategic concerns of the United States’,⁵⁶ being more interested in bottom-line profit than global politics. The stakes companies have in projects are not viewed as being irrevocably linked to the national interest and can be traded as commercial realities dictate. LUKoil, for example, announced that it was planning to sell its 10 per cent stake in the Azeri–Chirag–Gunashli project in the Caspian for US\$1.25 billion with the likelihood that the stake would be bought by a non-Russian company.⁵⁷ The idea, therefore, of a company being subservient to a grand strategic design on the part of the Kremlin or the White House is false.⁵⁸

Within the field, co-operation rather than competition is more often the case.

The formation of consortia demonstrated that while companies may have been in competition with each other during the tendering and negotiating process, they were ready and able to work together for production sharing agreements, recognising that the financing, resources and political realities in the region required working together;⁵⁹ ‘western companies sought to accommodate Russia since for the success of their projects they depend on good relations with Russia’.⁶⁰ Competition remains part of market economics but oil and gas multinationals are linked to each other through various partnerships and consortiums throughout the world; any argument that there is no co-operation between them in Central Asia ignores the reality of the evidence and this undermines the whole concept of the Great Game, based as it is on competition.

It is not just among companies, however, that there is a lack of competition; at the state level there has been significant co-operation over oil and gas. While commercial realities, hyped-up as a tool of political influence, have resulted in Russia being somewhat reticent with regard to access to her pipeline network, the reality is that oil does flow from Kazakhstan through to the Black Sea ports. In the Transcaucasus ‘the critical need for commercial and political alignment between Azerbaijan and Georgia was noted very early on and today is the fundamental building block on which both countries independence is being built’.⁶¹ The import–export of oil and gas requires co-operation as there is no one state that is able to dominate the market; alleged competition over pipeline routes has not prevented co-operation and the construction of pipelines for oil and gas that cross several states.⁶² Even states that are supposed to be directly vying for political influence—Russia and China—work with each other.⁶³ Further interaction between states and companies illustrates that the supposedly competitive economic dynamic does not preclude co-operation.

Within the inter-state field the absence of a New Great Game can be clearly demonstrated. Co-operation within Central Asia was encouraged in the early 1990s by the creation of a variety of structures between the newly independent states including, among others, the Tashkent Collective Security Treaty (1992), the Central Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (1993) and the Central Asian Economic Community (1994).⁶⁴ While these efforts had varying degrees of success, effective interaction was demonstrated in the security field by the formation of the Shanghai Five (1996), expanded to the Shanghai Forum in July 2000.⁶⁵ Intended as a vehicle through which member states could address border issues its role expanded into the discussion of issues of common security, such as militant Islam, cross border terrorism—with a regional anti-terrorist centre being formed in Bishkek—and has become a means ‘to discuss broad proposals for Central Asian security and to co-ordinate on more detailed needs in the unstable border regions’⁶⁶ while allowing itself room for expansion.

The question of a security Great Game raised its head following the events of 11 September and the US-led intervention in Afghanistan against the Taleban. In this context it was often interpreted as Washington making a move into Moscow’s backyard and challenging Russian hegemony in the area. The ensuing events have proved, however, that this is not the case and that any long-term

challenge to Russian prominence will be much smaller in scale than has been envisaged. In order for there to be a game there has to be at least two sides playing; after 11 September, in the context of the New Great Game, there were not. The coalition put together by diplomatic activity in the ‘war against terror’ included Russia and all of the Central Asian state, bar Turkmenistan (officially neutral as of 1995), Russia looking with favour on the intervention, linking it to Chechnya. Whilst it could be argued that Russian acceptance of the American presence in Afghanistan, Central Asia and Georgia is the result of having few alternatives, its acceptance by the Russian executive tends to give lie to any statement of inherent conflict. Russia may still view Central Asia and the Transcaucasus as lying within her geopolitical space but there seems to be a willingness to accept that there can be no monopoly of orientation within those states, either in the security or economic field.

In addition to these arguments, the question of the exact importance of the supposed New Great Game must also be addressed and its place within the policy issues of each state examined, with an attempt made to answer a question that was asked over half-a-century ago; ‘Is the struggle for the control of the Eurasian Heartland really the one and fundamental issue of world policy ...?’⁶⁷ Simply the answer is no.

While Central Asia retained some importance, the main thrust of Russian foreign policy under Yeltsin and Putin has been ‘Western orientated’,⁶⁸ focusing on NATO expansion and Ballistic Missile Defence. It has been argued that ‘Central and West Asia play a secondary role in China’s foreign policy’ as she ‘does not seek direct political or economic influence’,⁶⁹ while the economic potential of Central Asia is of interest, as are the questions of security linked to Xinjiang province, once again the most important foreign and security policy issues are not located within Central Asia. Within security the question of Taiwan remains paramount, while the energy potential of Central Asia is matched by the South China Seas and Siberia.⁷⁰ Within the US administration, until the ramifications of 11 September became clear, in security terms Central Asia was little more than an adjunct of US Central Command, the attention being further south on the Persian Gulf. Even now, effective interest in Central Asia will probably be short-term and that the focus will once again shift—as it already has done towards Iraq.

One of the largest sub-sections of the New Great Game thesis was the idea that there would be a cultural, historical and political struggle for influence by Turkey and Iran, each competing as to which would lead the newly independent states. However, ‘the Great Game that Turkey and Iran were expected to play as regional powers never took place’.⁷¹ For a combination of reasons, notably limited economic and financial resources on the part of Turkey and a lack of political will on the part of Iran, there has been no competition between the two states. While much has been written by academics and commentators in both of these countries regarding a desire for a zone of influence,⁷² as *The Economist* summarised, ‘when Soviet Central Asia suddenly

found itself independent ... there was much speculation about whether Turkey or Iran would win the hearts of the Muslim peoples in a New Great Game in Central Asia. The answer has been clear for some time: neither.⁷³

Given these critiques that can be made of the concept of a New Great Game, the very existence of the concept as something that can stand academic rigour and examination must be questioned rather than being accepted unquestioningly as a perceived wisdom.

(iii) *The New Great Game and geopolitics*

While interest in the region has been continuing because of the reasons outlined above, further attention has been due to the revival of the geopolitics—and the emergence of geo-economics—in the 1980s and 1990s.⁷⁴ The exact application of geopolitics varies from practitioner to practitioner, but as a discipline,

Theoretical Geopolitics studies the relation between physical space and international politics, develops models for the spatial division of the world into cooperating and competing parts for historical, economic and political reasons, and analyses how the participants interpret the political, economic and military consequences of this division. ... The Geopolitics of a state or other territorially defined society means its pursuit of geographically dimensioned aims that are connected with its economic and political position, security and culture.⁷⁵

Many articles on the New Great Game thesis have geopolitical references or ideas mentioned or alluded to within them, as ‘in the former sphere of influence of the USSR ... geopolitics has indeed become a key concept with respect to the redefinition of national interests’.⁷⁶ While a detailed exploration of geopolitics is not the intention of this paper, the application of aspects of geopolitical theory to the concept of the New Great Game can be examined.

Theoretical geopolitics has a number of tenants and models that can be used to provide support for the New Great Game concept. It has been argued that there are three groups into which geopolitical models can fall—imperialist, state and universalist.⁷⁷ While geopolitical theories can belong to any of the three groups depending upon their particular thesis and tenants, the particular models illustrated by the three groupings can be placed over and onto the concept of a New Great Game and the co-existent reality in Central Asia to see if there can be a basis in geopolitical theory. The model groupings all have some relevance to the situation, linking to the concept thesis; respective arguments can be put forward, using selected examples, to fit the theoretical mould.

Imperialist geopolitics, central to the ideas of control of territory, are linked in part to the concept idea. While the idea of territorial control of the states of Central Asia and the Transcaucasus by an outside power is, because of the international system and politico-economic reality, unimaginable, imperialist geopolitics fit perfectly with the original Great Game concept. Geopolitics of the state have been reinforced by the break up of the Soviet Union, and regional

grouping theory can be used to explain several of the events that have occurred. Universalist ideas, supported by evidence of cultural competition and the spread of democratic ideals, are also in evidence.

More specifically than these moulds, however, are the geopolitical ideas that have been proposed by leading theorists in the field such as Mackinder, Spykman, Haushofer and Savitsky. Often these conceptual references are made by commentators on the Central (Eur)Asian situation without a detailed exploration of the meaning and intention behind the theories proposed. Mackinder's ideas of the 'geographical pivot of history' and 'the heartland', for example, are most often used as a tool to demonstrate a supposedly higher level of theoretical thinking with regard to the concept of a New Great Game, though only part of Central Asia and the Transcaucasus lie in the 1904 'Heartland' and, proportionally, even less in the 1919 version.⁷⁸

It is interesting that the continual revisions of Mackinder's ideas—coupled with his dislike of the term 'geopolitics' and his aversion to geopolitical determinism⁷⁹—have been ignored by many analysts who have taken the 'Heartland' and applied it to the concept without reservation or detailed examination. Added to this, the historical limitations of Mackinder's ideas,⁸⁰ and the change in the reality of the political, economic, resource and military situation since his views were proposed, means that there is a considerable limitation on how applicable they can be now. A view from 1951 is still valid; 'It is probably true that Mackinder's views on the heartland have been accepted in too uncritical a spirit'.⁸¹

Beyond this, however, the ideas of geopolitics have openly been used in connection with the Great Game thesis and not just by implication or name reference. For some commentators Central Asia remains key to world power. One of the most famous examples of this was propounded by Zbigniew Brzezinski, presenting 'a post-modern version of the Mackinder/Haushofer geopolitical doctrine'.⁸² Referring to Central Asia—'the Eurasian Balkans'—as 'geopolitically significant'⁸³ for reasons of energy, socio-political instability and potential power domination, Brzezinski argued that 'it follows that America's primary interest is to help ensure that no single power comes to control this geopolitical space'⁸⁴ for 'preponderance over the entire Eurasian continent serv[es] as the central basis for global primacy'.⁸⁵ This illustrates, in part, what has come to be the current use of geopolitics; a merger of economic and political concerns in a region linking them arbitrarily with geopolitics coupled with policy recommendations while failing to examine that actual tenants of that theory. Namely, there has been a failure to conduct 'a coherent geopolitical analysis that elucidates the constellation of economic and political forces which exists at present and the geopolitical field within which strategic and economic leverage can be exercised'.⁸⁶

An interesting comparison between the original and new Great Games at the geopolitical level is the way in which they have been used to relate to the Cold War. In part due to Heartland—Rimland geopolitics,⁸⁷ the original Great Game was seen as a forerunner of the Cold War struggle between the USSR

and USA. By comparison, the new game is sometimes regarded as the last remnant of the Cold War—in a way, the last struggle between the USA and Russia.

The academic use of geopolitics in much of the literature on the New Great Game is one that fails to do justice to the discipline. As has been said, ‘that conventional wisdom ... has not been subjected to enough scrutiny in the light of the changed international realities. Many geopolitical “truths” that have passed into the canon of security by intellectuals rarely get a proper re-examination to determine their relevance to the constantly evolving nature of the [world] system.’⁸⁸

Often the term is bandied around with no actual reference being made to the techniques of the discipline, its aims, objectives or limitations. Analysts and commentators use the term without specifying what they intend to do with the discipline or which elements of the discipline they intend to apply. While the idea of territorial competition and co-operation is one that, at the most basic level, is understood to be geopolitics, lack of any further examination of the discipline with respect to the New Great Game concept is one that undermines both. There is, in short, a lack in evidence of academic and intellectual rigour when it comes to the use of geopolitics as a tool for analysis of the situation in Central Asia.

4. Conclusions on the New Great Game

Since the mid-1990s the use of the term and concept of the New Great Game has overshadowed the analysis of events in Central Asia and the Transcaucasus. Much of the analysis that uses this concept, however, does so without any qualification or reservation. It can be argued that the term—the New Great Game—is itself inaccurate as much as it portrays a misleading analogy, referring back to events that were totally dissimilar. As this has mostly been used without any of the explanation or qualification that is necessary to explain the differences between the original and new concepts, a false and misleading image of the events in modern Central Asia has been created.

Furthermore the whole concept can be challenged. Certainly there is no definitive interpretation of events that can be given, with evidence being presented on both sides. What is clear, however, is that much of the analysis that has been conducted is of a dubious standard, with facts being accepted without question and used without subjecting it to any semblance of an academic interrogation. The linking of the New Great Game with geopolitics does neither justice as their contemporary use has often been intellectually lax and capriciously all-embracing, driven by the obscure romanticism of a bygone era. Both the New Great Game concept and the discipline of geopolitics need to be subjected to intellectual and academic rigour—and the reality is that for much of the past decade this has not taken place effectively.

Notes and references

1. The labelling of geographical regions is one that has been the subject of debate. For the purposes of this paper 'Central Asia' is used to refer to the five republics to the east of the Caspian Sea—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The 'Transcaucasus' (or 'South Caucasus') refers to Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Some current literature, however, stretches these definitions and there is no solid consensus on the means of the terms. For example, a further regional distinction of 'Central Eurasia' has emerged and is used to cover the area spreading from the Bosphorus in the West to Xinjiang province in China, and from the Kazak steppe and Russian border in the north to the Indian Ocean in the south. See K. Weisbrode, 'Central Eurasia: prize or quicksand? Contending views of instability in Karabakh, Ferghana and Afghanistan', *Adelphi Paper 338* (Oxford: International Institute of Strategic Studies/Oxford University Press, 2001), pp 11–14.
2. A.M. Jaffe and M.B. Olcott, in D. Lynch and Y. Kalyuzhnova, Eds, *Euro-Asia: A Period of Transition* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), p 68.
3. The term 'the Great Game' was coined by Captain Arthur Conolly (1807–1842), a 'player' of the original Great Game. It is not the intention of this paper to recount the events of the Great Game; for a full examination see P. Hopkirk, *The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia* (New York: Kodansha International, 1994), or K. Meyer and S. Brysac, *Tournament of Shadows: The Great Game and the Race for Empire in Asia* (London: Abacus Books, 2001.)
4. Hopkirk, op cit, Ref 3, p 2.
5. From P. Hopkirk, 'The Great Game revisited?', *Asian Affairs*, Vol 33, Part 1, 2002, pp 59–63. Also D. Fromkin, 'The Great Game in Asia', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol 58, No 4, 1980, pp 936–952.
6. W. Palace, 'Afghanistan and the Great Game', *Asian Affairs*, Vol 33, Part 1, 2002, pp 64–67, and A. Verrier, 'Francis Younghusband and the Great Game', *Asian Affairs*, Vol 23, Part 1 (Old Series Vol 79), 1992, pp 34–43.
7. Hopkirk, op cit, Ref 5, p 61. For an examination of this period see P. Hopkirk, *Setting the East Ablaze: Lenin's Dream of an Empire in Asia* (London: John Murray, 1984).
8. F.S. Starr, 'Making Eurasia stable', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol 75, No 1, 1996, p 80.
9. J. Erickson, 'Russia will not be trifled with: geopolitical facts and fantasies', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol 22, No 2/3, 1999, in C.S. Gray and G. Sloan, *Geopolitics: Geography and Strategy* (London: Frank Cass, 1999), pp 257–258.
10. V.V. Tsepikalo, 'The remaking of Eurasia', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol 72, No 2, 1998, p 107.
11. N. Sariahmetoglu, 'A look at the matters of route and security of the Caspian petroleum pipeline', *Eurasian Studies*, No 17, Spring–Summer 2000, p 68.
12. Z. Brezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), p 125.
13. A. Cohen, 'The "New Great Game": pipeline politics in Eurasia', *Caspian Crossroads*, Vol 2, No 1, Spring–Summer 1996 (<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/usazerb/213.htm>) [Accessed 19 July 2002].
14. K. Meyer and S. Brysac, op cit, Ref 3, p xxiv.
15. G.M. Winrow, 'A New Great Game in the Transcaucasus?', in D. Lynch and Y. Kalyuzhnova, op cit, Ref 2.
16. Weisbrode, op cit, Ref 1, p 11.
17. I. Karimov, *Uzbekistan on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century* (Curzon Press, 1997), p 29.
18. A. Cohen, 'Is Russian New Caucasus policy threat to Turkish interests?', *Eurasian Studies*, Vol 20, Special Issue, Summer 2001, pp 115.
19. Weisbrode, op cit, Ref 1, p 23.
20. The question of the exact size of Caspian and Caucasian oil and gas reserves has been a matter of debate in and of itself with estimates varying from reserves the size of the Persian Gulf to those smaller than the North Sea.
21. P. Shammass, 'Energy cooperation in Central Asia and the global perspective', *The Iranian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol 5, No 1, 1993, p 25. Also N. Ghorban, 'The role of multinational oil companies in the development of oil and gas resources in Central Asia and the Caucasus', *The Iranian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol 5, No 1, 1993, pp 1–15.
22. Many articles have been written on the routes, problems, solutions and potential of Transcaucasian and Caspian pipelines. See, for example, J.P. Carver and G. Englefield, 'Oil and gas pipelines from Central Asia: a new approach', *The World Today*, Vol 50, No 6, 1994, pp 119–121; W. Maley, 'The perils of pipelines', *The World Today*, Vol 54, No 8–9, 1998, pp 231–232; A. Rashid, 'This way out', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 18 September 1997, pp 60–61; Sariahmetoglu, op cit, Ref 11, pp 67–80.

23. J. Stainslaw and D. Yergin, 'Oil: reopening the door', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol 72, No 4, 1993, p 81.
24. A.M. Jaffe and M.B. Olcott, 'The geopolitics of Caspian energy', in Lynch and Kalyuzhnova, op cit, Ref 2, p 68.
25. Cited in Erickson, op cit, Ref 9, pp 261–262.
26. United States Department of Energy and The White House, *National Energy Report*, 17 May 2001. Cited in M.T. Klare, 'Global petro-politics: the foreign policy implications of the Bush administration's energy plan', *Current History*, March 2002, p 100.
27. Ibid, p 100.
28. BBC World Service News Report, 4 July 2002. See also Reuters, 'China pipeline terms agreed', *The Moscow Times*, 26 July 2002 (<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/stories/2002/07/26/045.html>) [Accessed 26 July 2002] and Reuters, 'Source: \$1.7bn China pipe deal close', *The Moscow Times*, 21 November 2002 (<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/stories/2002/11/21/046.html>) [Accessed 21 November 2002]. For further indications of Chinese involvement in the Eurasian area see R.H. Munro, 'Central Asia and China', in M. Mandelbaum, ed., *Central Asia and the World: Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1994), pp 225–238 and A. Rashid and T. Saywell, 'Beijing gusher', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 26 February 1998.
29. R. Israeli, 'Return to the source: the republics of Central Asia and the Middle East', *Central Asian Survey*, Vol 13, No 1, 1994, p 22.
30. A. Tarock, 'Iran's policy in Central Asia', *Central Asian Survey*, Vol 16, No 2, 1997, pp 185–200; S.A.H. Pasha, 'Turkey and the republics of Central Asia: emerging relations and dilemmas', *International Studies*, Vol 34, No 3, 1997, pp 343–357; R. Ozey, 'The geopolitical importance and the main problems of the Turkic world', *Eurasian Studies*, Vol 20, Special Issue, Summer 2001, pp 83–94; Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 'Iran's relations with the states of Central Asia and Transcaucasia', *Background Brief* (London: FCO, August 1998.)
31. G. Dietl, 'Quest for influence in Central Asia: India and Pakistan', *International Studies*, Vol 34, No 2, 1997, p 143.
32. K.R. Singh, 'Changing geopolitical environment and new South-West Asia', *International Studies*, Vol 38, No 4, 2001, pp 363–364.
33. T. Lansford, 'The Great Game renewed? US–Russian rivalry in the arms trade of South Asia', *Security Dialogue*, Vol 33, No 2, 2002.
34. Following 1991, there were concerns over the location and existence of nuclear weapons within Central Asia, but after these issues were dealt with in the years immediately following independence the interest in security in the region diminished.
35. For example the Royal Society for Asian Affairs ran an edition of *Asian Affairs* that looked at the ramifications of the American intervention. Several of the articles made reference to 'The New Great Game' either explicitly or by implication. See *Asian Affairs*, Vol 33, Part 1, 2002. One commentator said that the US victory in Afghanistan as part of the war on terrorism was 'no such thing. It is another move in the 150-year "Great Game", pitting colonial powers against each other for control of Central Asia.' See W.O. Beeman, 'Op-Ed: "The Great Game" continues', 15 November 2001 (http://www.brown.edu/Administration/News_Bureau/2001-02/01-057.html) [Accessed 30 May 2002].
36. N. Nougayrède, 'Moscou veut étendre sa guerre «antiterroriste» à la Géorgie' and 'Un pays acculé entre le jeu de Moscou et les ambitions de Washington', *Le Monde*, 24–25 February 2002.
37. G. Prins, 'Winners and losers in the oil war', *The Guardian*, 26 November 2001.
38. Lansford, op cit, Ref 33.
39. Such as the Shanghai Forum, consisting of Russia, China and all the Central Asian states (except Turkmenistan) J. Page, 'Analysis—China and Russia kick of new Great Game', Afghan Info Center, 15 June 2001 (http://www.afghan-info.com/Research_Articles/Analysis_china_Russia.htm) [Accessed 30 May 2002].
40. Many NGOs have operated in Afghanistan during 2001 and 2002, especially since the fall of the Taliban, including Médecins sans Frontière, Aide Médicale Internationale, CARE International, Oxfam, Global Relief Foundation, DACAAR and SGAA in addition to UN agencies; (<http://www.afghana.com/Reconstruction/AfghanistanRehabilitation.htm>) [Accessed 30 July 2002] and (<http://www.careusa.org/newsroom/specialreports/afghanistan/statement2.doc>) [Accessed 30 July 2002]. They have, however, often operated alongside official state government organisations such as the Russian Emergency Situations Ministry. See M. Steen, 'Kalashnikov-toting Russians bewilder Kabul', *The Moscow Times*, 28 November 2001 (<http://www.themoscowtimes.ru/stories/2001/11/28/003.html>) [Accessed 28 November 2001].
41. In post-Taliban Afghanistan, for example, it was reported that the US administration allegedly paid for certain key warlords to stay 'on side'. J. Burke and P. Beaumont, 'West pays warlords to stay in line', *The Observer*, 21 July 2002 (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/afghanistan/story/0,1284,759203,00.html>) [Accessed 8 August 2002].

42. S. Hoffman, *Primacy or World Order* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978), p 175.
43. Shams-Ud-Din, 'The New Great Game in Central Asia', *International Studies*, Vol 34, No 3, 1997, pp 339–340.
44. B.Z. Rumer, 'The gathering storm in Central Asia', *Orbis*, Vol 37, No 1, 1993, p 89.
45. For a discussion of the full meaning and range of the terms 'Imperialism' and 'Empire', see M.W. Doyle, *Empires* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986) and M. Hardt and A. Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000). For a view of decolonization in Central Asia, see J. Grant, 'Decolonization by default: independence in Soviet Central Asia', *Central Asian Survey*, Vol 13, No 1, 1994, pp 51–58.
46. E. Ingram, *The Beginning of the Great Game in Asia, 1828–1834* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p 339.
47. W.E. Odom, 'The Caspian Sea littoral states: the object of a New Great Game?', *Caspian Crossroads*, Vol 3, No 3, 1998 (<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/usazerb/332.htm>) [Accessed 31 July 2002].
48. From the British side, the actual likelihood that Russian advances into Afghanistan would have resulted in the threatening of India with hordes of Cossacks has been questioned; 'not everyone was convinced that the Russians intended to try and wrest India from Britain's grasp, or that they were militarily capable of doing so'. Hopkirk, op cit, Ref 3, p 6. 'It did seem ... that the antagonists in the Great Game were mutually prone to exaggerating each other's capacity for mischief, and that it was hard now to discern what enduring benefit Russia or Britain derived from dominion over so much Asian real estate.' H.V. Hodson, editor of the London *Sunday Times*, and formerly of All Souls College, Oxford, was reported as saying of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, using it as an analogous situation, that 'Our greatest nightmare, our overriding fear, was that the Russians would occupy Afghanistan, with calamitous results. And what happened? In 1979, they did invade—they crossed the Oxus, they rolled their tanks into Kabul on the very highway built by Russian foreign aid, just as many of us said they would. And it really didn't matter.' '... dominion over Kabul did not assure the Kremlin mastery of Iran, Pakistan, or the Persian Gulf.' Meyer and Brysac, op cit, Ref 3, p 557.
49. A.M. Jaffe and M.B. Olcott, 'The geopolitics of Caspian energy', in Lynch and Kalyuzhnova, op cit, Ref 2, p 75.
50. Shams-Ud-Din, op cit, Ref 43, p 339.
51. Odom, op cit, Ref 47.
52. S. Blank, 'Every shark east of Suez: great power interests, policies and tactics in the Transcaspian energy wars', *Central Asian Survey*, Vol 18, No 2, 1999, p 150.
53. For an article on energy as a Russian political tool, see A. Wendlant, 'High politics help grease the wheels of trade', *The Financial Times*, 9 April 2001.
54. Shams-Ud-Din, op cit, Ref 43, p 330.
55. In the case of oil concessions, multinational oil companies, often working in tandem, local oil companies, smaller in size, and governmental officials, are determined that the interests of the state are met. See Rashid and Saywell, op cit, Ref 28, pp 46–50. The article details the efforts made by the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) to secure energy reserves throughout the world, efforts that, geography aside, seem very similar to ones detailed in Central Asia as belonging to the New Great Game.
56. C. Miles, 'The Caspian pipeline debate continues: why not Iran?', *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol 53, No 1, 1999, p 327.
57. Prime-Tass, 'BP eyes Caspian stake', *The Moscow Times*, 25 November 2002 (<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/stories/2002/11/25/061.html>) [Accessed 25 November 2002].
58. The exception to this rule is state owned companies that can be used as tools of policy, for example the China National Petroleum Corporation.
59. For example, the Kashgan project in Kazakhstan is operated by the Agip Kazakhstan North Caspian Operating Company (Agip KCO) (formerly OKIOC) which is owned by: ENI–Agip (Italy) 16.67%; BG (UK) 16.67%; ExxonMobil (USA) 16.67%; TotalFinaElf (France/Belgium) 16.67%; Royal Dutch/Shell (UK/Netherlands) 16.67%; Inpex 8.33%; Phillips (USA) 8.33 (<http://www.eia.doe.gov/cabs/kazaproj.html>) [Accessed 6 August 2002].
60. O.F. Tanmisever, 'Russia and the independent Turkic states: discovering the meaning of independence', *Eurasian Studies*, Vol 20, Special Issue, Summer 2001, p 101.
61. T. Adams, 'Oil and geopolitical strategy in the Caucasus', *Asian Affairs*, Vol 33, Part 1 (Old Series Vol 86), 1999, p 14.
62. The Caspian Pipeline Consortium, often viewed as a macrocosm of the New Great Game, consists of a sharing agreement between Russia 24%; Kazakhstan 19%; ChevronTexaco (USA) 15%; LukArco (Russia/USA) 12.5%; Rosneft–Shell (Russia–UK/Netherlands) 7.5%; ExxonMobil (USA) 7.5%; Oman 7%; Agip (Italy) 2%; BG (UK) 2%; Kazakh Pipelines (Kazakhstan) 1.75%; Oryx (U.S.) 1.75%. (<http://www.eia.doe.gov/cabs/kazaproj.html>) [Accessed 6 August 2002].
63. Reuters, 'China pipeline terms agreed', *The Moscow Times*, 26 July 2002 (<http://>

- www.themoscowtimes.com/stories/2002/07/26/045.html [Accessed 26 July 2002]. A strategic partnership between Russia and China was formed in 1996, though it has been argued that this is rather more limited in scope than the title suggests due to pragmatic concerns and economic limitations. J. Anderson, 'The limits of Sino-Russian strategic partnership', *Adelphi Paper 315* (Oxford: International Institute for Strategic Studies/Oxford University Press, 1997.)
64. R. Allison, 'Structures and frameworks for security policy cooperation in Central Asia', in R. Allison and E. Jonson, eds, *Central Asian Security: The New International Context* (London & Washington D.C.: The Royal Institute of International Affairs & The Brookings Institution, 2001), pp 219–245.
 65. N. Berry, 'Preventing another 'Great Game' in Central Asia: the Shanghai Five plus Six' (<http://www.cdi.org/asia/fa011201.html>) [Accessed 30 May 2002]. M. Mamadshoyev, 'The Shanghai G-5 becomes the Shanghai Forum', *Eurasia Insight*, 7 July 2000 (<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav070700.shtml>) [Accessed 7 August 2002].
 66. Allison, op cit, Ref 64, p 234.
 67. R. Strausz-Hupé, *Geopolitics: The Struggle for Power* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1942), p 155.
 68. C. Harada, 'Russia and North-east Asia', *Adelphi Paper 310* (Oxford: International Institute for Strategic Studies/Oxford University Press, 1997), p 37.
 69. C.D. Maass, 'The Afghanistan conflict: external involvement', *Central Asian Survey*, Vol 18, No 1, 1999, p 77.
 70. M.J. Valencia, 'China and the South China Sea dispute', *Adelphi Paper 298* (Oxford: International Institute for Strategic Studies/Oxford University Press, 1995).
 71. T. Pahlevan, 'Iran and Central Asia', in T. Akabaki and J. O'Kane, eds, *Post-Soviet Central Asia* (London & Leiden: Tauris Academic Studies & The International Institute for Asia Studies, 1998), p 79.
 72. For example, Ozey, op cit, Ref 30, pp 83–94.
 73. *The Economist*, 17 June 1995, p 64.
 74. Following the article by Harold Sprout, 'Geopolitical hypotheses in technological perspective', *World Politics*, Vol 15, No 2, 1963, pp 187–212, geopolitics came to be identified with exploitation of knowledge to serve the aims of a national regime—associated through the works of Karl Haushofer with the aggressive actions of Nazi Germany. The term 'geopolitics' became value-laden, and despite the discipline having a heritage that could be traced back to Hippocrates and Aristotle, it became a concept that was frowned upon. Since the end of the Cold War geopolitics has experienced a revival in defence and military analysis. However, in contemporary analysis, the realist preoccupation with territorial defence has given way to neoliberal concerns over interdependence and world politics based on economic considerations. 'Goeconomics' is said to have replaced geopolitics as the guiding motivation for foreign policy formulation and conduct. Summary taken from G. Evans and J. Newham, *The Penguin Dictionary of International Relations* (London: Penguin, 1998). For a further explanation of geopolitics, see D. Weiser, "'Geopolitics"—renaissance of a controversial concept', *Aussenpolitik*, Vol 45, No 4, 1994, pp 402–411.
 75. O. Tuomi, 'The new geopolitics—the world system and Northern Europe seen from a modern geopolitical perspective', *Finnish Defence Studies*, No 11 (Helsinki: National Defence College, 1998), p 28, cited in B. Ferrari, 'Some considerations about the methods and the nature of political geography and geopolitics' (http://www.ciari.org/investigacao/bruno_ferrari.htm) [Accessed 8 August 2002].
 76. Weiser, op cit, Ref 74, p 402.
 77. D. Retaillé, 'La géopolitique dans l'histoire', *Espaces Temps*, Nos 68–70, 1998, pp 187–201. Reprinted: D. Retaillé, 'Geopolitics in history', in J. Lévy, ed., *From Geopolitics to Global Politics: A French Connection* (London: Frank Cass, 2001), pp 35–51. According to Retaillé the first geopolitical formula is grouped under the term imperialist as 'it is the basic principle of colonial conquest and also shows hegemony taken to extremes in *arkhe* (sovereignty and its expansion)' (p 37) using space and area as the basis of positions. The state model takes territory as its basis with linear frontiers identifying it; 'These may emerge from ethnic or political bases from original cores and centres, or be enclosed within limits inherited from the colonial episode or from different international settlements and treaties. In any event, national identity is sought and asserted' (p 39), with the model allowing for zonal centre-periphery regional units. The universalist models are not immediately geopolitical; 'they only become so by virtue of the paradox on which they are based and the context that they provide both for the imperialist and state models. The paradox results from the assertion of values of a universal nature ... stemming from local philosophical and political traditions that are in conflict' (p 40), allowing for the formation of 'culture areas'.
 78. Mackinder proposed his ideas in H.J. Mackinder, 'The geographical pivot of history', *Geographical Journal*, Vol 23, 1904, pp 421–437 and in H.J. Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality: A Study in the Politics of Reconstruction* (London: Constable & Co., 1919). His argument that the Central Eurasian pivot area was key to the control of world politics was summed up in his famous phrase: 'Who rules East Europe

- commands the Heartland; Who rules the Heartland commands the World Island; Who rules the World Island commands the World.'
79. Geographical determinism, a thread that underlies much of the New Great Game literature, ignores one of Mackinder's major tenants as 'the actual balance of political power at any given time is, of course, the product, on the one hand of geographical conditions, both economic and strategic, and, on the other hand, of the relative number, virility, equipment and organisation of competing peoples'. H.J. Mackinder, (1904) op cit, Ref 78, p 437.
 80. Mackinder's 1904 theories, for example, were not intended to be eternal truths in world politics; while they were written to convey a warning of allowing too large a state to dominate the Eurasian continent, they were also written to promote the view that a united British Empire was essential for imperial defence, something that was being heavily debated at the time. See B.W. Blouet, *Sir Halford Mackinder, 1861–1947; Some New Perspectives* (Research Paper 13, School of Geography, University of Oxford, May 1975.)
 81. E.W. Gilbert, 'Introduction', in H.J. Mackinder, *The Scope and Methods of Geography and The Geographical Pivot of History* (London: The Royal Geographical Society, 1951), p 12.
 82. S. Thompson, 'A lexicon of "Brzezinski-isms"', *Executive Intelligence Review*, 9 April 1999 (http://www.larouche.com/other/1999/thompson_brzezinski_2615.html) [Accessed 8 August 2002].
 83. Brzezinski, op cit, Ref 12, p 124.
 84. Ibid, p 148.
 85. Ibid, p 39.
 86. G. Sloan, 'Sir Harold Mackinder: the heartland theory then and now', in C.S. Gray and G. Sloan, *Geopolitics: Geography and Strategy* (London: Frank Cass, 1999), p 32.
 87. The heartland–rimland theories were proposed, respectively, by Mackinder and Spykman. Mackinder argued the heartland would dominate world politics; Spykman argued that the rimland—the circle of land surrounding the heartland—could be used to contain the heartland and nullify its influence. In reality this geopolitical theory turned in to the containment policy that was followed by the USA during the Cold War. For maps of the heartland/rimland concepts in comparison, see M. Hauner, *What is Asia to Us?* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1992.)
 88. C.J. Fettweis, 'Sir Halford Mackinder, geopolitics and policymaking in the 21st century', *Parameters*, Summer 2000, pp 58–71. (<http://carlisle-www.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/00summer/fettweis.htm>) [Accessed 8 August 2002].

