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INTRODUCTION

WHEN THE COLLAPSE of the Soviet Union hurled the republics of Central Asia onto the global stage, the region was all but unknown to the outside world. Its complicated modern history had transpired away from the gaze of that world, with its events little noticed and the sources hidden away under lock and key. There was little expertise on the region, and outside observers had few ways of making sense of it. Initial reactions cast the new states as artificial, weak, lacking in any history or legitimacy, and with a potential for insecurity and instability. Commentators pulled out references from the past to make sense of the unexpected present: hackneyed notions of the Silk Road and the Great Game were put to use to make sense of the newly emerged states, and exoticization was an easy fix. Commentary on Central Asia evoked vast, undulating grasslands filled with nomadic horsemen, the minarets and cupolas of medieval architecture, and natives in folkloric costumes. To be clear, this exoticization is not a peculiarly Western phenomenon. A Japanese documentary from the 1980s also cast the region in exotic light, with long shots of camels trudging into empty deserts to the New Age music of Kitaro. Today, Xinjiang is an exotic domestic destination for tourists from China proper, while in the wider Muslim world, the names Samarqand and Bukhara evoke medieval grandeur and luxury that again are not of the here and now. At its best, exoticism romanticizes Central Asia and places it beyond the reach of history. At its worst, it can render the region a blank slate on which one can inscribe anything one wishes. Central Asia has served as the locale of a number of Hollywood action movies featuring unsavory characters, while in the 2006 movie Borat, the British comedian Sacha Baron Cohen used the misadventures of a fictional Kazakh reporter visiting the United States to present a critique

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of Western naïveté and gullibility. But the Kazakhstan represented in the film had nothing to do with the actual country. The ostensibly Kazakhstani scenes in the film were shot in Romania, and the film presented a completely made-up idea of Kazakhstan to its viewers. For Cohen, Kazakhstan's task was simply to embody the exotic, the inscrutable, the other.

Some of this was perhaps inevitable. For much of the modern period, Central Asia was invisible to the outside world. The Eurasian landmass had been divided up over the course of the nineteenth century between the two contiguous land empires of Russia and China. On the political map of the world, "Russia" and "China" appeared as singular entities. It was easy to see each of them as somehow homogeneous, rather than the highly variegated imperial spaces they were. This was indeed what happened. For most of the existence of the Soviet Union, the outside world knew it simply as Russia. On my first visit to Washington, D.C., I was surprised to see a sign in the metro pointing to "the Russian embassy." It was 1984 and the Cold War was getting quite hot, but American institutions—let alone the American public—could not tell the difference between Russia and the Soviet Union and remained oblivious to the multinational character of their main adversary. Xinjiang was, if anything, even more invisible, simply a part of an inscrutable (and exotic) domain called "China." Yet Central Asia was a distant backyard even within each empire, and little known even to those who specialized on one or both of the empires. The Tsarist regime treated Central Asia as a militarily sensitive region and restricted travel by foreign subjects there. Its Soviet successors were even more secretive, and for most of the Soviet period, Central Asia was inaccessible to outsiders. I grew up in Pakistan, on the other side of the Pamir Mountains from Central Asia. Tashkent. the biggest city in Central Asia at the time, was a mere 1,200 kilometers from my hometown of Lahore, but it might as well have been on a different planet. Travel was very difficult and news of current developments in short supply. It was this sense of wonder about a land so near, yet so far—one so familiar, yet very different—that first attracted me to Central Asia. The situation changed with the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Central Asia is no longer isolated.

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In fact, it occupies a pivotal place in the Belt and Road Initiative, China's hugely ambitious plan to remake the transportation and commercial infrastructure of Eurasia. Yet the view of the region as the distant heartland of Asia remains. Certainly in the public view, but also in policy circles, it remains an obscure place, the middle of nowhere, isolated from the rest of the world or caught in some sort of a time warp. This explains the constant invocation of the Silk Road, which heightens the sense that the region is best understood through its distant and exotic past, and the unstated assumption that its recent past and present are far less important or interesting.

Nothing could be further from the facts. Instead of being a place that time forgot and where one can forget time, Central Asia has been a crossroads of history. It has experienced every current of modern history, every achievement of modernity and every one of its disasters, and every extreme of the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries. The conquest of the region by the Tsarist (or Russian) and Qing empires marked a rupture in its history that needs to be taken seriously. Since then, Central Asia has experienced in succession colonial rule; many projects of revolutionary nation and culture building and of remaking of the economy and society under Communism; and, more recently, neoliberal globalization. For much of the twentieth century, Central Asia was a laboratory of modernity and a showcase for the Soviet model of development. These experiences have transformed the region and its people in fundamental ways. Its landscapes have been put to industrial use; its vast spaces domesticated by roads, railways, and airports; its cities reshaped; and its countryside brought under the plow as never before. The worldviews of its peoples and their ways of thinking about themselves, their communities, and their states have undergone enormous changes. The idea of the nation transformed notions of community in significant ways. The modern period has also seen major demographic shifts. The population has increased manifold, and the region has witnessed the influx of new populations through migrations, deportations, or state-sponsored settlement. The large numbers of Russians and Han Chinese who now live in Central Asia are the clearest example of such movements, but many other groups—Germans, Poles, Ashkenazi Jews,

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Tatars, Hui (also known as Dungans), Koreans, and Chechens—have appeared in Central Asia during the modern period. The twentieth century brought universal literacy and massive transformations in the position of women in society. It also brought environmental disaster. The nuclear programs of both the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China (PRC) were located in Central Asia, and both of them carried out open-air tests that had long-lasting effects on the population. In addition, the overuse of irrigation in Soviet Central Asia produced ecological disaster. The Aral Sea, once the fourth largest body of freshwater in the world, shrank drastically, transforming the climate and wreaking havoc on the health of those who live in its vicinity. For both good and ill, Central Asia is completely different from what it was in the middle of the eighteenth century. This book is an attempt to provide a coherent narrative of these transformations. Central Asia is not at all exotic or timeless. Rather, it is very much the product of history, a history it shares with all other societies that experienced colonialism, anticolonialism, modernization, and development in the past couple of centuries.

There are many ways to define Central Asia. The term coexists with others, such as "Inner Asia" or "Central Eurasia," each of which has a different inflection and scope. We could define Central Asia expansively to include the entire Eurasian steppe and its neighboring regions, extending from Hungary to Manchuria and stretching south to Afghanistan and even northern Pakistan and India. This is the definition adopted by the United Nations Economic, Social, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). In Soviet parlance, however, Central Asia comprised only the four republics of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. I have chosen a middle position that defines Central Asia as encompassing the five post-Soviet states and the Xinjiang region of the PRC. This Central Asia encompasses those predominantly Muslim societies that came under the rule of the overland empires of the Romanovs and the Qing from the late eighteenth century on. These

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societies were interconnected before their conquest as well, but the conquest put them on a peculiar trajectory even as it distinguished them from those of their neighbors that were not conquered by those empires. In the twentieth century, of course, both the Russian and the Chinese empires underwent revolutionary transformations that transformed their Central Asian territories in significant ways. The experience of the past two centuries has left these societies with much more in common with each other than with their other neighbors. The historical contingency that the Russian conquest stopped at the Amu Darya River accounts for the radically different path that Afghanistan took in the twentieth century. For this reason, it does not belong in this story. For similar reasons, my Central Asia does not include the lands of the Tatars and Bashkirs, which are geographically connected to the steppe zone of Central Asia and inhabited by Turkic-speaking Muslims, but which have a much longer connection to the Russian state. I exclude Mongolia and Tibet from my purview for similar reasons. They are culturally quite different from the region that is the focus of this book, and their political histories have little in common with its history in the modern period.

For all that, the Central Asia that I examine is not homogeneous. It is a frontier zone between nomadic and agrarian populations, a division seen as axiomatic by the region's own peoples. The river valleys of Transoxiana and the oases of Altishahr boast some of the most ancient cities in the world. Much of the surrounding steppe was home to nomadic populations until the 1930s. Nomadic and sedentary societies interacted throughout history, but they had different trajectories in the modern period, with the imperial powers treating them differently and subjecting them to different policies. Another axis of difference was imperial. The "Russian" and "Chinese" parts of Central Asia have experienced regimes of power that were both similar and different. The PRC modeled many of its policies in Xinjiang on Soviet precedents in "Russian" Central Asia but took them in different directions. The book is an experiment in writing an integrated history of modern Central Asia. The different political regimes in the "Russian" and "Chinese" zones mean that most of the chapters focus on one or the other half of Central Asia. However, I do offer a comparison between Soviet and Chinese policies

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of managing national difference, economic development, and social transformation as they affected Central Asia.

This book argues that imperial conquest thrust Central Asia into a new era of its history. That conquest marked a rupture with the past, which grew less important and less helpful in understanding the new era. Empires have been the most common form of political organization in human history, and there had been plenty of empires in Central Asia's history. The conquests of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were different, however. They brought Central Asia under the control of large empires based outside the region. They completed the enclosure of the steppe that had been ongoing since the seventeenth century and reversed the long-term relationship between the region and its neighbors. In different ways, Russian and Chinese rule introduced new regimes of power to Central Asia. Imperial rule brought with it new institutional arrangements; tariff regimes; ways of entanglement in the world at large; and, ultimately, ways of seeing the world. The past did not disappear, of course, but the new order was significantly different. Central Asians related to the rest of the world in a different way. In the twentieth century, both empires were overthrown and replaced by regimes of social mobilization that aimed at modernization and development. Central Asia was swept into those processes. Its modern history tells us a great deal about modernity, colonialism, secularism, Communism, and development, some of the key phenomena that have shaped the world we live in. This book suggests that this modern history is worth understanding in its own right, and it offers a first attempt at such an understanding.

The period since the imperial conquests also produced new ways of thinking about self and community and created new forms of identification. The national labels with which contemporary Central Asians identify—Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik, Turkmen, Uyghur, and Uzbek—emerged over the course of the twentieth century, displacing other forms of community. The labels have long existed, but they acquired

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new meanings in the modern age. The Uzbeks of the sixteenth century are not the same as those of the twenty-first, for instance, and the term "Turkmen" has a different meaning today than it did in the eighteenth century. The shifting meaning of these terms and the emergence of new ways of identification is a major concern in this book.

This book deals primarily with two imperial systems, those of Russia and China. They have shaped the context in which Central Asians have lived in the past two and a half centuries, but their mutual relationship has never been stable or symmetrical. Both systems have changed enormously. I trace the enormous transformations that the two polities experienced (imperial collapse, revolution, civil war, and state-led transformation), both individually and in relation to each other. In the middle of the eighteenth century, China's was much the wealthier and more powerful empire. The situation flipped in the nineteenth century, when Russia gained a military advantage as well as extraterritorial rights in China itself, while China—beset with threats both internal and external—risked being "carved up like a melon" by foreign powers, as the saying went. For much of the twentieth century, China was the recipient of aid and advice from the Soviet Union. Today, China is a world power and more firmly in control of its Central Asian possessions than ever before, while the Russian rule over Central Asia is no more. This imperial history also casts a long shadow on how we think and write about Central Asia. Overland empires did not have a formal separation between metropole and colony in the manner of overseas empires, a separation that makes the relationship between the imperial center and the conquered territories more nebulous. It is easier to see overland empires as somehow more homogeneous than overseas empires. In the twentieth century, Soviet rhetoric, seeking to minimize the imperial origins of the Soviet state, asserted that various non-Russian territories had joined the empire voluntarily and that the Soviet Union existed on the basis of a deep "friendship of peoples." Yet as we shall see below, Russia's possessions in Central Asia were thoroughly comparable to

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those of the overseas colonies of European empires. Since the demise of the Soviet Union, Central Asians have questioned the narrative to one degree or another, while the Russian public has been less receptive to the challenges. Today, it remembers the Tsarist empire with fondness and pride but is allergic to any mention of colonies or conquest. Soviet-era concepts thus create a post-Soviet amnesia about empire in Russia.

China is a different matter altogether. From the late Qing on, all Chinese governments, regardless of their ideological orientation, have insisted that China is not an empire but an indivisible nation-state with inviolable boundaries. The Qing dynasty collapsed in 1912 and was replaced by a republic, which only heightened the insistence on China's unity. Today, the People's Republic asserts that China in its current boundaries is the apotheosis of a Chinese nation-state that has existed throughout history as a single nation. This means that, in the words of an official proclamation of the State Council of the republic, Xinjiang has, "since the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-24 AD), ... been an inseparable part of the unitary multi-ethnic Chinese nation." According to this logic, Xinjiang is not part of Central Asia at all but constitutes the so-called Western Regions (Xiyu) of a transhistorical Chinese nation-state. This uncompromising and teleological view of China and its relationship to Xinjiang lies at the heart of the conflict in Xinjiang that is at a critical stage as I write these lines, with millions of Uyghurs in extrajudicial detention for not being loyal enough Chinese. Viewing China from Central Asia, as I do in this book, allows us to understand China in a new way. The "China" invoked by the Chinese government is a twentieth-century vision of the nation that subsumes a fraught history of numerous dynasties, many of which were established by peoples from Inner Asia, into a single narrative of an ever-present entity called China. This teleology does not fit well with the historical record, which is full of discontinuities and ruptures. One might equate China not with a single state, but with a political or cultural tradition—but even that continuity is problematic. Each new dynasty celebrated its novelty and its difference from its predecessors, rather than any continuity of a Chinese tradition. That tradition remained alien to lands beyond the central

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plains of China proper (*neidi*). More importantly for our purposes, the territorial extent of the various dynastic states varied enormously, and few of them controlled the whole territory of China proper, let alone everything within the current boundaries of the PRC. The Tang dynasty (618–907) had extended its rule to what is now Xinjiang. After the collapse of the Tang, no dynasty based in China proper controlled any part of Central Asia until the Qing conquests of the 1750s. The novelty of Xinjiang to the Qing imperium was underscored by its name, which means "New Dominion." The current boundaries of China were created by the eighteenth-century imperial conquests of a Manchu dynasty. It is with these conquests that I start this book.

Central Asia's history in the past two and a half centuries has been affected by transformations that often originated elsewhere (imperial conquests, the Russian and Chinese revolutions, and the neoliberal revolution). This book is about the ways Central Asians dealt with these transformations. I seek their agency both within and beyond the official institutions of the states that ruled them. People act in given circumstances, but they act in their own ways. Those ways differ and are always singular. Different groups of Central Asians had different notions of what ought to be done and how society had to act. The period I cover in this book has seen several monumental transformations—imperial conquest, revolutions, and both the building of socialism and its collapse—and each has produced new claims to leadership from new groups in society. There was plenty of contention within Central Asian societies, and I wish to convey that very clearly. In this book, we will see Central Asians arguing with each other as much as they argue with the Russians or the Chinese.

Central Asia stretches from the Caspian Sea in the west to the Altai Mountains in the east, and from the Köpet Dagh Mountains in the south to deep into the steppe in the north. It is an extensive area, about the size of the United States west of the Mississippi, and it encompasses

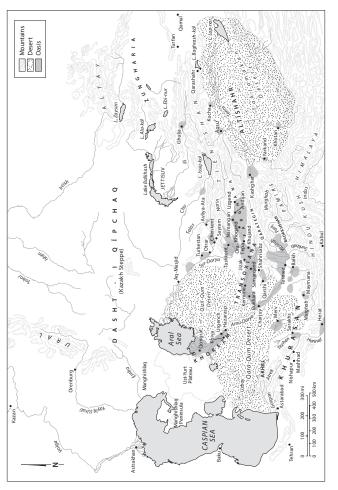
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TABLE 0.1 Contemporary Central Asia

State or region	Capital	Area (km²)	Population (thousands)
Kazakhstan	Nur-Sultan	2,724,900	18,320
Kyrgyzstan	Bishkek	199,951	6,304
Tajikistan	Dushanbe	143,100	9,101
Turkmenistan	Ashgabat	491,210	5,851
Uzbekistan	Tashkent	448,978	32,476
Xinjiang	Ürümchi	1,664,897	24,870
Total		5,673,036	96,922

Source: Population figures for the five sovereign states are United Nations midyear estimates for 2018 (United Nations, United Nations Demographic Yearbook 2018 [New York: United Nations, 2019], 693); figures for Xinjiang are for the end of 2018 (China Statistical Yearbook 2019 [Beijing: China Statistics Press, 2019], table 2-6).

a great deal of geographic and environmental diversity. The fundamental fact about the region, however, is its great distance from open water. The continental pole—the point on the planet farthest from open water—lies at 46°17′ N, 86°40′ E, near the border between Xinjiang and Kazakhstan, 2,645 kilometers from the nearest coastline.² The climate is continental, with extremes of heat and cold, and water is generally scarce. It means that large parts of the region are grassland or desert and that agriculture and urban life are often dependent on irrigation. The region consists of a series of internal drainage basins—that is, areas in which rivers flow into inland seas or lakes rather than draining into oceans. (The only exception is the northernmost reaches of Kazakhstan, which drain into the Irtysh River that flows into the Arctic Ocean.) Central Asia has some of the tallest mountains in the world, but the rest of the terrain is rolling hills or flatlands. Snowmelt from the mountains gives rise to the rivers, which flow westward to the Aral Sea. The river valleys create the possibility of irrigated agriculture. As noted above, they were the sites of some of the most ancient cities in the world. The aridity also creates large areas of desert and, to the north, vast stretches of grassland. Central Asia has both areas of dense population and vast tracts of sparsely populated or uninhabitable land. Its population of over ninety million is unevenly distributed (see table 0.1 and map 0.2).



MAP 0.2. Central Asia: physical features and premodern geographic terminology

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Before beginning the narrative, let us take a quick tour of the region to familiarize ourselves with the lay of the land and the geographic terminology used throughout the book. Let us fly west from the port city now known as Türkmenbaşy on the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea (it was known as Kransovodsk or Kizilsu until the 1990s). A vast desert called Karakum (or Garagum, "Black Sands") stretches out below us. To the south, running east to west is the Köpet Dagh mountain range, across which lies the Iranian plateau. Soon we reach the banks of the Amu Darya (Oxus to the Greeks and Jayhun to the Arabs). Once we cross it, we are in Transoxiana (the Land beyond the Oxus), which the Arabs called Mā warā' al-Nahr (or Maverannahr, the Land beyond the River). The term was used in all Islamicate languages to denote the region between the Amu and the Syr Daryas. A great portion of Transoxiana is also desert, called Kyzylkum (or Qizil Qum, "Red Sands"), but lands along the banks of the two rivers and others that flow into them (Zerafshan, "the Gold Bestower"; Vakhsh; Panj; and Surkhan Darya) support agriculture and have long supported urban life. Samarqand and Bukhara sit smack in the middle of Transoxiana. Downriver, where the Amu emptied into the Aral Sea, lies Khwarazm, another ancient city and for many centuries a major commercial and political center. Upriver, we find the fertile Ferghana valley, which today is the most densely populated part of Central Asia.

As we fly farther east, we spy the largest mountain system in the world. To the southeast lies the Pamir knot, called the "roof of the world," where a number of mountain chains come together. The Darvaz chain comes in from the southwest, the Karakorum and Himalayas stretch out eastward, and the Tien-Shan ("Celestial Mountains" in Chinese) range strikes out northward. This is inaccessible terrain that separates Central Asia from South Asia. The Tien-Shan also cleaves Central Asia longitudinally into western and eastern halves. Let us stick to the west for a while longer. To the northeast of the Pamir massif lies the Ferghana valley, which is surrounded on three sides by mountains. The western foothills of the Tien-Shan chain are a lush area watered by a number of tributaries of the Syr Darya, which give the

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area its name: Jettisuv in Kyrgyz and Kazakh and Semirech'e in Russian, meaning "seven rivers" in either case. North of the Syr Darya, we are on the steppe proper, a vast, mostly flat area of grassland or desert that stretches north until it blends into the Siberian taiga. In medieval Islamic sources, it was called the Dasht-i Qipchaq (the Qipchaq Steppe), named after a nomadic Turkic group that dominated it at the time. In the modern period, it makes sense to call it the Kazakh steppe, since in that era it has been inhabited by Kazakhs. Most of it is a plateau, the central part of which is known by the name Betpak Dala ("Hungry Steppe"), in testimony to the hardships that nature inflicts upon humans who try to live there. East of Jettisuv, however, we come upon another basin, called Zungharia after the nomadic people that occupied it until the eighteenth century. (The Zunghars play an important role at the beginning of the story this book relates.) They were Mongol and never became Muslim. Zungharia is a steppe grassland and the site of the continental pole of inaccessibility. Its southern boundary is formed by the Tien-Shan range, south of which is another large internal drainage basin—that of the Tarim River. The Tarim arises in the Karakorum Mountains and used to flow into Lop Nor Lake. Much of this basin is another desert, called the Taklamakan. It is dotted with fertile oases, which gave rise to cities in ancient times. The Tarim basin is also known as Altishahr ("Six Cities," a term for the oasis cities in the basin) as well as Eastern Turkestan. It is bounded on the south by the Kunlun Mountains, which separate it from the Tibet plateau. To its east lies the Turfan basin, a fault trough that houses the oases of Turfan and Qumul. Descending to 155 meters below sea level, it is one of the lowest depressions in the world. It has a very hot and dry climate, but the presence of underground water makes irrigated agriculture possible. Here we are at the other end of Central Asia, for to the east the Turfan basin connects to the Gansu corridor, a string of oases along a narrow path between the Kunlun Mountains to the south and the Gobi Desert to the north that leads down to the Yellow River (Huang He) valley and China proper. Central Asian sources used several terms for the lands beyond: Khitay for the area north of the Yellow River, once

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the land of the Khitans; Chin for the area south of that river; and Machin for the territory south of the Yangtze River. The Turfan basin at the easternmost edge of Central Asia had long been in commercial contact with China. For the rest of Muslim Central Asia, China remained a distant and culturally alien region.

As noted above, the Tien-Shan Mountains divide Central Asia in two, although the division has never prevented travel or other kinds of interaction, and the two regions are tied together by numerous cultural and economic links. Yet the two halves have often operated in different geopolitical arenas. Central Asia was often called Turkestan, "the land of the Turks," and its two halves referred to as western and eastern Turkestan. In the nineteenth century, after the imperial conquests, they were often called Russian and Chinese Turkestan. These were geographic terms, not names of political entities, of course, but they nevertheless acknowledged the commonality between the two parts. In addition to the east-west or Chinese-Russian division, we should also posit a north-south division between the steppe lands and the lands of the oases and irrigated agriculture. The division is very rough but nevertheless useful to keep in mind, for most the sedentary, agrarian population of Central Asia existed in Khwarazm, Transoxiana, Ferghana, and the oases of Altishahr, while the rest of the region—especially the steppe zone north of Transoxiana—remained predominantly nomadic until the 1930s.

This quick tour also confronts us with another important issue that everyone interested in Central Asia faces. Central Asian place names have changed over time, they often have more than one version, and there are numerous ways of spelling them. The same applies to Central Asian personal names. The spelling depends on whether one transliterates the name of a place or person from a Central Asian language or via Russian or Chinese. Transliterating names via Russian results in infelicities, so that h (which does not exist in Russian) becomes kh, and the sound represented by the English j is rendered by the unsightly (and, to non-Russian speakers, incomprehensible) jumble of dzh, while all sorts of vowels get bent out of shape. Chinese

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versions of Central Asian names, based on a syllabic transcription, often render the originals completely unidentifiable: Ahmad becomes Aimaiti, and Ibrahim turns into Yibulayin. In this book, I use the names of people and places as they appear in Central Asian languages, spelled according to Central Asian conventions (thus, I use Khujand, not Khodzhent, and Ürümchi, not Urumqi), but use well-established English spellings when they exist (thus, Kashgar, not Qäshqär, and Ferghana, not Fergana or Farg'ona). Occasionally, I give two versions of a place name, when both are in use. For the names of people, I use a common transliteration scheme for the period before the 1920s, when specific orthographies became established for different Central Asian languages. For the period after that, I transliterate names according to the language the person in question identified with most, recognizing all along that complete consistency is neither possible nor desirable.

Finally, a note about the term "Turkestan" and its variants. Turkestan (literally, the land of the Turks) was a generic term used in Central Asia and beyond for the territory north of the Amu Darya, where Turkic-speaking peoples predominated. The term was widespread enough that the Russians adopted it for the new province they established in 1865. From 1865 to 1924, Turkestan referred to a concrete administrative entity, but the older, more generic, sense of the term never disappeared. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, conventional usage both locally and in Europe divided Central Asia into western or Russian, and eastern or Chinese Turkestan, roughly along the Tien-Shan. In the early twentieth century, the Turkicspeaking Muslim subjects of the Qing began to use Eastern Turkestan as the name for their region. None of this would be worth a comment were it not for the insistence of the PRC that Eastern Turkestan is a term invented by foreign imperialists with the aim of dismantling China and used today by alleged "separatists" and "extremists." The only term the Chinese government allows is Xinjiang. Even though the term contains the narrative of imperial conquest, it may not be translated into Uyghur. The Uyghur term for the region is Shinjang,

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the transliterated form of the Chinese name. Today, most Uyghurs use the term only under duress. In this book, I use the term "Xinjiang" to refer only to the administrative entity of that name. When referring to the region in other contexts, I use "Eastern Turkestan" or "Altishahr," and I usually follow the usage preferred by my sources.

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