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*The Russian Conquest of Central Asia.
A Study in Imperial Expansion, 1814 – 1914*

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The Russian conquest of Central Asia was perhaps the 19th century's most dramatic and successful example of European imperial expansion, adding 1.5 million square miles of territory and at least 6 million people - most of them Muslims - to the Tsar's domains. This book is the first comprehensive military and diplomatic history of the conquest to be published for over a hundred years. From the earliest conflicts on the steppe frontier in the 1830s, to the annexation of the Pamirs in the early 1900s, it gives a detailed account of the logistics and operational history of Russian wars against Khoqand, Bukhara and Khiva, the capture of Tashkent and Samarkand, the bloody subjection of the Turkmen, and the decision-making processes that launched these campaigns. It also explores in depth Russian diplomatic relations with Central Asian states and peoples, China, Persia and the British Empire. It rejects the most commonly-advanced arguments to explain the Russian conquest, namely that it was an attempt to threaten the British in India (the so-called 'Great Game') or that it was driven by economic motives and the need for cotton for Russian industry. Instead it argues that Russian relations with Central Asian states and peoples were of much greater importance in explaining the dynamics and motives for conquest, and above all Russian fears for their imperial prestige and resentment of Central Asian 'insolence'. Based on ten years of archival research in Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Georgia and India, on Persianate chronicles and an abundance of campaign memoirs, this book explains how Russia acquired and governed a colonial empire in Central Asia, with consequences that still resonate today.

(New College, Oxford)