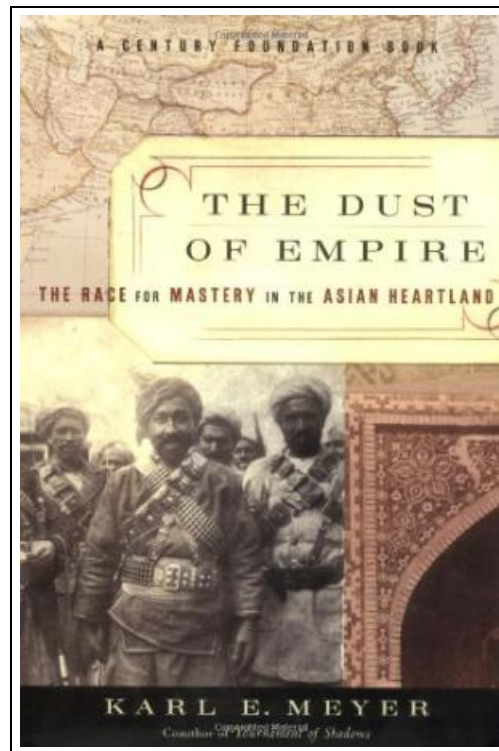


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THE DUST OF EMPIRE: THE RACE FOR MASTERY IN THE ASIAN HEARTLAND



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PublicAffairs, 2003. Book Condition: New. Brand New, Unread Copy in Perfect Condition. A+ Customer Service! Summary: The author of *Tournament of Shadows* examines the historical impact of the Western encounter with Central Asia's fragile and volatile nations, spelling out the implications for the United States and its allies today. When Charles de Gaulle learned that France's former colonies in Africa had chosen independence, the great general shrugged dismissively, "They are the dust of empire." But as Americans have learned, particles of dust from a remote and seemingly medieval country like Afghanistan can, at great human and material cost, jam the gears of a superpower. In *The Dust of Empire*, Karl E. Meyer examines the present and past of the Asian heartland in a book that blends scholarship with reportage, providing fascinating detail about regions and peoples now of urgent concern to America: the five Central Asian republics, the Caspian and the Caucasus. Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and long-dominant Russia. He provides the context for America's post-9/11 war on terrorism, for Washington's search for friends and allies in an Islamic world rife with extremism, and for the new politics of pipelines and human rights in an area possessing more of the former than the latter. He offers a rich and complicated tapestry of a region where empires have so often come to grief--a cautionary tale for Americans and their Western allies. Kabul, with its great bazaar, mosques and forts, long rivaled the Tibetan capital, Lhasa, among travelers as a prize to die for. "Before the catastrophe, all visitors to Afghanistan fell in love with the Afghans," writes the British author Doris Lessing in *The Wind Blew Away Our Words*, "as if with their own fabled past, when we were proud, brave independent, and witty and generous as well." Yet on this infectiously...



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