



The Caucasus: An Introduction

By Thomas de Waal

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In this fascinating book, noted journalist Thomas de Waal--author of the highly acclaimed *Black Garden*--makes the case that while the Caucasus is often treated as a sub-plot in the history of Russia, or as a mere gateway to Asia, the five-day war in Georgia, which flared into a major international crisis in 2008, proves that this is still a combustible region, whose inner dynamics and history deserve a much more complex appreciation from the wider world.

In *The Caucasus*, de Waal provides this richer, deeper, and much-needed appreciation, one that reveals that the South Caucasus--Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, and their many smaller regions, enclaves, and breakaway entities--is a fascinating and distinct world unto itself. Providing both historical background and an insightful analysis of the period after 1991, de Waal sheds light on how the region has been scarred by the tumultuous scramble for independence and the three major conflicts that broke out with the end of the Soviet Union--Nagorny Karabakh, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia. The book examines the region as a major energy producer and exporter; offers a compelling account of the Rose Revolution in Georgia, the rise of Mikheil Saakashvili, and the August 2008 war; and considers the failure of the South Caucasus, thus far, to become a single viable region. In addition, the book features a dozen or so "boxes" which provide brief snapshots of such fascinating side topics as the Kurds, Turkish-Armenian rapprochement, the promotion of the region as the "Soviet Florida," and the most famous of all Georgians, Stalin.

The Caucasus delivers a vibrantly written and timely account of this turbulent region, one that will prove indispensable for all concerned with world politics. It is, as well, a stimulating read for armchair travelers and for anyone curious about far-flung corners of the world.

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Editorial Review

Review

"A compact but rich book examining the southern side of the range, where combustible difficulties afflict three small post-Soviet countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. ...If ever there was a place that needed a competent and even-tempered guide, this was it. Mr. de Waal provides one. Currently an analyst at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, he has traveled through and written of the Caucasus more than most any outsider since the Kremlin's grip over the region loosened during the Soviet collapse. His book contains history and knowing flair:..will likely have many lives. Why? The wars that broke out in the 1990s are not over. Mr. De Waal's book is welcome now, and most useful. If one of the wars flares up again, it will be essential."--*The New York Times War Blog*

"Assiduously researched and lucid primer. While it may be easier for the distant academic to be dispassionate, de Waal is more than that. Through the past two decades, he has written extensively on, and from, the region for British newspapers and the Institute for War and Peace Reporting. He is also the co-author of *Chechnya*, probably the best contemporary volume on that violent Russian republic. *The Caucasus* reflects a depth of understanding of the region that doesn't stray into the didactic. In recent years, other volumes have appeared on the South Caucasus, notably Charles King's *The Ghost of Freedom*, and Thomas Goltz's diaries of Georgia and Azerbaijan. But de Waal has produced the most important work. And, as with any good book, it leaves the reader hungering for more."--*Foreign Policy*

"Nobody has dealt with today's Transcaucasia as lucidly as Thomas de Waal."--*Times Literary Supplement*

"Well-written, accessible and engaging...[De Waal's] magisterial histories are an essential part of a comprehensible explanation of the intractable problems that beset the region."--*International Affairs*

"Thomas de Waal has written one of the most vivid, clear-minded accounts of the history and current troubles of the lands between Russia and Turkey. The Caucasus defies easy explanation, and de Waal deftly untangles the webs of mystification and obfuscation that have so often marred our understanding of why this rich and beautiful region, a cradle of diverse civilizations, has failed so miserably to realize its promise."-- Ronald Grigor Suny, Professor of Social and Political History, and Professor of Political Science, University of Michigan

"Europe and Asia, mountains and flatlands, Christians and Muslims, ancient cultures and modern states--the Caucasus has long been a classic borderland in many senses. Blending first-hand reporting, historical narratives, and original research, *The Caucasus* is an indispensable guide to the fractious politics and complicated histories of the region's nations and peoples."--Charles King, Professor of International Affairs and Government, Georgetown University, and author of *The Ghost of Freedom*

"This is the definitive text for anyone interested in this complex region. De Waal describes the deep roots of current conflicts and his analysis of the present situation is right on target. It should be required reading for anyone involved in Caucasian affairs."--Richard Miles, former U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan and Georgia

"*The Caucasus* is a mini-encyclopedia, and de Waal a peerless guide for navigating this mountainous maze of tangled enmities and ethnicities."--Andrew Meier, author of *The Lost Spy: An American in Stalin's Secret Service*

About the Author

Thomas de Waal is a Senior Associate on the Caucasus at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He is the author of *Black Garden* and co-author with Carlotta Gall of *Chechnya*.

Users Review

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Yael Whitehead:

This *The Caucasus: An Introduction* book is not really ordinary book, you have it then the world is in your hands. The benefit you receive by reading this book is usually information inside this guide incredible fresh, you will get information which is getting deeper a person read a lot of information you will get. That *The Caucasus: An Introduction* without we understand teach the one who studying it become critical in thinking and analyzing. Don't become worry *The Caucasus: An Introduction* can bring if you are and not make your tote space or bookshelves' turn into full because you can have it with your lovely laptop even mobile phone. This *The Caucasus: An Introduction* having great arrangement in word along with layout, so you will not sense uninterested in reading.

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