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Review of the book The Handbook of Central Asia: A Comprehensive Survey of the New Republics

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Capisani, Giampaolo R. **The handbook of Central Asia: a comprehensive survey of the new republics.** I.B. Tauris, 2000. 264p bibl index ISBN 1-86064-429-5, \$75.00

First published in Italian in 1997, slightly revised and updated in this version, this book provides information in depth about the five republics that once constituted Soviet Central Asia: Kazakstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. For each country, the author discusses the political evolution that led to independence, the geography and population, a thorough historical outline, economy, culture, religion. A general bibliography includes materials in Western and Central Asian languages and useful Web sites; select bibliographies for each country accompany individual chapters. Other features include an index, 20 black-and-white maps, and a brief chronology of the major agreements of the Commonwealth of Independent States (1991-97). Although this volume provides more comprehensive information than James Minahan's *Miniature Empires: A Historical Dictionary of the Newly Independent States* (1999), Minahan includes *all* the former Soviet republics, as well as Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Namibia. Because of this volume's price, and since similar information is already capably covered in the Library of Congress's "Area Handbooks Series" volume *Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan: Country Studies*, ed. by Glenn E. Curtis (1997), which many libraries probably already own, only libraries with high interest in Central Asia will want this one.—*J. A. Drobnicki, CUNY York College*