



# The Oil and the Glory: The Pursuit of Empire and Fortune on the Caspian Sea

By Steve Levine

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## The Oil and the Glory: The Pursuit of Empire and Fortune on the Caspian Sea By Steve Levine

Remote, forbidding, and volatile, the Caspian Sea long tantalized the world with its vast oil reserves. But outsiders, blocked by the closed Soviet system, couldn't get to it. Then the Soviet Union collapsed, and a wholesale rush into the region erupted. Along with oilmen, representatives of the world's leading nations flocked to the Caspian for a share of the thirty billion barrels of proven oil reserves at stake, and a tense geopolitical struggle began. The main players were Moscow and Washington—the former seeking to retain control of its satellite states, and the latter intent on dislodging Russia to the benefit of the West.

*The Oil and the Glory* is the gripping account of this latest phase in the epochal struggle for control of the earth's "black gold." Steve LeVine, who was based in the region for *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, and *Newsweek*, weaves an astonishing tale of high-stakes political gamesmanship, greed, and scandal, set in one of the most opaque corners of the world. In LeVine's telling, the world's energy giants jockey for position in the rich Kazakh and Azeri oilfields, while superpowers seek to gain a strategic foothold in the region and to keep each other in check. At the heart of the story is the contest to build and operate energy pipelines out of the landlocked region, the key to controlling the Caspian and its oil. The oil pipeline that resulted, the longest in the world, is among Washington's greatest foreign policy triumphs in at least a decade and a half.

Along the way, LeVine introduces such players as James Giffen, an American moneyman who was also the political "fixer" for oil companies eager to do business on the Caspian and the broker for Kazakhstan's president and ministers; John Deuss, the flamboyant Dutch oil trader who won big but lost even bigger; Heydar Aliyev, the oft-misunderstood Azeri president who transcended his past as a Soviet Politburo member and masterminded a scheme to loosen Russian control over its former colonies in the Caspian region; and all manner of rogues, adventurers, and others drawn by the irresistible pull of untold riches and the possible "final frontier" of the fossil-fuel era. The broader story is of the geopolitical questions of the Caspian oil bonanza, such as whether Russia can be

a trusted ally and trading partner with the West, and what Washington's entry into this important but chaotic region will mean for its long-term stability.

In an intense and suspenseful narrative, *The Oil and the Glory* is the definitive chronicle of events that are understood by few, but whose political and economic impact will be both profound and lasting.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"... the treat is in the roiling tale of the gambles, bravado, and maneuvering of the dealmakers. ... Like a good scenarist, LeVine develops the characters for each segment before proceeding with the plot. For people who liked Michael Douglas in *Wall Street*, here is an even more subtle and complex movie script." -- *Robert Legvold, Foreign Affairs magazine*

"Superpowers, big oil, politics, human greed and exotic locale come together here in LeVine's skillful recitation." -- *The Christian Science Monitor*

"The collapse of the Soviet Union was a big opportunity for Big Oil, whose exploits are detailed in this fast-paced work of political and economic reportage by Wall Street Journal energy correspondent LeVine. Westerners had been sniffing for black gold in Russia and its satellites long before the empire disintegrated, notes the author. Averell Harriman, "the Harvard-trained scion of nineteenth-century robber baron Edward Harriman," tried his hand at the business before turning to manganese mining, while Armand Hammer "became a money launderer for the Bolsheviks, sneaked cash to secret Bolshevik agents in the United States, and profited handsomely as the representative in Russia of some thirty American companies." Hammer set the tone for the Americans who flocked to the Caspian in the first years of the Clinton presidency, which maneuvered for the construction of an east-west oil pipeline that, by reversing the old pattern of Central Asian materials going north to Russia and coming back as products for sale, "would favor the West and disfavor Russia." Not a nice way to treat a fledgling democracy, but the oil scouts, of course, considered Russia a rival for Central-Asian resources second only to Iran, with its heartfelt and long-standing enmity toward the United States in the region and abroad. These scouts-the first among equals being LeVine's heart-of-darkness antihero, Jim Giffen-kept their distance when Russia still had control over the area, spurning a Gorbachev-era program to allow foreign co-ownership. But they rushed to support separatist movements and encouraged ethnic and political divisions that opened the door to an even bigger share of the wealth. The tale of Giffen's rise and fall (the latter for perhaps surprising reasons) occupies much of the later pages, but he never loses sight of the bigger picture: namely, Central Asia as oil lamp and potential powder keg in the realpolitik of the next few years. A complex story rendered comprehensible, with much drama and intrigue." -- *Kirkus*

"The deft political portrait of this strategic, volatile area makes the book essential reading, but it's LeVine's fine writing that makes it a pleasure." -- *Conde Nast Portfolio Magazine*

#### From the Back Cover

Pipeline politics became a modern day version of the 19th Century's Great Game, in which Britain and Russia had employed cunning and bluff to gain supremacy over the lands of the Caucasus and Central Asia. *The Oil and Glory* is the story of how, at the dawn of the 21st century, the game was played once more across the harsh environs of the Caspian Sea.

#### About the Author

Steve LeVine was a foreign correspondent for eighteen years, posted in the Soviet Union, Pakistan, and the Philippines, reporting for *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Financial Times*, and *Newsweek*. He lives in Dallas.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Kenneth Tillman:**

Have you spare time to get a day? What do you do when you have far more or little spare time? That's why, you can choose the suitable activity regarding spend your time. Any person spent all their spare time to take a stroll, shopping, or went to typically the Mall. How about open as well as read a book eligible The Oil and the Glory: The Pursuit of Empire and Fortune on the Caspian Sea? Maybe it is to be best activity for you. You realize beside you can spend your time along with your favorite's book, you can smarter than before. Do you agree with their opinion or you have different opinion?

#### **Hector Naranjo:**

Book is to be different for every grade. Book for children until adult are different content. To be sure that book is very important for all of us. The book The Oil and the Glory: The Pursuit of Empire and Fortune on the Caspian Sea seemed to be making you to know about other expertise and of course you can take more information. It is extremely advantages for you. The reserve The Oil and the Glory: The Pursuit of Empire and Fortune on the Caspian Sea is not only giving you considerably more new information but also to become your friend when you really feel bored. You can spend your own spend time to read your publication. Try to make relationship with the book The Oil and the Glory: The Pursuit of Empire and Fortune on the Caspian Sea. You never truly feel lose out for everything should you read some books.

#### **Jeffrey Messina:**

The Oil and the Glory: The Pursuit of Empire and Fortune on the Caspian Sea can be one of your beginning books that are good idea. Most of us recommend that straight away because this e-book has good vocabulary that can increase your knowledge in terminology, easy to understand, bit entertaining but still delivering the information. The article author giving his/her effort to put every word into joy arrangement in writing The Oil and the Glory: The Pursuit of Empire and Fortune on the Caspian Sea but doesn't forget the main point, giving the reader the hottest in addition to based confirm resource data that maybe you can be one among it. This great information can drawn you into fresh stage of crucial contemplating.

#### **Frank Moore:**

In this age globalization it is important to someone to receive information. The information will make you to definitely understand the condition of the world. The health of the world makes the information much easier to share. You can find a lot of personal references to get information example: internet, newspapers, book, and soon. You can view that now, a lot of publisher in which print many kinds of book. Typically the book that recommended to your account is The Oil and the Glory: The Pursuit of Empire and Fortune on the Caspian Sea this guide consist a lot of the information on the condition of this world now. This kind of book was represented how can the world has grown up. The dialect styles that writer value to explain it is easy to understand. The particular writer made some analysis when he makes this book. That is why this book acceptable all of you.

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