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**COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND CENTRAL ASIA**

**Crisis Management, Economic Impact, and Social Transformations**

**Marlene Laruelle, editor**

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*COVID-19 Pandemic and Central Asia* sheds new light on the consequences of the pandemic on Central Asian countries by giving voice to diverse experts around the world. Chapters focus on the social, political, economic, and geopolitical impacts of COVID-19 and its dramatic effects on the region. The pandemic has exposed major flaws in healthcare and economic systems around the world, and Central Asia is no exception. The region's countries have been hit by a plunge in oil prices and lower demand for their export commodities; local labor markets and migrants’ opportunities abroad have been disrupted, and prospects for investment and tourism have been reduced. Public health and educational networks lack the resources to extend into rural areas, and authorities are using digital tools to increase control over the population. At the same time, increasing tensions between the U.S. and China may jeopardize the hopes of Central Asians for the region to serve as a transit hub amidst a prosperous Eurasia.

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