



Spykman's Rimland Theory

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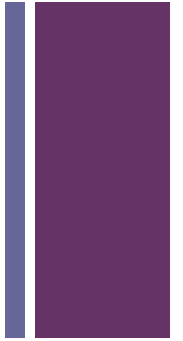
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What countries are the three prominent world powers?

- Identify the 3 countries that are world powers?
- What factors do the 3 countries share in common?
- What role does geography play in a country's establishment as a world power?

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Nicholas Spykman (1893-1943)



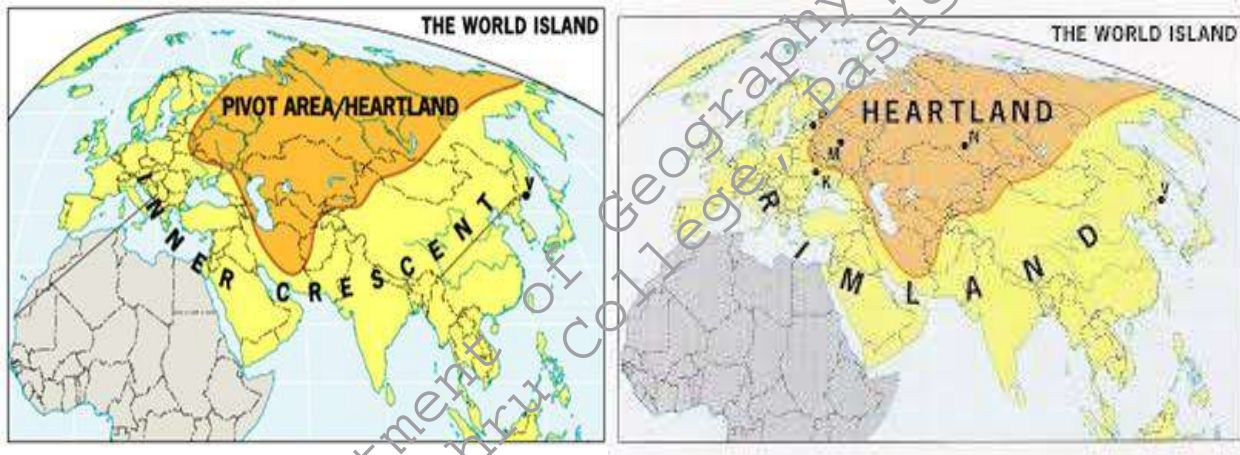
- Dutch-American political geographer
- Develops the Rimland Theory
- Largely draws on and extends Mackinder's Heartland Theory
- Geography is the most fundamental factor in foreign policy because it is the most permanent. Spykman
- Even more important than the size of a state, is location, both in the world and in a particular region. Spykman

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So, what is the Rimland?

- The Rimland plays on the terms already developed by Mackinder
- Mackinder refers to the Heartland, Inner Crescent, and World Island



- Spykman's emphasizes a rimland which has 3 sections: the European Coastland, Arab-Middle Eastern Desert land, and the Asiatic Monsoon Land.

+ Spykman's Premise

- He controls the rimland controls Eurasia and he who controls Eurasia controls the world.
- He argued that the power of the heartland could be kept in check by the peripheral rimland.
- By forming alliances along the Rimland the members can contain the heartland.
- Coastal areas or the Rimland has the advantage because of the population, resources and access to sea.

+ Mackinder vs Spykman

- Mackinder asserts that Eastern Europe is destined to gain control of the world due to its control of the heartland.
- Spykman asserts that rimland States like Japan, Great Britain and China would likely become superpowers because of their greater contact with the outside world.
- Mackinder thought countries like Australia and the Americas were insignificant as they were not a part of the world island; therefore they were not essential to world dominance.
- Spykman saw the world as consisting of two great landmasses, Eurasia and North America & three islands, South America, Africa, and Australia. He realized that

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Spykman's Division of the World

- Spykman divided most states into three types:
 - “landlocked states,”
 - “island states,”
 - “states that have both land and sea frontiers.”
- Spykman asserted that landlocked states usually faced security problems from their immediate neighbors.
- Island states normally faced potential pressure from other naval powers, but if they are offshore island states (Great Britain and Japan) they could also face security problems from nearby coastal powers.
- States with both land and sea frontiers determined their security based on several factors, including the extent of their sea and land frontiers and the power potential of their immediate or nearby neighbors.

+ Spykman's Conclusions

- Spykman realized that nations acted based on their geography.
- Spykman realized that all states have a tendency to expand.
- He also realized this was true of both sea powers and land powers, and that shifts in the balance of power would change the dynamics of geopolitics. Therefore the heartland could not remain a constant seat of power.



What does this final quote by Spykman mean?

- ‘States, cannot escape their geography. However skilled the Foreign Office, and however resourceful the General Staff. A state’s foreign policy must reckon with geographic facts. It can deal with them skillfully or ineptly; it can modify them; but it cannot ignore them. For geography does not argue. It simply is.’

