MACKINDER'S HEARTLAND AND THE LOCATION OF THE GEOPOLITICAL TETRAHEDRON

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S ir Halford Mackinder's paper, *The Geographical Pivot of History*,[1] has retained a power to engage those concerned with the analysis of epochal events in world geopolitics. The end of the Cold War witnessed the geopolitical phoenix rising in the "new world order," to the extent that the legacy of Mackinder has been consistently revisited in geopolitical discourse on Central Asia and, *inter alia*, Eurasia.

If the "age of discovery" had been the *prima facie* introduction to Europe of new lands and new societies across the Americas, Africa, Asia and Oceania, then the age of capitalism had given way to virtually the complete political appropriation of these continents. Otherwise, how could there have been a sudden realization in the form of Mackinder's cognitive metaphor that the "Heartland," hitherto the vast moribund steppes of Eurasia, had suddenly become of prime importance?[2]

The paper presented here addresses a dual question. First, it looks into the historical-geographical conditions in which the Pivot was construed, and the systemic variables of global capitalism which are the source of its programming across time-space. Second, it addresses an aspect of Mackinder's model that has seldom been considered—the spatial. One of the prime reasons that the latter has so often been overlooked could be the prevalent abhorrence of mapping simple geometrical and physical tools into the complex and changing nature of the geopolitical world. Had it not been for the 11 September, 2001 episode, the

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[1] H.J. Mackinder, "The Geographical Pivot of History," *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. XXIII, No. 4, April 1904, pp. 421-437.

[2] Even apart from these external factors, the internal dynamics of British society were subject to significant stress from the impact of the business cycle that began in Britain in the 1870s, a phase that coincided with the second scramble for Africa and Asia.

restive state of world affairs would have found few takers for the platonic Heartland-Rimland debates that often used to wash the shores of Cold War geopolitics. Here, an attempt has been made to look into the dual nature of Mackinder's theory both as map and concept. The paper's original contribution is to show how new light is shed on the Pivot by tilting it on its axis.

The paper that Mackinder presented to the Royal Geographical Society was illustrative of events of the time. These were the inevitable transformation of British imperialism, and it is then overarching captivity of world trade, from a near monopoly to competitive play with the increasing involvement of Germany in the East and later with the advent of Socialist Russia. The paper also reflected the new Asia rising from a long slumber of economic exploitation, revitalized by economic nationalism. China and Japan revealed the enormous potential of the East. Geographers and Statesmen were the two glass-lenses of the binocular vision of British Imperialism. This can be surmised in the words of G.T. Goldie on the death of the Queen Victoria, Empress of India, as follows: "Throughout the Victorian age, Great Britain has dealt with the white races on the principle of constitutional liberty, when assured of the loyalty to the Crown and flag; and the chief aim in dealing with the colored races has undoubtedly been beneficence, though this aim, like other human ideals, has too often been marred by *imperfect knowledge* or faulty judgement."[3]

The Royal Geographical Society was founded in February 1827, with the objective of filling the gaps in the "imperfect knowledge" of the globe for King William IV (1830). The society became the flagship of British Imperialism, when Queen Victoria provided a Royal Charter defining its objectives as "The Advancement of Geographical Science" and "The Improvement and Diffusion of Geographical Knowledge." A major contribution of the Society toward these goals has been the *Geographical Journal*. This is one of the longest running journals, forming a comprehensive repos-

itory of information about explorations of vast areas in Africa and Asia. Most of the proceedings of this society took the form of meetings, often held by senior statesmen and army personnel involved in the promotion of British imperial interests. Their work commonly took the form of intelligence about the local people, suitable routes for trade and movement, principal ethnic-social dimensions, and the military capabilities of the "natives." Sir Thomas Holdich aptly states this imperial service of the empire, in explaining the task of the Royal Geographical Society as follows: "We have restored to the world what the world well knew once before... All this has been brought about by the slow and certain process of Imperial advance, carrying with it all the *accessories of civilization*, which sweep clean the rotenness that underlies the undergrowth of small and semi-barbarous nationalities choking their roots and stunting the growth of wide and wholesome development; and it is this which has distinguished Asia no less than Africa..."[4]

Thus, the latter-day challenge that the promoters of Great Britain's overseas interest visualized, was not from Gothic France or German Magyars, who themselves emerged "under common necessity of resistance to external factors," but the advent of nascent Asian statehood emergent in the Third World, symbolic of the "Asiatic Imperialism" of the nomads hammering the eastern gates of Europe.[5] According to Mackinder, Latin America and Africa had an altogether different significance for the western world than did Asia: their history was inconsequential, and their geography made them militarily vulnerable.[6]

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[3] G.T. Goldie, "Progress of Exploration and the Spread and Consolidation of the Empire in America, Australia, and Africa," *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. XVII, No. 3, March 1901, pp. 240.

[4] T.H. Holdich, "Advances in Asia and Imperial Consolidation in India," *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. XVII, No. 3, March 1901, pp. 241-242.

[5] Mackinder contends that "the idea of England was beaten into the Heptarchy by Danish and Norman conquerors; the idea of France was forced upon competing Franks, Goths," but the idea of European civilization had been the consequence of one of the more "elemental movements whose pressure … perform[ed] a valuable social function … and it was under the pressure of external barbarism that Europe achieved her civilization" (H.J. Mackinder, op. cit., p. 423).

[6] The end of the nineteenth century had been already witnessing the second scramble for Africa, with Germany

Britain and its empire at the turn of the century had to face the multiple levels of challenges that emerged from its over-sized and unwieldy expanse. Napoleon had commented, "All empires die of indigestion," and statesmen and thinkers of the like of Chamberlain, Rhodes, Lord Haldane, Bertrand Russell, H.G. Wells, and Leo Amery, a galaxy to which Sir Mackinder also belonged, were attempting to save this one.

Mackinder's illustrious paper was soon put to test by another major event that invited the application of his precepts: the transformation of "trans-Prussian" space from a backyard to a powerful state in the form of U.S.S.R., a polity that later came to offer the Third World an alter-European identity. The emergence of the Soviet Union was a unique event in world geopolitics that rallied significant energies across Eurasia and quite effectively paved the way for the global transmission of British Imperialism, which now had geopolitically shifted its base to North America.[7] Mackinder's paper was an epilogue to Imperialism's geographic progression, as he remarks, "in Europe, North America, South America, Africa and Australasia there is scarcely a region left for the pegging out of a claim of ownership."[8] Asia is differentiated by its enigmatic space that seems physically conquered but feebly overwhelmed. He was arguably the pioneering statesman-cum-scholar who sought to look into the cyclic nature of the interaction between the Orient and the Occident through the dialectics of continental and maritime reciprocation. According to Mackinder, broader geographical and historical generalizations are sometimes needed to describe the genesis of landscapes, conspicuous of the "most coercive of human action" that "exhibit human history as part of life of the world organism." His oriental man was "a repellent personality" who "performs a valuable social function in uniting his enemies, and it was under the pressure of external barbarism that Europe achieved her civilization."[9] He further elucidates that "European civilization is, in a very real sense, the outcome of the secular struggle against Asiatic invasion."[10] This opprobrium against the conquered world was a historic justification to the "pegging" of control out of the spaces of the world.

This interpretative briefing is needed to look into the contemporaneity of Mackinder's work, where U.S. imperialism and its crusade against ultra-religious barbarism play a role often unnoticed by geographers of the present day.

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and France now equipotent industrial economies ventured out both for market and raw material in competence to Britain, so long held monopoly. For further details, see an *Outline of History* by P. Townsend.

[7] Brtiain's monopoly was dwindling swiftly as "between 1880-1884 and 1900-1904 British exports of manufactures increased 8 percent, German 40 percent, and American 230 percent." And, "in 1880 British steel output stood at 1.3 million tons, American at 1.2 million and German at 700,000. By 1900, American steel output had reached 10.2 million tons, German 6.4 million and British 4.9 million" (C.R. Dutt, *Britain's Crises of Empire*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1949, pp. 18-19).

[8] H.J. Mackinder, op. cit., p. 421. It is interesting to note that Mackinder did not enlist Asia in the similar vein, perhaps keeping safe the perceptive difference for his pivotal work that revealed Asia in a new geopolitical light.

[9] H.J. Mackinder, op. cit., p. 423.

[10] Ibidem.

The "Pivot" Paper and the Ensuing Discussion

Scholars of geopolitics have subsequently devoted considerable space to elucidating Mackinder's ingenious paper. However, they have often overlooked the discussion that followed later in the evening with Spencer Wilkinson, Thomas Holdich, Mr. Amery and Mr. Hogarth present. Wilkinson observed that one of the important facts brought out by Mackinder's paper was that "any movement which is made in one part of the world affects the whole of the international relations of the world."[11] At that

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[11] S. Wilkinson *et al.,* "The Geographical Pivot of History: Discussion," pp. 437-444.

time, Russia was by no means the Soviet Union, and it was only the reminiscences of Czarist Russia that offered the scant prospect of a successor to the Asiatic "hammer" of yesteryear. He questioned the proposition of this putative hammer striking all over the periphery of the Eurasian landmass (later defined as the Heartland). He offered an alternate explanation. He suggested that, historically, Europe was struck even at times by the Byzantine Empire, which was superseded by the Ottomans; hence the argument seemed far fetching. Another proposition was that just as the British Empire exerted control over marginal regions due to its geostrategic location, so should Japan be able to do the same, thus counterbalancing the whole effect.[12]

Sir Thomas Holdich was of the view that one of the prime reasons for the westward movement of Asiatic armies must have been climatic change that could have resulted in the subsequent outflow of nomadic tribes. He also suggests that South America might function "as a possible factor in that outer belt of power which was to bring coercion to bear on the inner power pivoting about the south of Russia."[13]

Mr. Leo Amery made some of the most insightful comments on Mackinder's paper. He contended that the East and the West are two relating terms in a constant gong and hammer relationship since the time of Herodotus. He explained their unique geographical location identified with three different economic and military systems. There is an agrarian system, a system of steppe people and sea-faring coastal people. But, for a power to sustain its sway, it had to acquire all the superimposing qualities of the three systems, i.e., the mobility of steppes as well as sea-faring capabilities along with a huge standing army can only render it an unsurpassing superiority. For all practical reasons there has to be an industrial and demographic base in order to support such a huge mobile contingent, both in continental (army) and oceanic (naval) terms. On the specifics of railway and sea mobility, he said that both would eventually be superseded by air mobility. Citing the role of the scientific and technological revolution, he said, "those people who have industrial power and the power of invention and of science will be able to defeat all others."[14] Mackinder later responded to all the queries but his principal reassertion was that the Eurasian steppes were occupied by the nomads, "and that there were rich countries to be plundered." He also reminded his listeners that railways had the major advantage over sea transport in that they could transfer huge armies relatively swiftly.

The Tetrahedral Scheme

Mackinder's paper can be considered as a stage in the long and meandering progression of his thinking throughout his professional career. That this was not merely an exercise in academic objectives can be seen by his imperial understanding of geography, as demonstrated by his ascent of Mount Kenya in 1899.[15] A significant consummation of these ideas occurred in 1902 with his book *Britain and the British Seas*. He wisely used the thematic structure of ancient maps and their relational aspect to arrive at a significant conclusion of how Britain could best locate her strategic interests in that

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[12] See: H.J. Mackinder, op. cit., p. 436. This refers to one of the aims of British-Japan Treaty to preserve their possessions in Korean peninsula, after all, it had been "the idea underlying Mr. Amery's conception that the British military front stretch(ed) from the Cape through India to Japan."

[13] H.J. Mackinder, op. cit., p. 439.

[14] Ibid., p. 441.

[15] "The motives for climbing Mount Kenya were not purely scientific," argues Brian Blouet (see: B.W. Blouet, "The Imperial Vision of Halford Mackinder," *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 170, No. 4, December 2004, pp. 322-329). He further argues that the "desire to conquer Mount Kenya was a deliberate career move by a man seeking authority within the new discipline of geography in late Victorian Britain" (see: G. Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space,* Routledge, London, 1996, p. 76).

continuum. Here, one finds that the Principle of *uniformitarianism* (that "the present is the key to the past") seems operational in physical space. Accordingly, physical space is differentiated by the super-imposition of a sociopolitical outlay that defines nation-states as uniquely located communities identifiable by their geopolitical attributes. Given that, it is unsurprising that the law of antipodality (expression of arrangement of earth's land/sea distribution given by Lowthian Green) can be drawn onto the geopolitical orientation of the earth's surface (see Table 1), where the Cold War and its priori and posteriori dynamics offer a sense of continuity amidst change. This construction of social "geo"-physics can be better understood when the tetrahedral theory and its utilitarian structure are extracted to model out the current scheme.

T a b l e   1

**The Antipodal Arrangement of
the Continents and Oceans**

ANTIPODAL ARRANGEMENT	
CONTINENTS	**OCEANS**
NORTH AMERICA	**INDIAN**
EUROPE & AFRICA	**PACIFIC**
AUSTRALASIA	**NORTH ATLANTIC**
EAST ASIA	**SOUTH ATLANTIC**
ANTARCTIC	**ARCTIC**

According to Gregory, the plan of the earth has certain important geographic observations (Fig. 1)[16]:

A) Concentration of land in the northern hemisphere, and of sea in the southern hemisphere.

B) General "triangularity" of the continents with bases in the north and apices in the south, and vice-versa for the oceans.

C) The marked antipodal arrangement of oceans and continents.

The antipodal distribution is essentially based upon geometric relation between shapes. Lowthian Green (1875) gave the two geometrical facts as follows[17]:

A) A sphere is a body, which contains the largest volume with respect to a surface area.

B) A tetrahedron is a body, which refers to the least volume for the aforesaid surface area.

Thus, a sphere and a tetrahedron are antipodal shapes in relation to a given surface area in terms of volume. The rationale for the tetrahedronic argument is as follows.

The three vertices of the tetrahedron radiating from one of its apices (primary) are poised with such distance that the major watershed of the earth (first order, continental) can be seen as a representation of their great meridional extents. This is seen in the two Americas, Europe-Africa and East Asia-

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[16] See: J.W. Gregory, "The Plan of the Earth and its Causes," *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. XIII, No. 3, March 1899, pp. 225-250.
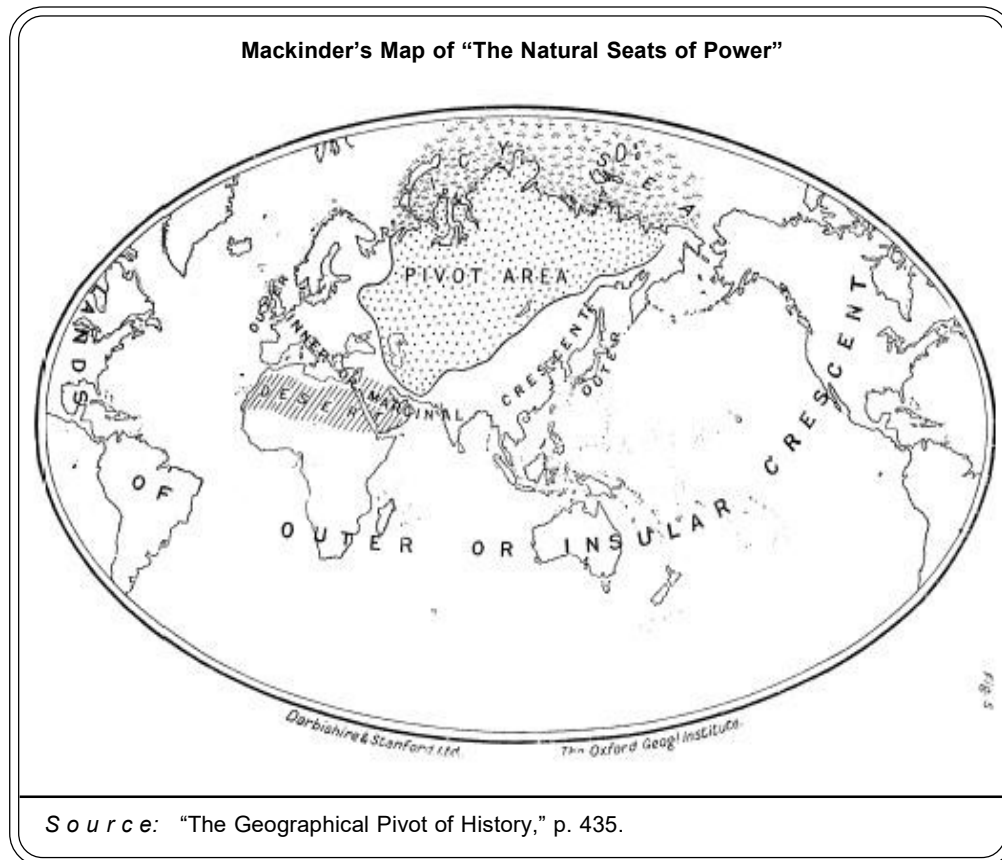[17] See: J.A. Steers, *The Unstable Earth*, Kalyani Publishers, ND, 1988, reprint, p. 3.

Australasia. It is also worth noting that the three major continental shields, namely, the Laurentian, Baltic and the Siberian, are approximately 120 degrees apart, longitudinally.[18]

Mackinder's Projection and the Tetrahedral Theory

Although this might appear to be an extraordinary claim, Mackinder's concept of the world had the same thematics as that of classical "T-O" maps. These depicted the earth as split by the Mediterranean and Red Sea continuum meeting the Nile at right angles, giving a shape of letter "T," ringed by the outer circumference of the ocean ring represented as an "O"—hence popularly known as "T-O" maps. These represented the world as a saucer shaped continental splay surrounded by an oceanic lake that offered a quest for geopolitical relations between Europe, Asia and Libya (Africa)—as Fig. 1 shows.
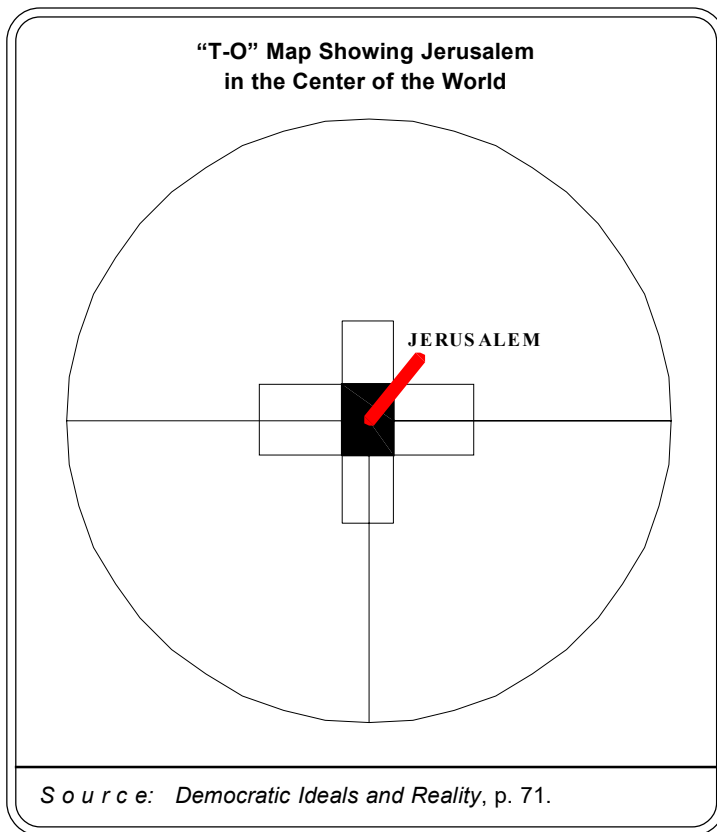
F i g u r e   1

Mackinder's Map of "The Natural Seats of Power"

S o u r c e: "The Geographical Pivot of History," p. 435.

[18] See: Ibid., p. 4.

This claim is not as surprising as perhaps it sounds. Indeed, Mackinder acknowledges this in his own theory by writing that "if our study of geographical realities, as we now know them in their completeness, is leading us to right conclusions, the medieval ecclesiastics were not far wrong" (see Fig. 2). The only modification was that instead of those "T-O" maps, the more suitable Mercator projection was available to offer adjustments to the scheme of global fortress.

F i g u r e   2

**"T-O" Map Showing Jerusalem
in the Center of the World**

JERUSALEM

S o u r c e: Democratic Ideals and Reality, p. 71.

In fact, in his book *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (1919), he even proposes that "if the World-Island be inevitably the principal seat of humanity on this globe, and if Arabia, as the passage land from Europe to the Indies and from the Northern to the Southern Heartland, be central in the World-Island, then the hill citadel of Jerusalem has a strategic position with reference to world realities not differing essentially from its ideal position in the perspective of the Middle Ages, or its strategic position between ancient Babylon and Egypt."[19]

Thus, the premeditations of his famous airy cherub had been as conspicuous in his quest for an eternal seat for strategic power, as, "Who owns Damascus, moreover, will have flank access to

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[19] H.J. Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality: A Study in the Politics of Reconstruction,* Constable and Company, London, 1919, p. 71.

alternative route between the oceans … it cannot be wholly a coincidence that in the self-same region should be the starting point of History and the crossing point of the most vital of the modern highways."[20]

This imperial location betraying strategic fetishism was fraught with "standard" geographical error, where the railways and sea-lanes were conceived as if they were no more than the question of transportation choice, rather than considering the exercise of power over distance.

The tetrahedral structure is a vital cog to understand and fully appreciate Mackinder's views. An important spatial priori to his theory has been the linear primacy of state and its authority, being visualized as overarching and undiminishing without any distance decay effect. Nevertheless, scale is a problem for this vision of global statehood, but Mackinder overlooks this to argue the case for British Imperialism and its quest to seek to identify a spatial configuration that would enable a power to command and rule the world.

One can safely presume here that it would be unmindful for any islander to overlook the curvature of the earth's surface at the edges beyond which its authority could tangentially pass off into uncertainty. However the vision of vast potential resources, spread all over the globe as colonies and slaves, creates a distortion that could easily mislead any superpower into delusions of invincible supremacy. This is achieved by the use of Mercator's navigation chart which, in constructing a grand vision of a global empire, shows imperial gains at higher latitudes increasingly larger than they are.

The tetrahedral theory helps modify the case by substantially reducing the margin of error for the space between the three vertices of "earth as tetrahedron" that can be easily commanded, dividing the whole spherical earth into four juxtaposing surfaces against each apice. This interpretative break up of the earth's surface is worth visualizing in a world, which is far more spheroid in the spatiometry of world order, and where a perceptively monocline surface provides the basis for hierarchical relations.

The tetrahedron approach can also be used as a model for mapping extra-terrestrial space. In the age of space power and rocketry, were all stellar locations connected they would reveal the earth's surface as encapsulated by a tetrahedronic shape. Thus, it is neither the railways nor the counter position to sea-lanes that convert the vast territorial expanses of erstwhile Asiatic hordes into the Heartland. Rather, the real air/space power supremacy can be commanded through an overhead perspective and the utilization of a unique stellar location, enabling its occupier to strike at any force trying to break into its circumference. This contention is supported by the fact that one of the primary aspects of the Cold War was the race for space supremacy, and its highest stage as displayed in the "Star Wars" program.

Mackinder's Pivot/Heartland is one of the four tetrahedral bases having Europe and East Asia at its two apices. Quite interestingly, its location is very much antipodal to America's, which also has another ideological location envisioning the conflict between communism and capitalism in the Cold War situation. This antipodal nature could be seen as a constant struggle to balance the tetrahedron either on its base or on its apex (see Fig. 3). Alternatively, it can be viewed as a struggle over the ability to sit atop the tetrahedron. On the basis of that logic, it seems that the Antarctic is the apex over which the whole tetrahedron is set up with the Arctic Ocean as its base in the north. However, the question of whether the northern or the southern hemisphere is "on top" becomes even more difficult when the earth is perceived at an increasing distance. This is the case with the age of space technology, where the perceptive orientation gets increasingly stereographic. Thus, it seems that a dialectics of Cold War geopolitics remains in place. That is quite a stable element in the long term, when compared to the short-term instability (or victory of capitalism, for that matter) of the earth.
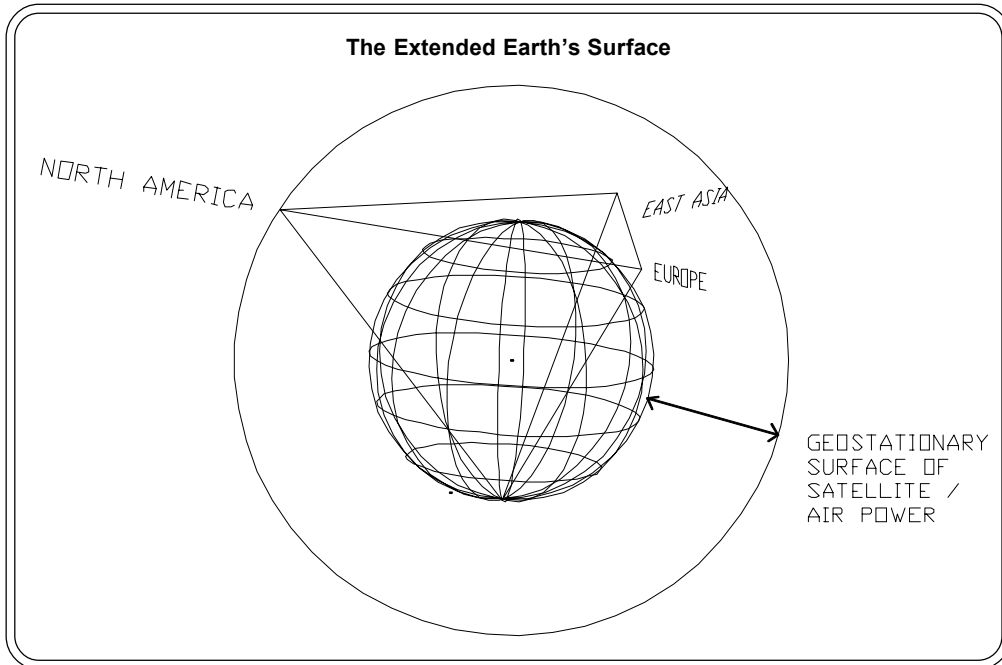
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[20] Ibid., pp. 71-72.

F i g u r e 3

**Which Way Up Should
the Earth Rest?**
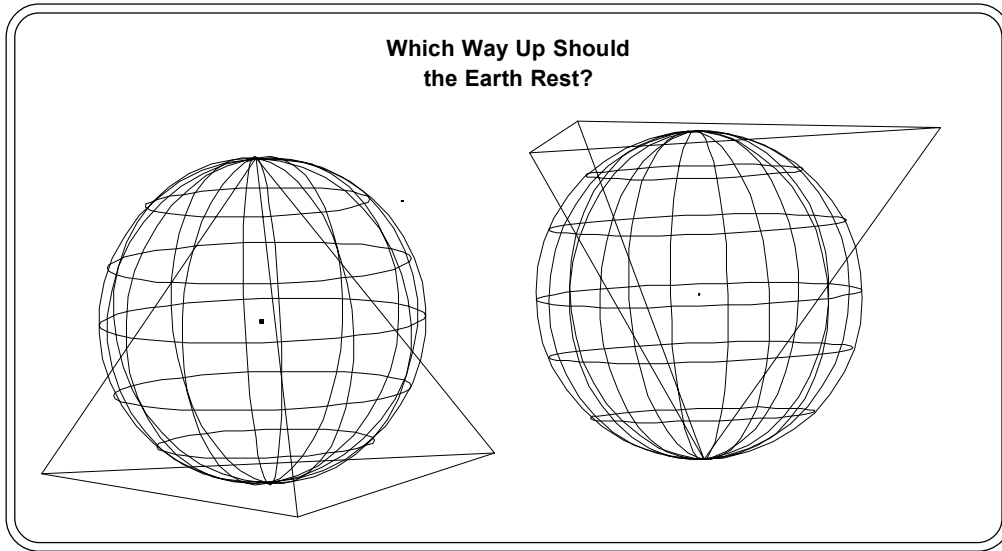
Any continental apex (power), which commands the extended radii of the earth's surface by attaining air supremacy, is able to determine all the orientation of the tetrahedronic scheme (see Fig. 4).

F i g u r e 4

The Extended Earth's Surface

NORTH AMERICA

EAST ASIA

EUROPE

GEOSTATIONARY
SURFACE OF
SATELLITE /
AIR POWER

Airpower transforms the fixed continental apices into mobile ones. They can project state authority and overcome the distance-decay effects of curvature. The same effect can be extended to military satellites and intelligence units that orbit the earth at even greater heights. However, one does not simply need to confine this discussion to mobile units. The scheme can be viewed with the operation of geostationary satellites. An apex power has the advantage of maximum surface area coverage with the positioning of geostationary satellites on apical positions of an imaginary tetrahedron. Thus, an American satellite would cover the area between Europe and China that counts for all the major zones of strategic interest. Conversely, a base power (here, for example, Russia) can also convert itself into an apical node for strategic parity. This can be achieved if the satellites are positioned on the basal positions of the tetrahedron (i.e., simulating a counter-tetrahedron). However, most of the direct area under these satellites would consist of oceans (the Atlantic and the Pacific). This will necessitate more reliance on maritime intelligence to supplement the overall picture. One might envisage a case where Russian satellites positioned over the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans and the Heartland could effectively provide early warning to its military installations of a force invading them in the Heartland.

Epilogue:
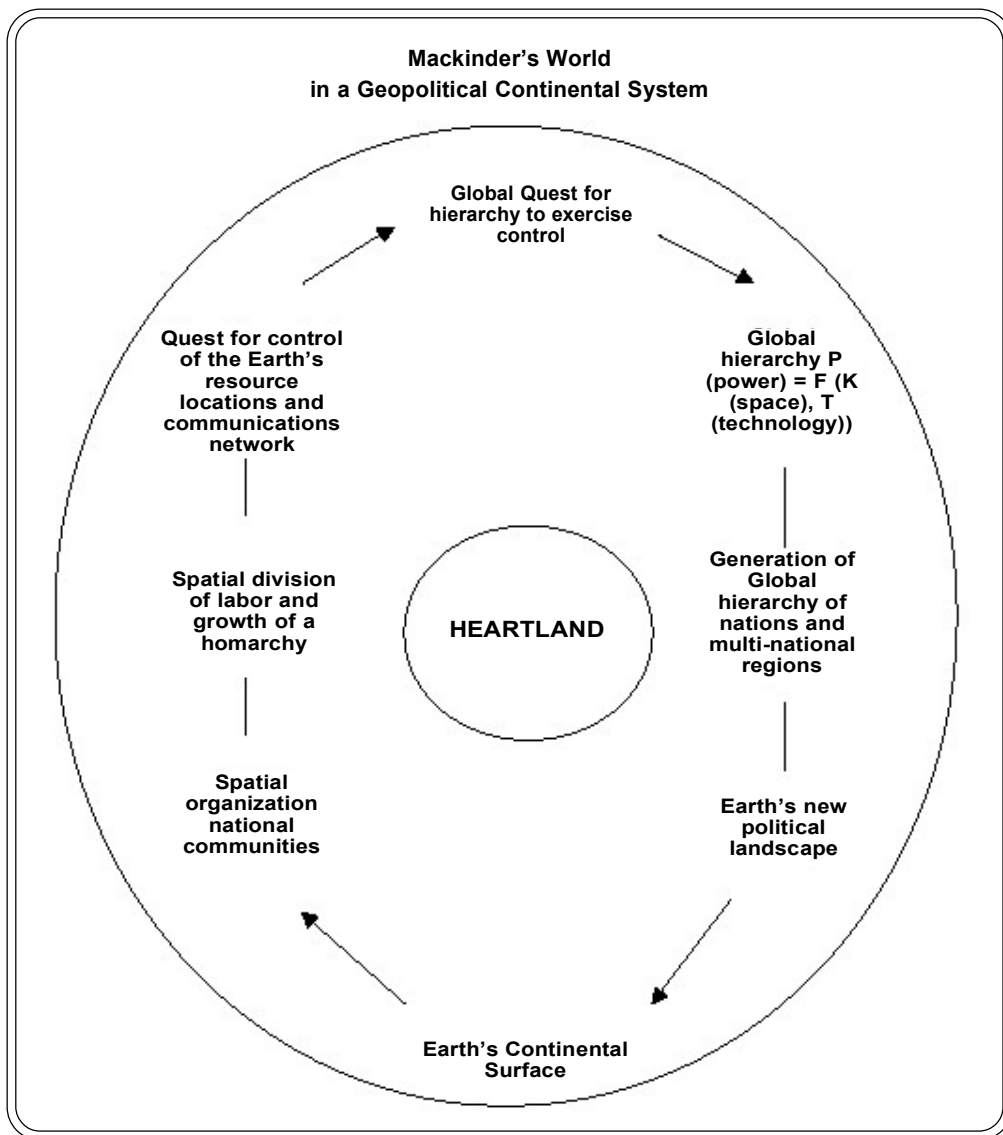# Heartland as Strategy and System

It has often been stated that Mackinder's Heartland thesis offers no further food for thought since the rise and fall of Soviet power, without properly clarifying the opinion that Mackinder actually held about it.[21] Although, the logic of containment of Soviet power did provide some evidence in support of the theory, it did not reflect Mackinder's argument about railways versus sealanes. In fact, the issue of relative resource parity was important in Mackinder's scheme. This was how South America became a stooge to U.S. global domination, as it was the only other rich storehouse of natural resources and, interestingly enough, was antipodal to the location of Heartland. Mackinder had recognized this possibility in his paper, where he found that "the development of the vast potentialities of South America might … strengthen the United States."[22] In time, with the toppling of Allende's government in Chile, and political turmoil in Uruguay, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, Latin America became one of the hot trial beds for the CIA's operations, where the local elite and the military establishment played quite an important role in quelling any democratic movement. The vast continental resources, including Amazonian forests, Venezuelan oil fields, Argentine grasslands, Chile's copper mines, and Brazilian plantations, became the hinterland for the "Midland basin" to counter the Eurasian fortress.

Mackinder's thought can be interpreted with the help of systems analysis theory as it connotes the spherical conceptualization of the earth surface (see Fig. 5). The model sums up the essence of his paper, which he maintained and updated in his subsequent writings. As geographers are given to cyclic understanding of spatial process, here a model is presented where one can integrate the earth's surface with the distribution of oceans and continents as a given set of conditions into the geopolitical complexities that gave rise to all tactical power arrangements across the globe.

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[21] Soviet power and its ideological orientation were in stark opposition to Mackinder's desired ownership of Heartland. In fact, his distaste for the Bolshevik revolution was quite conspicuous. Furthermore, World War II made him retreat from his Heartland interest. At the very moment when "policymakers in the US and the UK feared that the USSR might control the World-Island, Mackinder's imperial vision was undermined by the perceived need to leave the empire behind and join the European Economic Community" (B.W. Blouet, op. cit., p. 328).

[22] H.J. Mackinder, op. cit., p. 436.

F i g u r e 5

**Mackinder's World
in a Geopolitical Continental System**

**Global Quest for
hierarchy to exercise
control**

**Quest for control
of the Earth's
resource
locations and
communications
network**

**Global
hierarchy P
(power) = F (K
(space), T
(technology))**

**Spatial division
of labor and
growth of a
homarchy**

HEARTLAND

**Generation of
Global
hierarchy of
nations and
multi-national
regions**

**Spatial
organization
national
communities**

**Earth's new
political
landscape**

**Earth's Continental
Surface**

Different communities occupy the land area as their national space. These communities, both through inter- and intra-territorial means, influence state organization and vitally identify their resource location vis-à-vis the resources of other communities. They might reciprocate or compete for material (energy, territory, coastal outlet) or non-material (production of social goods, creating human resource potential) common resources. By a "national resource," especially in the sphere of non-material culture, is essentially meant the geopolitics of a nation. Its strengths and weaknesses within local, regional and global tiers of integration are governed by the nature of the state (a part of non-material culture) and the manpower support behind it.

This affects the regional organization of national communities into a broader regional hierarchy (homarchy), and this stratum in turn then broadly fits into a global hierarchy (heterarchy). This is responsible for their spatial division of labor, essentially the "specialization of labor" that prompts comparative exchange between nationbound communities, and it is quite often provocative of competition among them for more access to each other's resources and need to monopolize the communication lines that materialize them. The global consequence of this is a collective quest for both a control of global resources and a desired heterarchy. This has been the essence of a "new world order" or a quest for such a "Heartland," resting at the pinnacle of the spatial hierarchy of the "World-Island."

The system then feeds back into the quest for the selection of the appropriate technology that can render power and isotropy of space (the earth's surface), and thus command absolute control over the hierarchy. It may often be that innovations and extensions in transportation networks and technologies will provide the tools of exercising effective control. Most noticeably, these developments have been visible on the principle of cybernetics, when the cyber communication and airspace power combined into a powerful system of global surveillance has been developed. The role of global surveillance and its transformation into a tool to intervene into the national lives of communities has been a major instrument in conflict among nations, states, and non-state actors. This expands the intervention capability in spatial terms and thus power is exercised through threat or actual damage. The same approach is also used to counter possible interventions. Hence, there is an increased role of sectarian technologies. Needless to say, any such advent is bound to create a technological hierarchy in terms of superiority. These again feed back into the reshuffling of hierarchy in the World-Island, with middle region readjustments. An important aspect of this structuring is that the Heartland (by virtue of its geographical location), and the lowest order nations (on account of their exclusion from the system) remain comparatively untouched. The maximum disturbance is witnessed among the "Inner Crescent" nations, who are particularly vulnerable by virtue of their location in the tetrahedron. Interestingly, "Soviet" Central Asia remains embedded to the southern most end of the Heartland and bound by the "Inner Crescent" further south, which affirms its innate proclivity for instability. But being bound from its inner side by the "Russian Fortress" in the north that could offer much territorial space, there is very little demographic base for any marked diastrophism in the general Eurasian political landscape. Mackinder's theory thus remains helpful in understanding the geopolitics of contemporary Central Asia.